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**OUT OF TIME: ASPECTS OF ROMANCE NOVEL, FROM  
RICHARDSON AND BRONTË TO DIANA GABALDON'S  
*OUTLANDER***

**PORTO ALEGRE**

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Dissertação de Mestrado submetida ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Letras.

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*“Few people realize how much courage it takes for a woman to open a romance novel on an airplane. She knows what everyone around her will think about both her and her choice of reading material. When it comes to romance novels, society has always felt free to sit in judgment not only on the literature but on the reader herself.”*

Jayne Ann Krentz, *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women*

## RESUMO

*Romance novels* são um gênero literário de mercado popular formado por histórias em que o interesse narrativo é centrado na relação amorosa entre dois indivíduos. O casal deve transpor uma sequência de obstáculos antes de conseguir ficar juntos. Este gênero tem uma longa tradição, começando com narrações masculinas sobre como a rebeldia feminina e a sexualidade desencadeavam desgraça e sofrimento, em narrativas como *Pamela*, de Richardson (1740). O gênero evoluiu para trabalhos que retratam e problematizam como é para uma mulher estar ciente de suas circunstâncias e lutar pela independência em um contexto onde sua pessoa e seu corpo são constantemente examinados, avaliados e objetificados. *Romance novels* contemporâneos são escritos geralmente por mulheres, para leitores de maioria feminina – um público que desde o início do século XX tem sido muito vocal em seus gostos e desgostos sobre as histórias que leem, e tem ajudado a moldar e mudar o gênero continuamente. Assim, o objetivo desta dissertação é examinar as formas como o corpo e a sexualidade feminina têm sido representados durante o curso de desenvolvimento do gênero. O foco da análise recai nas maneiras pelas quais os trabalhos analisados refletem padrões de comportamento do contexto social do qual derivam. A dissertação se estrutura em três capítulos. O primeiro se ampara na teoria de Pamela Regis sobre os oito elementos essenciais do *romance novel*, apresentados em *The Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003). O capítulo examina como esses elementos se manifestam em dois textos canônicos, um escrito por um homem (*Pamela*, de Samuel Richardson, 1740), e outro escrito por uma mulher (*Jane Eyre*, de Charlotte Brontë, 1847). O segundo capítulo leva a discussão para *Outlander*, de Diana Gabaldon (1991), destacando quatro dos oito elementos propostos por Regis, a saber: (a) sociedade, (b) barreira, (c) reconhecimento e (d) morte ritual. O romance é considerado no seu contexto de publicação nos EUA. O capítulo final apresenta o contraste entre os três textos literários abordados, em relação às diferentes etapas da jornada feminina. Espera-se que a análise cruzada destes romances permita exemplificar as maneiras pelas quais a representação de heróis femininos evoluiu ao longo do tempo e sua relação com os valores sociais em evolução nas sociedades em que se inserem.

**Palavras-chave:** 1. *Romance novels*. 2. Diana Gabaldon. 3. *Outlander*. 4 Crítica literária.

## ABSTRACT

Romance novels are a mass-market literary genre consisting of stories where the love relation of a female and a male protagonist occupies the central narrative interest. The couple must transverse a sequence of obstacles before they manage to be together. What we understand today as Romance Novels has a long tradition, having started as male narrations on how female rebelliousness and sexuality triggered disgrace and suffering, in novels as Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). The genre progressively evolved into works that portray and problematize what it is like for a woman to be aware of her circumstances and strive for independence in a context where her person and her body are constantly scrutinized, evaluated and objectified. Contemporary romance novels are written by women, for a mostly female readership – a readership that since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been very vocal in their likes and dislikes about the stories they read, and have been helping to shape and change the genre continuously. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to examine the ways in which body and sexuality have been represented along the course of development of the genre. The focus of examination lies in the ways the analysed works reflect the standards of behaviour of the social context from which they derive. The thesis is structured in three chapters. The first is based on Pamela Regis' theory regarding the eight essential elements of the Romance Novel, presented in *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003). The chapter examines how these eight elements relate to two early canon texts, one written by a male author (Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, 1740), the other written by a female author (Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, 1847). The second chapter brings the discussion to Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* (1991), highlighting four among the eight elements proposed by Regis, namely (a) society, (b) barrier, (c) recognition, and (d) ritual death. The novel is considered from within its place into the U.S. publishing context. The final chapter presents the conclusions reached, based on the contrast perceived in the three literary texts addressed concerning different stages of the female journey. It is hoped that the study of these novels allows for a cross-analysis of the ways in which the representation of female heroes has evolved through time and its relationship to the evolving social values of each society.

**Keywords:** 1. Romance novels. 2. Diana Gabaldon. 3. *Outlander*. 4 Literary criticism.



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## INTRODUCTION

As a child my favourite movie was *Cinderella*, I would rent it so often from my neighbourhood's movie rental shop that the owner gave me one of their copies at some point. As a child, the talking mice and the singing were more than enough reason for me to cling to that story. As a grown woman, my penchant for reading romance fanfiction and romance novels clashed with my feminist values. It was from that unease that my academic interest for the genre flourished. I have read many explanations on why romance novels are so appealing to women, none have quite managed to answer my questions, however, Jennifer Cruise Smith – a well-known romance writer – has gotten the closest. In her article *This Is Not Your Mothers Cinderella* (1999), she explains that, just as fairy tales share a belief in innate justice of the social system, the romance novel's female hero "pursues a worthy goal and achieves it on her own while the romance plot runs in tandem with her quest" and that "the romance is something the heroine achieves inadvertently while working to win her external goal" (SMITH, 1999, p. 55). That is why romance novels have always been a highly marketable genre. Proof of that is the fact that one of its main publishers alone, Harlequin Books, prints more than 110 titles in 34 different languages every month and the Romance Writers of America Non-profit's Website claims that the genre amounts to 34% of the fiction market in the U.S. (Source: Nielsen BookScan/Pub Track Digital 2015).

My main theoretical approach in this study is Regis' definition of the romance novel and the exploration of the eight essential elements she defines as necessary for a work of fiction to be considered a romance. My previous research, published as my monograph, presented a review of the critical fortune of the romance novel genre based on her definition and the main critical works considered by her. Neither that study, nor this one in any way exhaust the research to be done in this topic. I, however, must admit, for the sake of being fair to my corpus, that Regis' theory has been the central approach I've used in my research and this choice brings a series of implications regarding my analysis. Pamela Regis' main point of contempt with romance novel critics is the fact that they

extrapolate, from a small and limited corpus, truths about the genre as whole. The author's keynote address at the Second Annual Conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Romance, titled *What Do Critics Owe the Romance?*, presents a rhetorical analysis of the critical fortune of the genre with a focus on the underlying beliefs behind the main eight studies of romance novels. Her argument is based on the rhetorical studies of literary critics as a "discourse community" by Laura Wilder. In that research, articles from the best periodicals were analysed and a common topoi employed by critics was established. Of these, Regis selects three to analyse in the main critical studies of romance novels, complexity, *contemptus mundi*, and social justice. From these topoi the author highlights the main obligations critics have to the romance novel genre.

Regis explains of the topos of complexity, "Wilder found that the special topos she calls "complexity" is an overarching value in all critical work from whatever era. Literary critics—we—all believe "that literature is complex and that to understand it requires patient unravelling, translating, decoding, interpretation, analysing" (REGIS, 2011, p. 7-8). In direct opposition to complexity is simplicity and, as Regis points out, "our discipline values complexity in its study texts", which implicitly says that simplicity is a negative quality in a work of fiction (2011, p. 8). From this discussion Regis concludes the first obligation of the critic to the romance novel, that is "to make overt and to defend our conclusion that the romance is simple, if this is, in fact, our assessment" (2011, p. 8). This should be done in conjunction with admitting the value judgement that follows this topos, that simplicity is, as Wilder found, "a much-maligned state" (apud REGIS, 2011, p.8). In addition, whatever conclusion we reach after a text is established as "simple" should be made carefully. Another corollary the author establishes from the discussion of the complexity topos is that "we owe it to the romance to stay within our evidence when we state conclusion", that is, we should not extrapolate our findings as representative of the genre as whole unless we have proof that it indeed does (REGIS, 2011, p. 9).

*Contemptus mundi*, for Regis, is among the most important topoi of the critics' community. She again quotes Wilder's study explaining that "this term refers to the critic's sense that the world is fallen, in the face of which fact 'the critic exhibits an assumption of despair, alienation, seediness, anxiety decay, declining values, and difficulty in living and loving our society'" (WILDER apud REGIS, 2011, p. 10). At the turn of the century, the *contemptus mundi* topos was substituted by the "social justice" topos. Regis explains that

“this is the assumption that ‘literature, regardless of when it was written, speaks to our present condition’ and critics deploying this topos seek ‘in that [...] connection [between literature and life] avenues toward social justice through advocating social change’” (Idem). The refusal by critics of deploying either of these topoi marks them “as outliers, Pollyannas, and as critics remiss in our critical study” (REGIS, 2011, p. 10). The critics who do make use of these topoi relate the lack of both attitudes in romance novels to its “lamentable simplicity”. This leads to another of Regis’ corollaries, that “we owe the romance a just consideration of its happily-ever-after or happy-for-now ending” (2011, p. 11). She explains that the body of work which serves as corpi for most of the critics, “the late twentieth-century popular romance novel written in English” offer a combination of romance and comedy, despite the absence of the second genre in the name (Idem). Regis points that “the much-derided happily-ever-after (...) is an important marker of comedy, which traces a fictional society’s movement from a beginning state of disorder to a final order” (2011, p. 11). This evolution of society is always comparative, the society at the end is more just than the one at the beginning of the narrative, however, “the new order is rarely (I am tempted to say never) a complete solution to society’s ills or a righting of all social injustices” (Idem).

The discussion above contains the guiding values of the study presented in this work: to be aware of how notions of complexity and simplicity influence my analysis and to make my stand on this topic clear and detailed; recognize that my corpus is not representative of the genre as a whole and maintain my conclusions centred on the selected works of fiction; and maintain awareness of the genre’s history and the implications of the infamous happy ending. This being established, the objective of this work is to explore the ways in which the romance novel’s “formula”, or narrative structure, relates to issues regarding the female hero’s journey to self-discovery, personal fulfilment and to what extent it may aid or hinder that journey in the contemporary novel *Outlander*, by Diana Gabaldon, first published in 1991. The text is divided into three main chapters. The first one aims to delineate the early history of the genre through two different novels, Richardson’s *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847). This will serve not only to contextualize the history of the genre but also as a measuring tool for the analysis of the heroic journey in *Outlander*. The second chapter starts with the cultural and historical context of the genre in the second half of the

twentieth-century, pointing the ways in which it has affected the narrative structure and the values depicted in the novels. This is especially useful in the analysis of *Outlander* as it was published a few years after the boom of the romance novel genre in the United States and is directly affected by the changes that occurred in the two previous decades. For the analysis of *Outlander*, I have selected four of the eight essential elements defined by Regis. This selection was made with the theories of heroic journey and of archetypal patterns as a guiding north, that is, the elements chosen stand to have the biggest direct relation to the stages of the journey and have the most direct relation to the female hero's growth as an individual. The third chapter delves in the heroic journey of Claire, the hero of *Outlander* and seeks to identify the ways in which the points of the journey related to the four essential elements influence for good or bad her process of self-discovery and development as a full individual. The journeys of Jane and Pamela will also be discussed in terms of the genre's evolution in values and narrative tropes in hopes of answering question regarding the generalized assumption that all romance novels reinforce patriarchal values, do not challenge the status quo, misrepresent women, and restrict the female hero's development.

In the introduction to *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (1981), Annis Pratt explains that "our desire for responsible selfhood, for the achievement of authenticity through individual choice, comes up against the assumption that a woman aspiring to selfhood is by definition selfish, deviating from norms of subservience to the dominant gender" (1981, p. 6). This clash between what women desire and what society expects of them is never more apparent than in the literature created by women. At times it is as obvious as the reasons why this tension exists, other time it is necessary to wade through the muddle of traditional values to see the tension hidden under the surface. In no other genre is this dichotomy as complex as in the romance novel, those narratives that tell us of the courting and betrothal of couples in love who live happily ever after. Concurrently, we have depictions of traditional values such as marriage, we also have female heroes<sup>1</sup> challenging the status quo by working traditionally male professions, refusing to abandon their career for a possible partner, and choosing not to have children.

The main critics of the genre claim that works of fiction that portray traditional values, such as heterosexual marriage, are patriarchal by default due to the values it

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<sup>1</sup> The expression. "female hero" is preferred here to the traditional term "heroine" because the latter is usually associated to a set of submissive actions and positions.

expresses. Germaine Greer claims that “All romantic novels have a preoccupation with clothes” and that “the traits invented for him [the hero of the romance she discusses] have been invented by women cherishing the chains of their bondage” (2006, p. 202). What the critics fail to consider is the fact that the simple act of writing about women as third dimensional, complex beings is in itself an act of rebellion.

As Pearson explains,

any author who chooses a woman as the central character in the story understands at some level that women are primary beings, and that they are not ultimately defined according to patriarchal assumptions in relation to fathers, husbands, or male gods. Whether explicitly feminist or not, therefore, works with female heroes challenge patriarchal assumptions. In addition, both traditional and contemporary works with a female hero typically depict her primary problems as outgrowths of the culture’s attitude about women and of women’s economic and social powerlessness (1981, p. 12).

A female character who marries but refuses to quit her job is portraying feminist values. So is the character who chooses not to have children. In the end, as Pearson has pointed, “despite the authors’ recognition of the destructive effects of traditional womanhood, most works largely take for granted the forces that circumscribe women’s lives” (1981, p. 17). Accusing female writers of perpetuating patriarchal values without a thorough analysis of their narrative is blaming them for their socialization within patriarchal values without actual evidence of their offenses.

All the novels under analysis in this work have, in some way, defied patriarchal values despite depicting a few or more of these values. Richardson’s *Pamela* “implicitly criticizes the doctrine of the inferiority of women and of the non-aristocratic middle class”, despite not going “so far as to attack the double standard or the doctrine of wifely obedience” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 17). Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* makes a killer statement about Jane. It also

“points out how idolatrous it is to worship a man as a god. Jane’s very love for Rochester cuts her off from God and from herself: “He stood between me and every thought of religion, as the eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for this creature of whom I had made an idol.” She flees from him to save herself and her soul.” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 35).

*Outlander* has challenged more than traditional values and has challenged the very definition and structure of the romance novel. In the former, the deviations go from as small as presenting an internal focalization to largely overstepping implicit rules regarding “the standard form of the genre”, as Gabaldon points out on her website (2016).

Criticism of the romance novel genre varies from jabs at the genre itself and its supposed irrelevance and lack of complexity to accusations of perpetuating patriarchal values, the objectification of women, of being mere pornography, an addiction, and a fantasy – as a negative value in opposition to reality. Tania Modleski’s *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982) presents an in-depth analysis of romance novels. It begins by pointing to the bias that permeates mass-culture studies; one finds plenty of critical work glorifying popular male genres, the same, however, cannot be said of popular feminine narratives. Modleski quotes Virginia Wolf’s observation that “football and sport are ‘important’; the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes ‘trivial’ . And these values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction” (2008, p. 1). Considering the varying ways in which women are handicapped in fiction so that men can assert their superiority, Modleski points out that “it is hardly surprising that since the beginnings of the novel the heroine and the writer of feminine texts have been on the defensive, operating on the constant assumption that men are out to destroy them” (2008, p. 3). In the chapter titled *The Disappearing Act*, Modleski discusses the phenomenon of the publisher Harlequin Enterprises, Ltd. and observes that its impressive popularity demands further analysis. At the time of the study Harlequin was already a successful business with over 2,300 titles published, translated into six different languages. Twelve books of serialized stories were released each month, sold on bookstores, supermarkets, pharmacies and chain stores. This, backed up by heavy advertisement on TV, allowed for cheaper books and ensured that every book was a bestseller. According to Modleski, the formula rarely varied, presenting “a young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten to fifteen years” (2008, p. 28).

Modleski claims the complexity of the appeal of romance for women has not been properly acknowledged. She understands that the fact that romance does indeed works to “keep women in their place” does not exclude the possibility that it is “concerned with real female problems” and affirms this duality had thus far been ignored by critics. The



romance fantasy had been previously seen “either as evidence of female ‘masochism’ or as a simple reflection of dominant masculine ideology” (2008, p. 29). As proof she points to one of the pioneers on the critical analysis of romance, feminist theorist Germaine Greer, whose conclusions on the idealized male of the romance and Susan Brownmiller’s “reflection theory”. For Modleski, Greer’s theory places the blame solely on women and assumes a freedom that may not exist in a patriarchal context. In the other extreme, in Brownmiller’s theory, women have no participation whatsoever in the fantasy creation – when women fantasize about sex it is not theirs but a men’s fantasy. Modleski believes the answer is found between the two extremes.

As Modleski established that romance’s function is to keep women in place while at the same time being concerned with female problems and anguishes, she details how these stories offer readers the opportunity of expressing anger and frustration towards the patriarchy in a safe and restricted way. This revenge takes place when the female hero brings the hero “to his knees” and is the source of the pleasure in reading these types of fiction. Modleski believes Harlequins are read for their management of the contradictions between real life “in which women are presumed guilty (of their own rapes, of scheming to get a husband)”, and the idealized life presented in romance novels (2008, p. 44). This puts women in a situation in which they cannot win, as they become aware of the suspicion surrounding them, they must try to look innocent, which is in itself proof of guilt for the manipulation accusations. This impasse is further magnified by the constant surveying of women by the male eye. For Modleski, women can only be innocent of artfulness away from men which presents a dichotomy as it is men that must be convinced of their innocence. A common ploy, according to her, in Harlequins is to have the hero eavesdrop on the female hero, disguise themselves, and hide "in doorways, behind bushes, in nearby rooms listening, looking, and, finally, loving" (MODLESKI, 2008, p. 44-45).

Another great critic of the romance novel is Janice Radway, whose analysis of the genre, titled *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, first published in 1984, stems from in-person and written interviews of a group of forty-two readers, all customers of a specific bookstore in the fictitious suburb of Smithton. The readers all had the same socioeconomic profile: married, middle-class, and most had children. They also had a similar reading preference for one subgenre of romance novels and selected their readings based on the advice of the store owner. Radway’s corpus of

study of twenty romance novels was selected from the works cited as favourites by the readers during the interviews. She explains that the interviews and selected corpus would provide an analysis to “reveal the crucial generative matrix of the genre *as the readers understand it*” (RADWAY, 1991, l. 1850). The research seems to be more focused on the psychological effects of reading this type of literature and the interaction between reader and fiction than the structure and history of the genre.

Radway claims there is a correlation between reading romance novels and the “social roles of wife and mother” (1991, l. 2123). According to her, the need for outside validation of the female personality, men’s inability to be “completely adequate relational partners”, and the demands of the children who fulfil their unmet needs, it is quite easy to see why women derive pleasure from constantly indulging in the romance fantasy. For the author, “the romance is an account of a woman’s journey to female personhood *as that particular psychic configuration is constructed and realized within patriarchal culture*” (RADWAY, 1991, l. 2121). That is, it works as a symbolic demonstration and exemplification of a process common amongst women. The reproduction in romance of “real female needs” and successful fulfilment of them endorses for the reader the inevitability and desirability of the “institutional structure within which those needs are created and addressed” is (Idem). From the interviews, Radway concludes that a good romance is light, fun, and escapist. If a story does not fit into that description it is considered bad. The poor evaluation stems from the closeness of these stories to the readers’ lives. The reading of romance novels for this group is done to escape an exhausting life, thus the desire for reading material that tells stories opposite to it.

# 1 RICHARDSON AND BRONTË IN THE HISTORY OF ROMANCE NOVEL

Romance Novel is a literary genre whose name is formed out of the junction of two terms that may mean different things, in different contexts. For the sake of clarity, it is advisable to define the meaning of the expression in the context of the present thesis. The word “Novel” – which comes from “novelty” – refers to the new literary genre that rises in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, starting with adventure, or epistolary, or picaresque narrative prose texts. The “newness” of the novel lies in the fact that the narrative point of view is set from the perspective of a common person, rather than from a member of the aristocracy. Also, the novel is more committed to a realistic and true-to-life presentation of the facts narrated. The novel substitutes for a previous (verse) literary genre, Romance, that was more open to magical forces and to symbolical representation (WATT, 1963). In our contemporary use of the expression “Romance Novel”, however, the word “Romance” means a love story, and the word “Novel” comprises both the periods of the novel (18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards) and romance (medieval literature).

What we understand today as Romance Novel has a long tradition to it, having started as male narratives on how female rebelliousness and sexuality triggered disgrace and suffering. The aim of this thesis is to consider some gender issues in female behaviour. The timespan considered ranges from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, to determine in what ways women protagonists adapt or deviate from the pattern of behaviour that is expected from them. The chapter starts by contextualizing the romance novel, in light of Pamela Regis’ categorization of the genre, as presented in the work *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003). Next, Regis’ formula is tested in two foundational romance novels, *Pamela: Or Virtue Rewarded*, written by a male author, Samuel Richardson, in 1740, and *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*, written by Charlotte Brontë, a female author, in 1847.

## 1.1 CONTEXTUALIZING ROMANCE NOVEL

In his work *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, Ian Watt traces “the relation between the growth of the reading public and the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth-century England” as well as “the new climate of social and moral experience” of that time (1963, p. 7). His text reminds of the fact that the book is, ultimately, a commodity as any other, as he dwells on the economic conditions of the reading public. The price of a novel – considerably cheaper than the international literature printed in expensive folios – could “feed a family for a week or two” (WATT, 1963, p. 43). The critic comments that “the novel in the eighteenth century was closer to the economic capacity of the middle-class additions to the reading public than were many of the established and respectable forms of literature and scholarship, but it was not, strictly speaking, a popular literary form” (WATT, 1963, p. 43).

It is within this context that the circulating libraries gained popularity after the establishment of the first one, in London, in 1740. They made reading more affordable, Watt tells us that “subscriptions were moderate: the usual charge was between half a guinea and a guinea a year, and there were often facilities for borrowing books at the rate of a penny a volume of three pence for the usual three-volume novel” (1963, p. 44). Most of these libraries stocked all types of literature, however, novels were their main attraction and “there can be little doubt that they led to the most notable increase in the reading public for fiction which occurred during the century” (WATT, 1963, p. 44). It was also the popularization of the circulating libraries that led to an increase in the number of readers from lower social classes, a fact highly criticized at the time. Perhaps worse than the lower classes having access to literary content was the fact that the lower prices on books made it possible for women to consume the literature that was being published. Watt points that

The distribution of leisure in the period supports and amplifies the picture already given of the composition of the reading public; and it also supplies the best evidence available to explain the increasing part in it played by women. (...) Women of the upper and middle classes could partake in few of the activities of their menfolk, whether of business or pleasure. (...) Such women, therefore, had a great deal of leisure, and this leisure was often occupied by omnivorous reading (1963, p. 45).

In addition to these voracious readers of the upper and middle class, there were two other “large and important groups of relatively poor people who probably did have time and opportunity to read - apprentices and household servants, especially the latter”

(WATT, 1963, p. 48). Watt tells us of the astounding number of contemporary complaints regarding the increase in “literary pretensions” from the lower classes. Despite the complaints, with the exception of these two classes, the reading public of the eighteenth century did not go much lower than the tradesmen and the shopkeepers, which in itself is an important change, as “it is probable that this particular change alone, even if it was of comparatively minor proportions, may have altered the centre of gravity of the reading public sufficiently to place the middle class as a whole in a dominating position for the first time” (WATT, 1963, p. 49).

Contemporaries worried about the influence of booksellers and the marketization of literature and “the novel was widely regarded as a typical example of the debased kind of writing by which the booksellers pandered to the reading public” (WATT, 1963, p. 56). Watt, however, points that with further analysis of the works being promoted by booksellers “we find that their bias was primarily for large works of information (...) and many other historical and scientific compilations, which they commissioned on a lavish scale” (1963, p. 57). Despite not having any direct influence in the success of the novel, the booksellers’ involvement in the transfer of the control of literature from patrons to the selling market

“assisted the development of one of the characteristic technical innovations of the new form - its copious particularity of description and explanation – and made possible the remarkable independence of Defoe and Richardson from the classical critical tradition which was an indispensable condition of their literary achievements” (WATT, 1963, p. 57-58).

Their break with the literary status quo went beyond style, permeating their very vision of life. For Watt, however,

Ultimately (...) the supersession of patronage by the booksellers, and the consequent independence of Defoe and Richardson from the literary past, are merely reflections of a larger and even more important feature of the life of their time - the great power and self-confidence of the middle class as a whole. (...) This is probably the supremely important effect of the changed composition of the reading public and the new dominance of the booksellers upon the rise of the novel; not so much that Defoe and Richardson responded to the new needs of their audience, but that they were able to express those needs from the inside much more freely than would previously have been possible (1963, p. 61).

As Tompkins points out in *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (1961), another source of criticism against the novel were the literary critics, and “during the years that followed the death of Smollett, last of the four great novelists of the mid-eighteenth century, the two chief facts about the novel are its popularity as a form of entertainment and its inferiority as a form of art” (1961, p. 1). Tompkins, like Watt, takes note of the influence of the itinerant libraries in the popularization of reading as a leisure activity and, particularly, its role in the development of women readers. She tells us “the booksellers, who had been shy of the libraries at first, soon found their account in them, for the increasing wealth, leisure and refinement of the middle class had turned women into readers” (TOMPKINS, 1961, p. 2). Whatever the critics thought of the novel, its popularity was undeniable. For Tompkins, “it nourished the imaginations of a great many people with food which they found pleasant” and this was “the chief, perhaps the only justifiable interest of this obsolete, tenth-rate work, and research moves gladly away from questions of lineage and classification to inquire what attractions these novels offered, and to what emotions they appealed” (1961, p. 69).

Despite Tompkins’ mourning over the death of the “four great novelists of the mid-eighteenth century”, she provides valuable insight on not only the influence of women as readers, but also on their role as important contributors to the development of literature. She calls to attention that

The whole question of the relation in which women stood to literature was receiving a good deal of attention in the ‘seventies. It was, of course, part of the wider, perpetually re-canvassed question of the learned woman. That a woman should write was not new; there had always been single spies; but soon after the middle of the century the battalion advance, and before a generation is over, women of all ranks are writing, from the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Craven down to the Bristol milk-woman and a farmer’s daughter in Gloucestershire (TOMPKINS, 1961, p. 118-119).

The author points towards both the improvement in the education of women and the popularity of the novel as “the liberating and stimulating forces” behind this outpour of literary production by the female population (TOMPKINS, 1961, p. 119). For the critics, this contribution was received “with sympathetic indulgence” (Idem) as “there was a very real belief in the civilizing function of women in society, and to this was added the hope that womanly delicacy and purity, imported into literature, might supplement the robust

virility of eighteenth-century utterance” (TOMPKINS, 1961, p. 124). This, of course, became a problem when, during the Victorian period, women began writing female characters who killed their husbands, abandoned their families, and refused to conform to their roles as wives and mothers.

In *Tradition and Displacement in the New Novel of Manners*, the first chapter of *Chick Lit: The New Woman's Fiction* (2006), Stephanie Harzewski traces a gendered pattern in the critical history of devaluation of the novel, and later of the popular romance. In her analysis, Harzewski divides the early novel in two kinds, one of realism, celebrated by the critics, and one of amorous intrigue, criticized and unappreciated. The gendering of this criticism stems from the fact that one type was associated with male and another with female sensibilities and values. Harzewski says that

“the history of the novel in English is a history of secession and appropriation from the romance [the French prose romance]. Critics cast the early novel reader as they did the romance reader - that is, as a vulnerable female. This gendering persisted throughout the eighteenth century and carried well into the next” (2006, p. 32).

In the eighteenth century, prose romance was the centre of many debates regarding the “woman writer's moral and financial status as well as the genre's educational and entertainment benefits, especially in regard to women readers” (HARZEWSKI, 2006, p. 31). The same cannot be said of the novels written by men, as

In the works of Richardson and Fielding, critics found merit, morality, and a male authorial model. Claiming Richardson and Fielding enabled critics to begin to define the "English" novel and separate the novel from the prose romance's French affiliations. The latter form was coded as feminine; the former as masculine. This marked the triumph of realism over novels of amorous intrigue, deemed unrealistic because they were inappropriately factual (HARZEWSKI, 2006, p. 32).

## **1.2 PAMELA REGIS' DEFINITION OF ROMANCE NOVEL**

Before any in depth discussion surrounding the romance novel as a genre can take place, it is necessary to ensure that boundaries have been delineated. What I mean by this is it should be clear what exactly is addressed as a romance novel in this analysis and what are the limits of that definition. Pamela Regis' definition of the romance novel, as

presented in *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, will be the starting point for the present analysis. This, of course, is not the only definition of romance novels or of romance available in literary theory and criticism. Robert Ellrich and Northrop Frye, among many others, have defined romance as a broader genre and critics such as Janice Radway and Kay Mussell have attempted to differentiate the subgenre romance novel from the broader body of works previously studied.

Before Regis' definition and plot division can be explored, however, we will observe some of the previous definitions, to better understand Regis' reasonings and my choice of her definition as the basis for this analysis. Regis comments on the complications involving the terms "romance" and "novel". There have been many different definitions for both words in literary history, and some of them intersect. Regis explains that "the term 'romance' is confusingly inclusive, meaning one thing in a survey of medieval literature, and another, not entirely distinct, in a contemporary bookstore" (2006, p. 19). She also points that "if 'romance' presents one set of confusions to the romance novel's definition, then 'novel', that relatively new form that now dominates literature, confuses in a different way. Is a novel a romance or are the two forms distinct?" (REGIS, 2006, p. 20).

In *Anatomy of Criticism* (2000), Northrop Frye discusses romance through the notions of myth and archetype. He claims that "the mode of romance presents an idealized world" (FRYE, 2000, p. 151) and

the complete form of the romance is clearly the successful quest, and such a completed form has three main stages: the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero. (...) Thus the romance expresses more clearly the passage from struggle through a point of ritual death to a recognition scene that we discovered in comedy (FRYE, 2000, p. 186-187).

Frye places romance as a dialectical form, with the focus on the hero – to whom the reader's values are aligned – and his enemy's conflict. This places the hero as a stand in of the "mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world" (FRYE, 2000, p. 187). Frye's view of romance is not a very positive one as he oversimplifies romance by saying



The characterization of romance follows its general dialectic structure, which means that subtlety and complexity are not much favoured. Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly. Hence every typical character in romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him, like black and white pieces in a chess game (2000, p. 195).

The oversimplification is not the only point to notice in Frye's definition. He explains that the "recognition of a new born society rising in triumph around a still somewhat mysterious hero and his bride" is "the archetypal theme of comedy" (FRYE, 2000, p. 192). Frye also points that

the reward of the [hero's] quest usually is or includes a bride. This bride-figure is ambiguous: her psychological connection with the mother in an Oedipus fantasy is more insistent than in comedy. She is often to be found in a perilous, forbidden, or tabooed place (...) and she is, of course, often rescued from the unwelcome embraces of another and generally older male, or from giants or bandits or other usurpers (2000, p. 193).

Both statements are technically correct, but they fail to encompass those romances that depict the quest of female heroes. Regis' theory uses some terms from Frye's discussion which, in turn, are based on theories regarding the hero's journey. Therefore, it is relevant to see how the journey theory can help us better understand the romance novel. It is also important to highlight the fact that traditional theories regarding the hero's journey do not encompass the case of the female hero, as they are all male centred and women are seen either as enemy or prize in these traditional analyses. In their feminist reworking of the heroic journey, *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*, Pearson and Pope discuss those aspects that are unique to the female hero and debunk the long-held belief that "the female protagonist and her real-life counterparts seldom travel beyond the protective environment of the home" (1981, p. 8). They also point

the female hero's very heroism calls into question the metaphysics of much of contemporary literature. The male central characters of contemporary literary works usually are anti-heroes in a hopeless and meaningless world; they view themselves and all humanity as powerless victims of metaphysical nothingness and technological, bureaucratic society. In contrast, female characters are increasingly hopeful, sloughing off the victim role to reveal their true, powerful, and heroic identities (PEARSON, 1981, p. 13).

Although their work does not analyse romance novels and romantic love is identified as one of the myths to be overcome during the female hero's journey, the authors point that "occasionally (...) the love story ends with an egalitarian relationship between two people, each of whom has stopped repressing the qualities society reserves for the other sex" (PEARSON, 1981, p. 175).

John Cawelti, in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, first published in 1976, also offers a definition of what he calls 'the romance'. He tells us that "the crucial defining characteristic of romance is not that it stars a female but that its organizing action is the development of a love relationship, usually between a man and a woman," and that "the moral fantasy of the romance is that of love triumphant and permanent, overcoming all obstacles and difficulties" (CAWELTI, 2014, p. 41). Cawelti also differentiates the 'romantic tragedy' from the 'formulaic romance': the latter presents a story with a happy ending; the former are "more sophisticated types of love story sometimes end in the death of one or both of the lovers, but always in such a way as to suggest that the love relation has been of lasting and permanent impact" (2014, p. 42). Still on the subject of formulaic romance, the author states that

Since romance is a fantasy of the all-sufficiency of love, most romantic formulas centre on the overcoming of some combination of social or psychological barriers. A favourite formulaic plot is that of the poor girl who falls in love with some rich or aristocratic man, which might be called the Cinderella formula. Or there is the Pamela formula, in which the heroine overcomes the threat of meaningless passion in order to establish a complete love relationship. Another more contemporary formula is that of the career girl who rejects love in favour of wealth or fame, only to discover that love alone is fully satisfying (CAWELTI, 2014, p. 42).

Cawelti's title suggests what he calls the romance genre will be explored as deeply as the adventure and mystery genres, however, the actual discussion on the romance takes place as a brief part – less than two pages – of chapter two, titled "*Notes Toward a Typology of Literary Formulas*". The romance novel genre is narrowed down to three simplified "formulas" that are less sophisticated types of love stories - if we are to use his words - and are "the feminine equivalent to the adventure story" (CAWELTI, 2014, p. 41). His definition of the romance, however, goes directly against his definition of the

adventure story where he says “the interplay with the villain and the erotic interest served by attendant damsels are more in the nature of frosting in the cake. The true focus of interest in the adventure story is the character of the hero and the nature of the obstacles he has to overcome” (CAWELTI, 2014, p. 40). Cawelti’s definition, in addition to making judgements of value, is reductionist.

In the preface of *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, Pamela Regis affirms that “their [critics of romance novels] conception of the range of the romance novel, of the true boundaries of the genre, is inadequate in that they mistake a part – a few texts – for the whole – for the entire genre. Other critics speak from an incomplete knowledge of the form itself” (2003, p. xii). Starting from the principle that lack of knowledge about the genre is one of the limitations in previously published critical studies, Regis goes on to develop what she calls the “eight essential elements” of the romance novel, through the analysis of famous and popular romance novels published throughout history. She defines the romance novel as “a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines” (2003, p. 19); and divides the plot into eight core elements that must be present in a work of fiction for it to be considered a romance novel:

a definition of society, always corrupt, that the romance novel will reform; the meeting between the heroine and the hero; an account of their attraction for each other; the barrier between them; the point of ritual death; the recognition that fells the barrier; the declaration of the heroine and hero that they love each other; and their betrothal (REGIS, 2003, p. 14).

Regis explains these eight core elements using Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), as an example of a classic work that falls into the definition, and “Kathleen Gilles Seidel’s *Again* (1994), to demonstrate the continuity of the form and its vitality in the hands of a popular novelist” (REGIS, 2003, p. 28). Because the goal of the present analysis is to observe the ways in which the genre has evolved through time, I will present the core elements using both Richardson’s *Pamela* and Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*.

According to Regis, there are eight narrative events that establish the basic structure of the romance novel. Without them, “the work is not a romance novel” (REGIS, 2003, p. 38). In addition to the eight essential elements, Regis also identified three accidental or non-essential elements that can appear in a romance novel, but that are not

necessary for a work of fiction to be considered one. They are “the wedding, dance, or fete; the exile of a scapegoat character; and the conversion of a bad or evil character” (Idem). Both these and the essential elements can appear in any order in a narrative and “elements can also be doubled and even tripled in the same scene or action; that is, a single action can accomplish the narrative purpose of two or more elements” (REGIS, 2003, p. 30). All the elements can repeat themselves throughout the narrative, for example, a novel can have more than one proposal scene. Regis also tells us that

In addition, any element can be diminished, so that it is merely reported after it happens “off”; that is, a writer, without dramatizing a certain element, without representing it with action and dialogue, can, in the voice of the narrator or one of the characters, let the reader know that it has happened. Conversely, any element can be expanded to any length and dramatized in detail with action and dialogue, thus becoming a governing element of the novel” (2003, p. 30-31).

### 1.3 FROM RICHARDSON TO BRONTË

Regis explains to us that the society the hero and female hero will challenge during their courtship is defined at or near the beginning of the novel. She says that

this society is in some way flawed; it may be incomplete, superannuated, or corrupt. It always oppresses the heroine and hero. (...) The scene or scenes defining the society establishes the status quo which the heroine and hero must confront in their attempt to court and marry and which, by their union, they symbolically remake” (REGIS, 2003, p. 31).

This defining of society can be a brief sketch of the group they are a part of, or it can be a representation of a much larger society. In Richardson’s *Pamela* the society we are presented is consisted of the Pamela’s co-workers at Mr. B-‘s estates, first at Bedfordshire and then at Lincolnshire. This definition of society is fragmented through the letters Pamela writes to her parents and it is only as she discovers their vices and flaws that we, the readers, gain access to it. Charlotte Brontë, on the other hand, dedicates a good part of *Jane Eyre* to delineating the society in which Jane is inserted and its vices and sins. It is also representative of a much larger problem in Victorian society regarding the education

of poor children and the condition of working women within that society. Also, as we have a traditional narrator in the voice of Jane, who is telling the story years after it took place, we are privier to the intricacies of Jane's situation and of this society.

On her first letter, Pamela tells that "great trouble" that has befallen the household, her mistress has died, however, on her deathbed, she has recommended all her servants to her son and he has made Pamela responsible for his linens so, for the time being, she will remain working at the family's estate. As we read the letters, we learn of Mrs. Jervis, who loves Pamela like a daughter, and of trustworthy Jonathan who takes the letters to and from her parents. All the servants seem to like and admire Pamela for her virtue and honesty. This society is flawed in two ways, first because the people are not who they say they are, and second because they value rank and money more than character and an individual's autonomy. Mrs. Jervis, despite in fact being an ally to Pamela, tries several times to diminish the severity of Mr. B-'s actions, sometimes putting Pamela in even more danger. Jonathan, we learn later on in the novel, had been in Mr. B-'s employ the whole time, intercepting the letters between Pamela and her parents. Despite disagreeing with Mr. B-'s conduct, none of the servants tries to stop him or defends Pamela from his actions, as it is seen as the acts and rights of a man of rank.

The problems with the society in *Jane Eyre* are in some ways similar but are explored on a much deeper and broader level in terms of representation in the narrative. Jane begins her narration when she is still a child, living with her aunt, and follows her through the period she spends in a boarding school through to adulthood. The society she is a part of is flawed in many ways, from early age Jane's existence as an individual is challenged. Her aunt punishes her for defending herself from violence, or simply for being curious and creative. The same repression happens at the school, now in a larger scale. The girls are forced to wear shapeless grey dresses, to cut their hair in men's style, and are deprived of any form of individualization. Once Jane arrives at Thornfield, we are confronted with the same set of societal flaws, Jane's individuality is challenged and her place in society imposes restrictions to how she can conduct her life.

It is also usually close to the beginning of the novel that we have the meeting between hero and female hero, however, it can also be presented as a flashback. At this point "some hint of the conflict to come is often introduced" (REGIS, 2003, p. 31). Pamela

first meets Mr. B–, as far as we know, at his mother’s death bed, when the dying Lady begs to do good by her servants, especially Pamela. After his mother’s death, Mr. B– assures the servants he will take care of them and singles out Pamela, “and for you, *Pamela*, (and took me by the Hand; yes, he took me by the Hand before them all) for my dear Mother’s sake, I will be a Friend to you, and you shall take care of my Linen” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 11). Later on, he also gives her the deceased’s pocket money in the sum of “four golden Guineas, besides lesser Money” and reiterates that if she “was a good Girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a Friend to me” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 12). Her parents reply with (rightful) suspicions regarding Mr. B–’s intentions and warn her, “for what signifies all the Riches in the World with a bad Conscience, and to be dishonest?” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 13). This is a foreboding of what is to come, seen as Mr. B– ends up kidnapping Pamela and keeping her prisoner at one of his estates, after repeatedly trying to rape her. Jane’s first meeting with Rochester is different in the sense that she does not know that the man she meets and aids on the road is in fact her master, which allows to act as naturally and truthfully as she wants. She tells us that she is “in the mood for being useful, or at least officious” when Rochester falls off his horse on an ice patch on the road and, despite his protests, helps him get back on his horse (BRONTË, 2000, p. 98). The trouble being announced in this scene is exactly Jane’s individuality and refusal to back down even when Rochester is rude to her - especially then.

Another element vital to the romance novel is the barrier, that is, the reason female hero and hero should not marry. A lot of times the conflict of the novel is entirely composed of this barrier. It can be external, existing “outside of a heroine or a hero’s mind”, or internal, coming from either of their psyches (REGIS, 2003, p. 32). According to Regis,

External barriers include elements of the setting, especially the society in power at the beginning of the work, as well as the heroine and hero’s family, the economic situation of either or both halves of the couple, and coincidence. Setting includes geography - physical separation is sometimes part of the barrier - as well as society and its rules. (...) Economics includes the income that the heroine and hero can bring to a potential union as well as their prospects for future prosperity. Coincidence includes events, such as a natural disaster, over which the heroine and hero have no control that impede their union. Elements of internal barriers include the attitudes, temperament, values, and beliefs held by heroine and hero that prevent the union (2007, p. 32).

This element is what propels the action of the novel and it gives the author space to explore all manner of aspects

“within the heroine’s mind or in the world itself. Literally any psychological vice, virtue, or problem, any circumstance of life, whether economic, geographical, or familial can be made a part of the barrier and investigated at whatever length the writer sees fit. At stake in the romance novel, then, is more than the marriage” (REGIS, 2003, p. 32).

The surpassing of this barrier means not only freedom to marry, but also “freedom from societal, civic, or even religious strictures” (REGIS, 2003, p. 33). In earlier works this freedom related exclusively to the possibility of marrying the hero, but in more modern works this freedom extends to the female hero’s whole life and releases her to follow professional and personal goals in addition to the happy ending with the hero.

In Richardson’s work, the barrier is a literal restraint. Regis points that “the ideas put into play by the barrier as well as its literal content are Pamela’s liberty and property, including Pamela’s ownership of herself” (2003, p. 65). In the values displayed in the novel, Richardson showed himself very much a product of a time “that was embracing affective individualism with its emphasis on personal fulfilment” (REGIS, 2003, p. 66). *Pamela* was also one of the first novels to explore the psychology of characters, due to its epistolary form, despite presenting barriers that are ostensibly external. In addition to Mr. B–’s kidnapping of Pamela, we also have their different social status as another barrier to their union, Pamela is a servant as Mr. B– an aristocrat – even worse, she is his servant for half the novel. The expectation is that Mr. B– will marry someone of his own station and who has a considerable dowry. A third barrier to Pamela and Mr. B–’s union is Parson Williams, the reverend at Mr. B–’s Lincolnshire estate who learns of Pamela’s status as prisoner and decides the best solution is for her to marry him.

Regis points to geography, property, and money as part of the barrier also. Geography is a barrier in the sense that Pamela’s kidnapping and subsequent imprisonment represent a far more complex barrier than is usually seen with this type obstruction. The more Pamela tries to escape, the more Mr. B– restricts her movements, to the point her shoes and money are taken away so there is no possibility of her escaping beyond the estate’s grounds. Regis surmises all the barriers of Richardson’s work in “B’s inability or

unwillingness to recognize Pamela as a person with rights” (REGIS, 2003, p. 69). Pamela’s refusal to enter a sexual relationship with B outside of marriage relates to her desire to protect her virtue, self-ownership, and self-determination. Her ferocious protection of her virginity goes beyond respecting God’s will and maintaining her parents’ honour, “it is a preservation of her inner self, of her freedom” (Idem). Regis quotes Northrop Frye’s insight into the meaning of virginity in our society, saying it

is to a woman what honour is to a man, the symbol of the fact that she is not a slave. [...]. Deep within the [...] convention of virgin-baiting is a vision of human integrity [...] always managing to avoid the one fate that is worse than death, the annihilation of one’s identity (Ibidem).

In *Jane Eyre*, the initial barrier is self-imposed by Rochester in the form of Blanche Ingram. She is presented to house’s servants as a possible fiancée to their master and Jane sees the match as a certainty despite her self-confessed love for Rochester. This barrier is only removed once Jane exposes her feelings to Rochester by exploding

Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal,—as we are!” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 223).

The removal of this barrier, however, does not mean a clear path to the couple’s happy ending. Jane was not completely wrong in her assessment of Blanche, she was much better suited as Rochester’s bride from a social status perspective.

The second barrier presents itself in Jane’s lack of freedom. This lack of freedom presents itself in different ways throughout the novel. One of them is the inequality of social and economic situations between Jane and Rochester. Jane’s very declaration of love points to their differences when she says, “and if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 223). Later when she asks Rochester to explain their



situation to Mrs. Fairfax, she tells him “I believe she thought I had forgotten my station, and yours, sir” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 232) and Mrs. Fairfax herself warns Jane that “equality of position and fortune is often advisable in such cases” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 233) and that “gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses” (Idem). Their difference of stations is also shown through Rochester’s desire to clad Jane in jewellery and fine clothes and her uneasiness regarding it. Jane tells us “glad I was to get him out of the silk warehouse, and then out of a jeweller’s shop: the more he bought me, the more my cheek burned with a sense of annoyance and degradation” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 236) and she muses

It would, indeed, be a relief (...) if I had ever so small an independency; I never can bear being dressed like a doll by Mr. Rochester, or sitting like a second Danae with the golden shower falling daily round me. I will write to Madeira the moment I get home, and tell my uncle John I am going to be married, and to whom: if I had but a prospect of one day bringing Mr. Rochester an accession of fortune, I could better endure to be kept by him now (Idem).

A second aspect of this lack of freedom is Rochester’s desire to subdue and transform Jane. She hints at uneasiness with the possible changes to come when she reacts to him calling her Jane Rochester, she says “the feeling, the announcement sent through me, was something stronger than was consistent with joy - something that smote and stunned: it was, I think almost fear” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 227). Rochester’s intentions appear in his peculiar word choice, he wants to “put the diamond chain round” her neck and likes “the sense of pliancy” she gives, and he claims, “I mean shortly to claim you – your thoughts, conversation, and company – for life” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 234). He also talks of attaching her to him by a chain, like he has his watch, which, although figuratively, sounds foreboding. Jane, however, quickly realizes the only way to maintain her identity is by fighting his love declarations with her usual realist attitude. She also realizes that to maintain her independence, she must maintain her job. Regis tells us that

Her profession provides the known territory from which to be courted by Rochester. It stands for the family she does not have, for the home she cannot return to, for the financial independence she longs for but has not yet achieved. Jane masters the last apparent barrier element as she asserts herself and places her relationship with Rochester on a more rational footing (2003, p. 88).

Concurrent to the scenes that expose the reasons why the couple should not be together, we have a scene or succession of scenes that expose to the reasons why the couple should marry. Regis explains that

the attraction keeps the heroine and hero involved long enough to surmount the barrier. Attraction can be based on a combination of sexual chemistry, friendship, shared goals or feelings, society's expectations, and economic issues. In modern works, these separate motives get lumped together under the rubric "love." Some romance novels interrogate this notion of love, other simply assume it (2003, p. 33).

There are several scenes in Richardson's work that can be representative of the attraction between Pamela and Mr. B-. The first time this attraction can be seen is after Mr. B-'s last attempt at assaulting Pamela on a Monday night - the closer to success so far. Pamela has a fit and passes out which appears to truly scare Mr. B- and from this point forward he appears to have given up on forcing her to submit to him. On the subsequent Wednesday night, Mr. B- accompanies Pamela at dinner and his pleasant behaviour confuses Pamela, she says "I blush'd, but was glad he was so good-humour'd; but I could not tell how to sit before him, nor to behave myself" (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 211). After dinner Pamela and Mr. B- go for a walk around the pond and it is during this scene that he declares himself to Pamela. As Regis points, "a single action can accomplish the narrative purpose of two or more elements", and that is case with this scene - it is, at the same time, Mr. B-'s declaration of love and a part of the attraction (REGIS, 2007, p. 30). The reason this scene shows the reader why Pamela and Mr. B- should marry is the fact that it is the first time he gives Pamela a voice. He has yet to give her an actual choice about her future, but he finally asks her "Now, *Pamela*, judge for me; and, since I have told you thus candidly my Mind, and I see yours is big with some important Meaning, by your Eyes, your Blushes, and that sweet Confusion which I behold struggling in your Bosom, tell me with like Openness and Candour, what you think I ought to do, and what you would have me do-" (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 213).

A second instance in which the union between Pamela and Mr. B- is shown as something desired comes after Mrs. Jewkes has confiscated Pamela's package of letter to her parents narrating her imprisonment and her thoughts on the situations and people involved. He has read part of Pamela's account and after finding out some of the danger

she had been in while trying to escape and that her suffering was real, he repents and tells her

Come, kiss me, said he, and tell me you forgive me for rushing you into so much Danger and Distress. If my Mind hold, and I can see those former Papers of yours, and that these in my Pocket give me no Cause to alter my Opinion, I will endeavour to defy the World, and the World's Censures, and make my *Pamela* Amends, if it be in the Power of my whole Life, for all the Hardships I have inflicted upon her (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 241).

Pamela, however, is still suspicious due to a letter delivered by a gipsy warning a sham marriage plot on the part of Mr. B— and maintains her wish to return to her parents. After storming out in a rage, Mr. B— decides to finally send Pamela to her parents' home.

The attraction, the reason why Jane and Rochester should be together develops along the narrative as they get to know each other. We learn that Rochester is a stubborn, domineering man, however, Jane, from their first meeting, refuses to give into his command. It is clear that Rochester is interested in the governess, he even chooses her for a confidant regarding Adèle's story and his involvement in it. He tells her so,

Strange that I should choose you for the confidant of all this, young lady; passing strange that you should listen to me quietly (...) as I intimated once before: you, with your gravity, considerateness, and caution were made to be the recipient of secrets Besides, I know what sort of a mind I have placed in communication with my own: I know it is one not liable to take infection: it is a peculiar mind: it is a unique one (BRONTË, 2000, p. 125).

Jane herself feels his receptive posture, telling the reader,

I never seemed in his way; he did not take fits of chilling hauteur: when he met me unexpectedly, the encounter seemed welcome; he had always a word and sometimes a smile for me: when summoned by formal invitation to his presence, I was honoured by a cordiality of reception that made me feel I really possessed the power to amuse him, and that these evening conferences were sought as much for his pleasure as for my benefit (BRONTË, 2000, p. 128).

Their time together is so pleasant that Jane feels like he is a family member instead of employer and their friendship makes so happy she "ceased to pine after kindred" (Idem).

It is the depth of their connection that will make it painfully hard for Jane to leave when necessary and, ultimately, what will reunite them.

An emblematic scene or scenes in the romance novel is the declaration of love between hero and female hero. It can happen at any time during the narrative and its different placement provides different plot possibilities. Regis says that “With the heroine in the centre of the narrative, it usually becomes a story about the courtship, about the choice of a spouse, with the heroine’s declaration scene placed correspondingly late. Often, too, there is a separate declaration scene for the hero and the heroine” (2003, p. 34). In *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, Richardson divides the declaration in two parts. First Mr. B– declares his love for Pamela saying, “All these Accomplishments have engag’d my Affections so deeply, that, as I have often said, I cannot live without you; and I would divide with all my Soul, my Estate with you, to make you mine upon my own Terms” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 213). At this point Pamela hints at having feelings for him, she says “I found I had Need of all my poor Discretion, to off the Blow which this Treatment gave to my most guarded Thoughts” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 215), asks him not take advantage of her “weak Moments” (Idem) and questions “in I should be taught a Lesson I never yet learneth, with what Regret should I descend to the Grave, to think, that I could not hate my Undoer?” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 216). This seems to be enough for Mr. B–, at least for some time because he replies saying she has “given me a Hint that will hold me long” (Idem).

Pamela’s declaration is much less explicit in terms of direct expression to Mr. B–. Once she is on the road home, Pamela is handed a letter from Mr. B– in which he forgives her for her actions and wishes her well. She tells her parents

This Letter, when I expected some new Plot, has affected me more than any thing of that Sort could have done. For here is plainly his great Value for me confess’d, and his rigorous Behaviour accounted for in such a Manner, as tortures me much. And all this wicked Gypsy Story is, as it seems, a Forgery upon us both, and has quite ruin’d me! For, Oh” my dear Parents, forgive me” but I found to my Grief before, that my Heart was too partial in his Favour; but *now*, with so much Openness, so much Affection, nay, so much *Honour* too, (which was all I had before doubted, and kept me on the Reserve) I am quite overcome. This was Happiness; however, I had no Reason to expect. But to be sure, I must own to you, that I shall never be able to think of anybody in the World but him!—Presumption, you will say; and so it is: But Love is not a voluntary thing: *Love*, did I say!—But come, I hope not!—At least it is

not, I hope, gone so far as to make me *very* uneasy: For I know not *how* it came, nor when it began; but creep, creep it has, like a Thief, upon me; and before I knew what was the Matter, it looked like Love (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 248).

To Mr. B— Pamela never openly declares her love, however, her actions seem to be enough of a declaration for him. It is also implicit in the fact that Mr. B— reads all the letter she writes to her parents after they are reconciled.

Jane's declaration to Rochester takes place first, when she is telling him she is going away to Ireland because she supposes he will marry Blanche Ingram. She makes one of her emblematic speeches, telling Rochester

'Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal,—as we are!' (BRONTË, 2000, p. 223).

Rochester responds to this by proposing marriage, but Jane is sceptic and still believes he is promised to Blanche. He tells Jane

'Am I a liar in your eyes?' he asked passionately. 'Little sceptic, you *shall* be convinced. What love have I for Miss Ingram? None: and that you know. What love has she for me? None: as I have taken pains to prove: I caused a rumour to reach her that my fortune was not a third of what was supposed, and after that I presented myself to see the result; it was coldness both from her and her mother. I would not—I could not—marry Miss Ingram. You—you strange, you almost unearthly thing!—I love as my own flesh. You—poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are—I entreat to accept me as a husband' (BRONTË, 2000, p. 224).

His intensity and, especially, his rudeness are what convince Jane of his truthfulness.

The point of ritual death can be said to represent the climax of the barrier, it is the point in the narrative where it seems most impossible for female hero and hero to be together. Regis tells us that “The heroine is often the target of ritual death (...) Often enough death itself, or an event equated with death, threatens or actually transpires at this point when the barrier seems insurmountable. The death is, however, ritual. The heroine does not die” (REGIS, 2003, p. 35). Imagery of death abounds in Richardson’s work, Pamela’s attempt to escape involves a faked drowning, a head injury, and suicidal thoughts. Mr. B— also suffers a symbolic death once he allows Pamela to return to her parents’ home, he falls suddenly ill and tells her “Life is no Life without you” If you had refused me, and yet I had hardly Hoped you would oblige me, I should have had a severe Fit of it, I believe; for I was taken very oddly, and knew not what to make of myself” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 255).

The point of ritual death in Jane and Rochester’s story is the revelation of his living wife right as they are about to marry. The letter Jane had written to her uncle in Madeira reaches him while Mr. Mason is visiting, and Rochester previous marriage is revealed leading to a rush against time from Mason and a solicitor to stop Jane’s marriage to Rochester in time. The existence of a previous union with a living spouse prevents Jane and Rochester from being lawfully married and, as Bertha Mason is insane, Rochester cannot legally divorce her. At this point their union seems impossible. Jane tells us of her situation referring to all sorts of imagery of nature and death. She says

Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent, expectant woman—almost a bride, was a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale; her prospects were desolate. A Christmas frost had come at midsummer; a white December storm had whirled over June; ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hayfield and cornfield lay a frozen shroud: lanes which last night blushed full of flowers, to-day were pathless with untrodden snow; and the woods, which twelve hours since waved leafy and fragrant as groves between the tropics, now spread, waste, wild, and white as pine-forests in wintry Norway. My hopes were all dead—struck with a subtle doom, such as, in one night, fell on all the first-born in the land of Egypt. I looked on my cherished wishes, yesterday so blooming and glowing; they lay stark, chill, livid corpses that could never revive (BRONTË, 2000, p. 261).

The impossibility of their union is certain for Jane, she cannot morally accept Rochester proposal of going away with him to live in France as a married couple without

the actual legal and religious attachment. The ritual death almost becomes a literal one for Jane once she leaves Thornfield. She forgets her belongings in a coach and is left in the middle of the moors. She sleeps outside a few nights, must beg for food and is denied shelter by a maid during a storm night. Jane tells the reader

This was the climax. A pang of exquisite suffering—a throe of true despair—rent and heaved my heart. Worn out, indeed, I was; not another step could I stir. I sank on the wet doorstep: I groaned—I wrung my hands—I wept in utter anguish. Oh, this spectre of death! Oh, this last hour, approaching in such horror! Alas, this isolation—this banishment from my kind! Not only the anchor of hope, but the footing of fortitude was gone—at least for a moment; but the last I soon endeavoured to regain.

“I can but die,” I said, “and I believe in God. Let me try to wait His will in silence” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 296).

She is taken in by the homeowner, whom we later learn to be her cousin St John Rivers and spends several days in bedridden.

Towards the end of the novel we have the recognition scene, that is, the scene where “the new information that will overcome the barrier” is presented (REGIS, 2003, p. 36). Regis tells us “In romance novels, the heroine is at the centre of the recognition scene, where any number of things can be “recognized.” If the barrier has been external, these impediments are removed or disregarded” (2003, p. 36). This recognition takes place, in *Pamela*, when Pamela is returning to her parents’ home and receives two letters from Mr. B–, one forgiving her and recognizing his part in their situation, and another, later in the journey, begin her to come back. The first letter makes her realize the gipsy’s story about a fake marriage was probably a lie and she writes of the second “O my exulting Heart! how it throbs in my Bosom, as if it would reproach me for so lately upbraiding it for giving way to Love of so dear a Gentleman!” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 252). It is also after reading this letter and the one sent to his servant that she realizes Mr. B– is giving her a choice, he could have told the servant to take her back by force, but he made sure to make the decision to come back hers alone and this is what finally fells the barrier.

In *Jane Eyre*, the action surrounding the recognition starts when Jane is closest to giving in to St John’s marriage proposal, she tells him “I could decide if I were but certain,” I answered: “were I but convinced that it is God’s will I should marry you, I could

vow to marry you here and now—come afterwards what would!” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 371). It is at this moment that she hears Rochester’s voice calling her “Jane! Jane! Jane!” (Idem). After this she decides to go back to Thornfield to have news of Rochester since her letters have been unanswered so far. She arrives only to find the manor half burned down and discovers Rochester is living at Ferndean Manor after being permanently injured at the fire. It is when Jane learns of the details of the fire and of the fact that Bertha is dead that the final barrier to her union with Rochester is lifted, he is finally free to marry her. His injuries from the fire also represent the fall of the barrier caused by his desire to dominate her, he is now blind and has had a hand amputated. This in conjunction with her inheritance mean they can finally be together as equals.

The scene romance novels are most famous - and more criticized - for is the betrothal scene, the happy ending. Regis explains it saying

In a scene or scenes the hero asks the heroine to marry him and she accepts; of the heroine asks the hero, and he accepts. In romance novels from the last quarter of the twentieth century marriage is not necessary as long as it is clear that the heroine and hero will end up together. If the betrothal is split into a proposal scene and an acceptance scene, the novel’s focus often turns inward, to confront the internal barrier that prevents the proposal scene from also being an acceptance scene” (2003, p. 37-38).

Richardson develops this scene when Pamela and Mr. B– discuss his sister’s letter in which she disapproves of their union. Mr. B– asks Pamela how she would feel if they were to marry and she rejected from society. He asks, “Should I now marry my Pamela, how will my Girl relish all this?” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 262). Pamela tells him that her only concern is to embarrass him in front of his peers for marrying so low and tells “And if I can, by the most cheerful Duty, and resigned Obedience, have the Pleasure to be agreeable to you, I shall think myself but too happy, let the World say what it will” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 262-263).

There are two betrothals and a marriage proposal in *Jane Eyre*, both betrothals are between Rochester and Jane and the first does not materialize because of the barrier presented by his living mad wife. The marriage proposal comes from St John Rivers, but he is proposing for all the wrong reasons, he wants a missionary wife and not someone he loves, so Jane refuses him despite his insistence. The second betrothal takes place after



Jane courts Rochester in a sense. When they reunite, he is a cripple and blind, she must convince him not only that he is capable of being someone's husband, but also that she still wants him. Their betrothal takes place after she convinces him she wants to marry him, despite his shortcomings

“Ah! Jane. But I want a wife.”

“Do you, sir?”

“Yes: is it news to you?”

“Of course: you said nothing about it before.”

“Is it unwelcome news?”

“That depends on circumstances, sir—on your choice.”

“Which you shall make for me, Jane. I will abide by your decision.”

“Choose then, sir—*her who loves you best.*”

“I will at least choose—*her I love best.* Jane, will you marry me?”

“Yes, sir.”

“A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand?”

“Yes, sir.”

“A crippled man, twenty years older than you, whom you will have to wait on?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Truly, Jane?”

“Most truly, sir.”

“Oh! my darling! God bless you and reward you!”

“Mr. Rochester, if ever I did a good deed in my life—if ever I thought a good thought—if ever I prayed a sincere and blameless prayer—if ever I wished a righteous wish,—I am rewarded now. To be your wife is, for me, to be as happy as I can be on earth” (BRONTË, 2000, p. 294).

## 2 OUTLANDER AND THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

*Outlander* falls into the subcategory of erotic historical romance novel which, according to Carol Thurston, became popular in the 1970s with the publication of Kathleen Woodiwiss' *The Flame and the Flower*, in 1972. Thurston's 1987 study of erotic romance novels published between 1972 and 1985, titled *The Romance Revolution: Erotic Novels for Women and the Quest for a New Sexual Identity*, presented a systematic content analysis of more than 100 romance novels published in that period; assessment by readers of the personality traits of female heroes and heroes in erotic historical romance and erotic contemporary series, using a set of semantic differential (opposing adjectives) scales; and two mail surveys of a national sample of 600 romance readers, conducted in 1982 and 1985. The first three chapters are dedicated to establishing the historical context in the USA for the rising of the romance novel genre in the late 1960s, a history of the genre's predecessors and the strong relationship and exchanges between industry and readers, an identifying characteristic of the genre. The fourth chapter is focused on erotic historical romance and offers the results of a systematic content analysis of more than 50 erotic historical, single-title romances published between 1972 and 1981, as well as readers' assessment of personality traits of female heroes and heroes in this type of romance. This history of the romance novel genre, along with its historical context, is particularly meaningful to an analysis of *Outlander* since it was published in 1991 - right in the aftermath of the changes presented in Thurston's research.

By 1985 paperback romance novels represented 40% of the mass market paperbacks published in the US, "with 20 million readers and close to a half-billion dollars in annual sales" (THURSTON, 1987, p. 16). These numbers were largely influenced by the socio-political events that took place in the country during the 1960s: the civil rights movement, the new women's movement, the so-called sexual revolution, and the national debate over the Vietnam War. These four events "stimulated widespread challenges to traditional authority, institutions, and values" during a time in which a sense of morality and responsibility for the wellbeing of all people and the planet itself was at its highest

(Idem). The cornerstone of this developing moral code was equality of opportunity, which would make self-determination possible for everyone” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 16-17). This belief cemented itself in the form of civil rights legislation, changes in the job market and preservation programs during the sixties and seventies.

Up until 1960 women were constrained from acting out on their sexuality for several reasons, the central one being the risk of pregnancy. The introduction of the birth control pill worked as an “instrument of equalization of the most fundamental kind, becoming both mechanism and symbol in the fight for social and sexual equality, and ultimately political and economic equality” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 17). The statistics showed that only a small percentage of women were achieving orgasm regularly during sex, reinforcing the idea that women were sexually inhibited and inadequate. The creation of the pill, a safe and reliable method of fertility control coupled with the freedom and equality discourse in vogue at the time allowed women to explore their sexuality more freely. It soon became apparent how uninformed and unprepared they were to enjoy their new freedom. The erotic literature available catered largely to male notions of eroticism and acted as “no more than a lesson in anatomy” (Idem). “Our Bodies, Ourselves”, written by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, giving detailed information on “reproduction, venereal disease, abortion, and birth control”, became the bible sexually active women prayed by and revealed a lot more about the female physiognomy than the doctors of the time were supplying their female patients (Ibidem).

It didn’t take women very long to realize that what was considered erotic by men didn’t necessarily match for women, especially pictures of the female body. Thurston quotes Herant Katchadourian and Donald Lunde by pointing out that “The sight of the female genitals is probably as nearly universal a source of excitement for men as any that exists. Paradoxically viewing the male genitals does not seem to excite women as much, even though men fantasize that it does” (1987, p. 18). The Kinsey reports in 1948 and 1953 and Masters’ and Johnson’s research published in 1966, 1967, and 1970 brought to centre stage the discussion about male and female sexuality and shed light on it. Even so there was very little material considered sexually stimulating by women. If, as the studies had suggested, their ability for sexual response was equal or even superior to that of men, why was their sexual experience so different from the male one?

That was the perfect moment for something to fill this void, “something that would provide both a testing ground and a sense of sexual sisterhood, of peer consensus and approval” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 18). Which is why, when it did surge, it was created by women in the form fiction “dealing with female sexual fantasies, behaviour and needs” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 18-19). The early printing of explicit content written by women led to the ‘bodice ripper’ phenomenon which started with the publication of Kathleen Woodiwiss’ *The Flame and The Flower*. Romance novels were being printed before that, but none reached the success and readership of bodice rippers. “These erotic stories about heroines who tried and often succeeded in challenging the male-female power structure were the flip side of the traditional sweet romance (...) and there were very few crossover readers” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 19).

In the 1970s the result of the social turmoil of the 1960s was seen in action when the Supreme Court ruled abortion legal in 1973 and the pressure began for the ratification of the ERA<sup>2</sup>. Two out ten marriages ended in divorce, more than half-million unwed couples were living together, and 44% of women over the age of 16 were in the workforce – making an average of 58 cents to the male dollar – in that year. As the women’s unrest regarding inequality and injustices increased the same could be seen more regularly in erotic historical romance novels. Lynn Bartlett’s *Courtly Love* (1979) hero criticizes the female hero for pretending to be male to compete in a jousting tournament and gets the following response:

‘Is that what you think – that I wish to be a man? . . . Perhaps in some respects you are right. I would have other respect me for myself, not merely because I have a passable face or because my body induces lust in some. I have a mind – I think and feel the same as does a man. Do you think the jests of your men and the old lord’s family when I came here did not hurt me? They did. . . . To be treated like a possession – an object to be used at someone else’s whim, ‘tis degradation I hope you never feel,

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<sup>2</sup> An amendment proposed to the American Constitution. Under American law it is necessary that an amendment be ratified in at least thirty-eight states to be incorporated into the Constitution. Currently, the ERA has been ratified in thirty-seven states. According to the ERA’s website, “The proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) states that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution apply equally to all persons regardless of their sex. After the 19th Amendment affirming women’s right to vote was ratified in 1920, suffragist leader Alice Paul introduced the ERA in 1923 as the next step in bringing “equal justice under law” to all citizens. In 1972, the ERA was finally passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The original seven-year time limit was extended by Congress to June 30, 1982, but at that deadline, the ERA had been ratified by only 35 states, three states short of the 38 required to put it into the Constitution. The ERA has been introduced into every Congress since the deadline”.

m'lord. A woman has as much pride, as much honour as a man, but she is treated as if she had none!' (THURSTON, 1987, p. 20).

The mid-1970s saw a surge in the prosecution of men charged with rape, crisis centres for rape victims were opening across the country, and the women were getting angry at their "perceived vulnerability to this (...) kind of assault" (THURSTON, 1987, p. 21). The same was happening with "heroines in the bodice rippers. (...) In their struggle for equal justice and respect, these heroines fought many a battle for control over their own bodies, not only with lovers or husbands, but also with the Catholic Church" (Idem). The erotic historical romance novel genre enjoyed its success for eight years, during which readers used their money and words to let the publishers know what was acceptable and what wasn't in their favourite works of fiction. They

did not like rapist heroes or 'unrealistic' virgin heroines whose sexual participation often was physically forced or in some other way beyond their control. (...) By 1981 editors at the first Romance Writers of America conference in Houston were passing the word to authors that 'heroines are older and more mature, the hero no longer gets his ultimate thrill from being first, and no more rape!' (THURSTON, 1987, p. 22).

By 1980, 54% of women above 16 years of age were in the workforce, earning 59 cents for every male dollar, 4 of 10 marriages ended in divorce and a million and a half unmarried couples were living together. A Census Bureau Director described this new family organization saying, "the expectation of women now is that they will have a career, marry late, have children, stay home for a period and then resume their careers", something that was soon echoed in the voices of romance novel female heroes (THURSTON, 1987, p. 23).

Thurston highlights that

until the end of 1980 there were basically two types of popular romance stories on the market – historical romances that were issued as single titles by a number of publishers, most of them with "sensuous" content (...) and the contemporary sweet romance lines (...) generically referred to as brand names, series or category books (1987, p. 24).

The stories were written to publishers' guidelines, most had around 200 pages, and were sold through retail stores and reader services (titles were delivered to readers' homes

who chose them by series name, not author or title). Erotic historical romance novels were what Thurston called a

tidal wave that crested in 1979, and, while still near its peak, metamorphosed into an even higher third wave after the sexual element was introduced into series contemporary romances at the beginning of 1981. (...) These new texts contain the erotic element that until 1980 could be found only in the historical romances, but usually without rape or other kinds of violence. Most heroines are older and sexually experienced. They are also career-oriented, with many holding non-traditional jobs which they rarely give up when they marry (1987, p. 24).

Despite historical settings offering a greater potential for fantasizing, it seems there in something just as appealing in “fantasies that carry the potential for becoming reality (...) and the evolution of the ‘liberated’ woman is chronicled with ever increasing breadth and bravado, as the female hero takes full control of her body and her destiny” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 25).

By 1984 there was a myriad of sexually stimulating material for women to choose from in the market according to their individual taste and needs. Female readers’ rejection of rape as a sexual fantasy freed them to “recognize and embrace the role of erotica in developing their own sexuality, and ultimately a sense of self” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 26). Thurston points out that

the very words ‘sense of self’ seem to puzzle many men, perhaps because they have never been without it. But they also have not been defined for most of their lives in terms of their relationship or lack of it to the opposite sex, nor have they been systematically denied their very humanity (1987, p. 26-27).

She furthers this argument by quoting Gerda Lerner,

All women have in common the fact that their history comes to them refracted through the lens of men’s observations and refracted again through a male-centred value system. The historic condition unique to women is that, for more than 5,000 years, they have been excluded from constructing history as a cultural tradition and from giving it meaning. Women have not held power over symbols and thus have been truly marginal to one of the essential processes of civilization (Idem).

In 1985 women were still fighting for passage of the ERA in Congress with no sign of giving up. The nomination of a female vice president in 1984 forced recognition of the changed roles of women in society, a cover story for the U.S. News & World Report

observes that “the new women of the 1980s are slowly showing up in books, films and television shows, appearing as wage earners and family heads instead of as stereotypical bumbling housewives, frustrated man chasers and sexual vamps” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 29). Thurston points out that the paperback romance novels

already had begun doing just that a decade earlier, both reflecting and acting as agent of continuing social change. In the process, they were reconstructing history for women, sending the message to women everywhere that the drive for dignity and respect has motivated and united women for centuries (Idem).

For Thurston, “whether consciously intended or not, some of the fundamental assumptions and values portrayed in these novels (...) match those issuing from the women’s movement” (1987, p. 31) and she concludes the chapter pointing out

that the audiences for erotic romance novels have for the most part been different from and much larger than those for today’s ‘serious women novelists’ [Austen, Brontë, Gaskell, Wharton, Woolf] has been crucial in helping to achieve the kind of changes in women’s lives that have, as Rena Bartos (1979, 272) observed, ‘permeated the hearts and minds of all women, whether or not they themselves have gone to work and whether or not they themselves live in traditional life styles’ (Idem).

The erotic historical romance novel emerged at a time when readers were getting tired of the “submissive and childlike heroine of the regency and domestic romances” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 67-68) and these new stories captured the imagination of female readers with its independent and rebellious women who fought for equality. Thurston explains that

The result was a mass migration of readers that proved to be a one-way street, for no matter the variations in time, place, or story that have appeared since, the strong, independent-minded heroine – a woman bent on being a full-fledged human – has become as essential to the romance as a happy ending (1987, p. 68).

The classifications of these novels “between stories in which the heroine has multiple sexual partners (sweet savagery or bodice rippers) and those in which the hero is her one and only sexual partner (sensual or romantic historicals), were not considered useful” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 71). Unlike suggested by critics, it’s not the number of sexual

partners that marks the types of erotic historical romance novels but “the matter of force versus choice” (Idem). Thurston found that

most heroines in the erotic historical romances examined are independent-minded and strong-willed women determined to overcome the injustices that beset them, even as they refuse to comply with the submissive behaviour expected of their sex. Gentleness and concern for others are characteristics of admirable males, while roughness, cruelty, and selfishness are attributes of undesirable males in nearly two-thirds of the stories. (...) An unexpected number of heroes in the erotic historical romances are androgynous types who are tender, caring, and adaptative enough to understand the strivings of the strong heroines, whom they admire above all others (THURSTON, 1987, p. 72).

Economic independence poses a problem for most female heroes in these novels, which might explain the popularity of Middle Age period stories, especially set in England, due to the women of this time having “effective power and some measure of equality during this period of history” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 74).

A clear difference from the traditional romance is that the female heroes in erotic historical romances don't remain virgins for very long,

“sexual acts are explicitly described in nearly 90 percent of the books examined. female heroes feel sexual needs of a physical nature as strongly as their lovers (...) and are not ashamed to seek satisfaction of those needs. (...) By story's end well over two-thirds of the heroines in these romances have had sexual intercourse without the benefit of marriage, in two-thirds of these with more than one man” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 75).

It doesn't come as a surprise, with the very much contemporary amount of sexual activity the characters engage in during these stories, that “the historical setting does not impede the imposition of contemporary social values and mores, especially those associated with changing sex roles” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 76). Backing up these contemporary social mores in the fact “that in 80 percent of the books the heroine possesses more education than was common to women of her time” and this is a source of admiration and regard from the hero (THURSTON, 1987, p. 77). The search and use of contraception are also fairly common in these stories, even with the constraints of the historical setting, in the form of herbs and sponges. “contraceptives are almost always used without her partner's knowledge, causing him to wonder why she does not conceive, which



he believes will seal his control over her in a more permanent way, and virtually all are attempts to escape domination by men” (Idem).

While most of the novels analysed in the study “conform to the generalized definition of a courtship (...) the fundamental power relationship between men and women has begun to change, or at least to be challenged” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 86). The fact is that the old conventions about romance – “the split female persona” – is the propelling force behind the mass migration of readers to the erotic historical subgenre of romance novels. The female hero who before was the definition of virtue itself now

cares about herself, about her own wants, needs, and goals in life, yet she is never depicted as selfish. For her, the virtues now include self-awareness, in both the emotional and physical sense, and the giving and receiving of sexual pleasure. (...) The customary happy ending now is only possible through the heroine’s emergence as an autonomous individual, no longer defined solely in terms of her relationship to a man (Idem).

Thurston also states that “during its first decade the erotic historical romance served as a kind of testing ground for women readers struggling to find new ways of seeing and thinking about themselves and their place in the world” and concludes the chapter affirming that these novels “mark the first appearance of a large and coherent body of sexual literature for women, providing the opportunity to learn to use sexual fantasy and to explore an aspect of their identities that patriarchal society has long denied women” (1987, p. 87-88).

## 2.1 IS IT, OR IS IT NOT?

Before the analysis of how the four essential elements selected are presented in *Outlander*, it is necessary to answer the question of whether the novel is indeed a romance novel. In “Traveling Through Time and Genre Are the *Outlander* Books Romance Novels?” – an article in the collection *Adoring Outlander Essays on Fandom, Genre and the Female Audience* (2016) – Jodi McAlister discusses some of the more popular definitions of the genre and whether *Outlander* complies to any or all of them. The scope

of McAlister's article, however, encompasses all the novels in the *Outlander* series, which possibly undermines her correct assertion that *Outlander* is indeed a romance novel. A quite conspicuous aspect of the discussions on this topic is the fact that the novel's author, Diana Gabaldon, vehemently denies the possibility of her work fitting the definition of a romance novel. The concern is such that her explanation is presented in her official website frequently asked questions. Despite her long justification as to why none of her works are romance novels, most of her reasoning is debunked under careful analysis. McAlister also points to an interesting aspect of the success of the *Outlander* series,

Gabaldon's thoughts on the matter have not stopped readers from categorizing the novels as romances (...) The first book, *Outlander* (...) won the Romance Writers' of America RITA Award for Best Romance of 1991. The most recent instalment, *Written in My Own Heart's Blood*, won the Goodreads Best Romance of 2014 Award, as well as the Romantic Times Booklovers' award for historical fiction. *Outlander* regularly appears in the top ten of the All About Romance Top 100 Romances, appearing at #3 in 1998, #2 in 2000, #7 in 2004, #4 in 2007, #5 in 2010, and #5 in 2013. *Outlander* appeared at #2 on a 2015 Goodreads list of the top 100 romance novels of all time, and also appeared at #2 on a 2011 list aggregated from Amazon bestsellers and various other top ten lists. On the same list, *Dragonfly in Amber* appeared at #6 and *Voyager* at #8 (McALISTER, 2016, p. 94-95).

Gabaldon's argument involves four main points: she does not guaranty a happy ending, her female hero is older than the hero, there is too much history in the novels, and it is narrated in the first person. When analysing the whole series, these may present a problem, however, when restricting the discussion to the first novel in the series, i.e. *Outlander*, these arguments are easily overturned. The assertion that she does not guarantees a happy ending is valid, however, the fact is that *Outlander* specifically does have a happy ending and, were it not to have, many readers' expectations would have been frustrated as seen by the data provided by McAlister. As to the assertion that Claire is older than Jamie, she is only four years older than him and, as McAlister points out, "heroines who are older than the heroes are certainly rarer in romance than the other way around, but it is by no means a requirement of the genre that the hero be older" (McALISTER, 2016, p. 96). Although it may not be the most popular plot structure in romance novels, as Thurston points out, female heroes older than the hero where already being written back in the nineteen eighties. Talking about Ballantine's Women's Stories for Today series, Thurston describes the process in which the female hero "sheds the man who is unwilling to allow

her to grow and change and encounters the New Man, sometimes younger and sometimes older, who does not need to dominate and control her in order to elevate himself” (THURSTON, 1987, p. 56). The same can be said of the use of the first person, although not very common, it is occasionally used in romance novels and nothing in the definitions existent forbids it. As for the ‘history’ issue, as McAlister points, “historical romance is a very popular subgenre of the romance novel, and novels are regularly set against real historical events using real historical characters” (2016, p. 96).

Regardless of the author or the readers’ opinion on rather *Outlander* is or is not a romance novel, for this analysis, it only needs to comply with Regis’ definition. In addition to the four elements that will be analysed in this chapter – i.e. the definition of society, the barrier, the point of ritual death, and the recognition – *Outlander* presents all the other four elements as defined by Regis. They are the meeting, the attraction, the declaration, and the betrothal. Claire and Jamie first meet right after she goes back in time and is captured by Murtagh, he has a dislocated shoulder and she rearranges it so the clansmen do not end up breaking it. The attraction between the two is shown throughout the narrative, first as friends and then as husband and wife. They have an obvious sexual chemistry and learn to trust each other during the many dangerous situations they find themselves in. The declaration happens towards the end of the novel, whereas the betrothal happens closer to the beginning. The placement of these plot elements in the novel is somewhat different from traditional romance novels and the repetition of some of the elements – such as the point of ritual death – make *Outlander* a richer and more interesting narrative, but a romance novel, nonetheless.

## 2.2 THE FOUR ELEMENTS

As defined by Regis (2007), the first essential element of the romance is the definition of society. This society will be flawed in some way and oppressive to the female hero. *Outlander* presents us with a unique case seen as Claire’s time travelling presents us with two different societies oppressing her, the twentieth and the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century society fails Claire because she has spent five years as a nurse in the war, exercising autonomy and a meaningful profession, and it is now expected that she will

return home to be a housewife and give up her work in health care. The eighteenth century oppresses Claire in a slightly different form, although her medical knowledge is valued, respected, and admired, she can only exercise it freely as a married woman and with a husband that gives her permission to do so.

A lot has been said about the contribution of war work to the emancipation of women, however, people's perception and the actual changes that took place post World War II can be a lot further apart than imagined and these purported changes have been studied under a much more critical view in recent years. It is important to note that although the changes claimed to have happen in societal structures did not change, women's perception of their importance and abilities in society and in their family. The war made it necessary that the biggest number of women possible entered the British workforce and despite government's attempts at keeping mothers and wives at home and to not disrupt men's peaceful retreat, it came a time where even those with small children and husbands were called to volunteer or were hired to do paid war work. The expectation after the end of the war was that these women would return to their home and continue doing the housework they did before the disruption of war. Many of them, however, had no wish to do so. Penny Summerfield, in an essay about the social change caused by war work among British women says that

oral evidence suggests that many women felt that their lives were being profoundly changed even if they did not experience or expect 'emancipation', and that the place of women after the war was not exactly what it had been in 1939, even though many of the war-time changes had been negated (SUMMERFIELD, 1994, p. 95).

Even at the height of war, it was expected that the married women would be available for their husbands on leave, in fact "women's availability [for war work duty] was determined by their role within the home" and "no married woman was subject to call-up under the National Service (Number 2) Act" (SUMMERFIELD, 1994, p. 102). In 1947,

The advent of marriage and devotion to a home and husband in its early years were the most important reasons for giving up paid work (...) However, married women over the age of 35 evidently found the idea of full-time housewifery both less attractive and less binding than younger ones (SUMMERFIELD, 1994, p.108).

Financial independence and the development of friendships at work were cited as the main reasons for wanting to stay in work after the war and as the most significant contributions in personal terms. Surveys conducted in 1943 and 1947 “reported broad public agreement on the idea that men should be breadwinners, that marriage could be an alternative to earning her own living for a woman, and that married women 'should go out to work only if they could carry out their duties to their homes and families’” (SUMMERFIELD, 1994, p. 109). All this information points towards an absence of any real change in the sexual division of labour within marriages as well as in the expectations regarding the place of women in society. The idea that a woman’s first obligation was to the home was barely scratched by the war “and post-war pronatalist arguments about the primacy of motherhood in a woman's life reinforced it, bolstered by theories of the psychological damage to children of married women 'leaving' home to go out to work” (SUMMERFIELD, 1994; p. 112).

Claire had an unusual upbringing, her parents died when she was young, and she was raised by her uncle. He was an archaeologist and had every intention of putting her in a boarding school before heading to the Middle East, but she refused and ended up growing up in dig sites all over the world. In Claire’s own words, she

had gone with him to the Middle East, to South America, to dozens of study sites throughout the world. Had learned to read and write from the drafts of journal articles, to dig latrines and boil water, and to do a number of other things not suitable for a young lady of gentle birth – until I had met the handsome, dark-haired historian who came to consult Uncle Lamb on a point of French philosophy as it related to Egyptian religious practice (GABALDON, 2005, p. 8).

Claire married Frank but continued a nomadic lifestyle due to his scholarly career until the war started and he was assigned to MI6 and her to nurse training. When the war ends, and Claire returns to England and to Frank, she finds herself idling and takes up botany at Frank’s suggestion “To occupy my mind, now that I’ve not got nursing to do” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 9). She’s never had a traditional life, has never created roots in one place so it makes sense that the prospect of doing so after the end of the war would be the cause of some anxiety and internal struggle. She would have felt, even more than her other female colleagues, the personal effects of the social changes necessitated by the war regarding female work.

Claire's first interaction in the novel, placed in the very first page is no coincidence as it marks very clearly the society in which she is inserted and what the expectations are regarding women. She is leaving to meet her husband Frank and runs into the inn owner, Mrs. Baird, when the following interaction takes place:

I met Mrs. Baird in the front hall on my way out. She stopped me with a pudgy hand on my arm and patted at my hair.  
 "Dear me, Mrs. Randall, ye canna go out like! Here, just let me tuck that bit in for ye. There! That's better. Ye know, my cousin was tellin' me about a new perm she tried, comes out beautiful and holds like a dream; perhaps ye should try that kind next time."  
 I hadn't the heart to tell her that the waywardness of my light brown curls was strictly the fault of nature, and not due to any dereliction on the part of the permanent-wave manufacturers. Her own tightly marceled waves suffered from no such perversity (GABALDON, 2005, p. 3).

The issue is that Claire has spent the last five years in the front working as nurse, seeing the most terrible situations, doing meaningful work, and experiencing a great deal of independence if compared to the regular lives of women pre-war. Having their first and second honeymoon in Inverness, Scotland, a small village that values traditional social mores is also meaningful. This is a section of society that holds traditional values and shirks away from anything that deviates from the rule, which makes Claire's personality stand out even more.

The clash between Claire's behaviour and the society she is inserted in does not stop with Mrs. Baird's critics over her hair. A few pages forward we can read Claire's recollection of her first and only meeting with a solicitor called Mr. Bainbridge during one of Frank's visits in search of his ancestor. She starts reminiscing by saying Frank would surely pretend to not have a wife in his current visit to the man and Mr. Bainbridge would have no issue with it. We learn then that while visiting him Claire managed to drop hot tea on his lap. Up until that point the visit had been going perfectly well, Claire had "been demure, genteel, intelligent but self-effacing, well groomed, and quietly dressed – everything the perfect Don's Wife should be" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 15). The tea spilling itself was not a problem, her cursing "Bloody fucking hell! In a voice that topped Mr. Bainbridge's outcry" on the other hand made Frank quite displeased (GABALDON, 2005, p. 16). Their host shows himself quite willing to forget the incident, but Frank insists on

apologizing on behalf of his wife and explains, “with a nervous smile”, she learned “a number of, er, colourful expressions from the Yanks and such” (Idem).

Frank’s nervousness and displeasure for Claire’s out of convention language is explained by Claire’s own sarcastic description of her behaviour so far as that of the “perfect Don’s Wife”. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a Don is “a head, tutor, or fellow in a college of Oxford or Cambridge University”. Considering Frank had just been offered a position at Oxford and that he was presenting himself as a historian in the search for his ancestor, he would have been nervous to display a pleasing image of himself and his wife. If we also take into consideration the historical context in which the story takes place, it would be perfectly plausible to presume he expected Claire to participate in the advancement of his career by being a “perfect” wife. It is clear Claire has no patience for these facades and, as we go on in the novel, we will learn she not only dislikes but is also not very good at social games. She takes things at face value and expects others to do the same. She says what she thinks and expects people to at least accept it, if not respect it. Claire will only learn to navigate the intricate society she finds herself in when she travels back in time and finds herself having to choose between following the rules or dying.

There are two somewhat distinct societies through which Claire circulates in the eighteenth century: the group of clansmen she travels with during several occasions and the society living at and around Castle Leoch. Each group presents a slightly different social reality and, therefore, different rules and levels of autonomy for Claire. This society is flawed in many ways, the first glaringly obvious one is its treatment of women; Claire is threatened with sexual violence quite frequently and there is a constant expectation that she will obey the clansmen without question. With time she is allowed to work so she has something to occupy herself and does not go looking into things she should not meddle. This allowance for work is also linked to a culture of needing all hands on deck to make the castle work, there is to be no idle hands if everyone is to be fed and clothed. Another significant failing of this society is its treatment of Jamie, both from the English as well as the Scottish. We also learn that this is not a democratic group and that those who can lead and those who are wise, follow. As Claire tells us, Colum “was law, jury, and judge to the people in his domain—and clearly accustomed to having things his own way” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 125). Politics are a big part of their everyday life and decisions are

made based on maintaining power in the hands of one specific family and not necessarily on what is best for the people. A good example of this is Dougal's secret support for the Stuarts, which puts the clan's safety at risk.

On the English side we have Randall's torture and obsession with Jamie, which represent not only the corruption of the English army – and society at large we will later find out as he had been protected by a titled gentleman – but also a breach between Claire and Frank. The English convict and punish Jamie for, as he explains the reason for the two whippings he received and caused the scars on his back, “The first time was escape, and the second was theft—or at least that's what the charge-sheet read.” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 86); he had been arrested in the first place for obstruction and when Claire asks what it means, as it does not seem such a serious crime, he explains “Ah. Well, I suppose it's whatever the English say it is. In my case, it meant defending my family and my property, and getting myself half killed in the process” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 87). The Scots failure comes down to the fact that Jamie's uncles, Dougal and Colum, act in unethical and unlawful ways towards him because they perceive Jamie as a threat to their leadership of the clan and to Hamish's place as future leader. At the beginning of the novel we learn of a big Gathering that will take place where many of the clansmen will pledge allegiance to Collum. Unbeknownst to Claire, Jamie plans to avoid the event as his pledge of allegiance and obedience to his uncle would not only mean giving up his father's name but would also make him a viable option for clan leader should the men wish him to be. We also learn further on in the story that Dougal tried to kill Jamie when he returned from France after escaping Wentworth prison.

Claire's first contact with the eighteenth century sets the tone for much of her time spent in that period. On a visit to *Craigh na Dun*, after watching the local women perform a pagan ritual, she touches one of the stones and they begin to scream. “There was a noise of battle, and the cries of dying men and shattered horses” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 49). When she comes to, she tells the reader that she

felt sick and dizzy. I crawled toward a stand of oak saplings and leaned against one to steady myself. There was a confused noise of shouting nearby, which reminded me of the sounds I had heard, and felt, in the stone circle. The ring of inhuman violence was lacking, though; this was the normal sound of human conflict, and I turned toward it” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 50).



The scene before her, of Scotsmen and English soldiers fighting and running, is rationalized as part of a film production and Claire ducks out of their way so as not to get in the way of their work. It soon becomes clear, though, Claire has stumbled onto something much more sinister when she is surprised by “Jonathan Randal, Esquire, Captain of His Majesty’s Eighth Dragoons”, Frank’s ancestor and one of the reasons for their trip to the Highlands (GABALDON, 2005, p. 54).

At first, Claire mistakes him for Frank she, however, soon realizes her mistake. “The hands released me, but even as I turned to him, I sensed something wrong. It was not only the unfamiliar cologne, but something more subtle. I stood stock-still, feeling the hair prickle on my neck. ‘You aren’t Frank,’ I whispered” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 52).

Following this realization, a sequence of violations take place. First, Randall forcefully kisses her and threatens sexual violence; after this, he questions her reputation by accusing her of being a prostitute. It is at this moment that a Scotsman, Murtagh, incapacitates Randall and ‘saves’ Claire. She describes him saying,

My rescuer, if I cared to call him that, was some inches shorter than I and sparely built, but the bare arms protruding from the ragged shirt were knotted with muscle and his whole frame gave the impression of being made of some resilient material such as bedsprings. No beauty, either, with a pockmarked skin, low brow, and narrow jaw (GABALDON, 2005, p. 57).

Murtagh leads her rapidly through the woods and when he ignores her question regarding his identity she raises her voice, an action that is countered with her being pushed off the path they were on and silenced with a hand over the mouth while being yanked down under Murtagh’s body. This action seems a clear indication of sexual assault and Claire tries desperately to get free. She, however, soon hears what Murtagh had heard – English soldiers walking by. When she tries to get their attention, Murtagh knocks her out and she only regains consciousness when they are arriving at a cottage.

At the cottage, the men’s leader, Dougal, questions her regarding her identity and Murtagh explains he found her arguing with Randall about whether she was a prostitute and, after some discussion among the men regarding the matter, Claire tells the reader

Dougal looked me over carefully once more, taking in every detail of cotton print dress and walking shoes.

"I see. And what was the lady's position in this discussion?" he inquired, with a sarcastic emphasis on the word "lady" that I didn't particularly care for. I noticed that while his Scots was less pronounced than that of the man called Murtagh, his accent was still broad enough that the word was almost, though not quite, "leddy."

Murtagh seemed grimly amused; at least one corner of the thin mouth turned up. "She said she wasna. The captain himself appeared to be of two minds on the matter, but inclined to put the question to the test."

"We could do the same, come to that." The fat, black-bearded man stepped toward me grinning, hands tugging at his belt. I backed up hastily as far as I could, which was not nearly far enough, given the dimensions of the cottage.

"That will do, Rupert." Dougal was still scowling at me, but his voice held the ring of authority, and Rupert stopped his advances, making a comical face of disappointment.

"I don't hold wi' rape, and we've not the time for it, anyway." I was pleased to hear this statement of policy, dubious as its moral underpinning might be, but remained a bit nervous in the face of the openly lascivious looks on some of the other faces. I felt absurdly as though I had appeared in public in my undergarments. And while I had no idea who or what these Highland bandits were up to, they seemed bloody dangerous. I bit my tongue, repressing a number of more or less injudicious remarks that were bubbling toward the surface" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 60).

Once again it becomes very clear that the rules of civility Claire is used to do not apply in whatever place it is she has landed on. Physical threat seems to be always imminent and is considered natural by everyone else. It is clear she has yet to understand what has happened and still believes to be lost somewhere in the hills of *Craigh na Dun* in her own time, in fact, the idea of having travelled in time has not even crossed her mind so she continues to behave as she always did. When she interrupts their poor attempts to fix Jamie's dislocated shoulder, performs the procedure successfully, and explains to him about keeping his wound clean and his arm immobilized, the men – except for Jamie himself – are all looking at her "with looks ranging from wonder to outright suspicion" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 64). This will be a continued theme throughout her time with clan MacKenzie.

Claire's introduction to 18th century Scotland was not a pleasant one, however, her settling into Castle Leoch, even if under duress, provided for a less dangerous environment, if not necessarily a friendly one. After tipping the men off about a possible

English ambush at Cocknammon Rock and saving their lives, Claire and the group of Highlanders continue to travel through the night. Their destination, she will later learn is Castle Leoch, the keep of the MacKenzie clan. Once they are in sight of the castle, Claire asks Jamie where they are and when tells it is “the keep of Leoch” she contemplates:

“Castle Leoch. Well, at least now I knew where I was. When I had known it, Castle Leoch was a picturesque ruin, some thirty miles north of Bargrennan. It was considerably more picturesque now, what with the pigs rooting under the walls of the keep and the pervasive smell of raw sewage. I was beginning to accept the impossible idea that I was, most likely, somewhere in the eighteenth century. I was sure that such filth and chaos existed nowhere in the Scotland of 1945, bomb craters or no. And we were definitely in Scotland; the accents of the people in the courtyard left no doubt of that” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 81).

Upon her arrival, she once again takes charge of the situation and after an awkward introduction to Mistress FitzGibbons, tends to Jamie’s new wounds, acquired at Cocknammon Rock. It is during this scene that she first sees Jamie’s back scars and when he tells her the abridged version of how he got them at the hands of Captain Randal, which cements the thought that wherever she was, she was better off than with Randall. She finds confirmation regarding her time travelling during her introductory meeting with Colum – the clan’s leader. She takes advantage of his leaving his office, in which they were meeting, and looks for dated documents:

I found what I supposed I had been looking for in the central drawer. A half-finished letter, written in a flowing hand rendered no more legible by the eccentric spelling and total lack of punctuation. The paper was fresh and clean, and the ink crisply black. Legible or not, the date at the top of the page sprang out at me as though written in letters of fire: 20 April, 1743 (GABALDON, 2005, p. 98).

As Claire begins to settle into castle Leoch, she begins to grasp how the clan is organized and the rules of clan life. On her third day in the castle, she attends hall at Collum's invitation and learns that this is a semi-formal gathering where he settles disputes and gives verdicts on all sorts of matters, including Claire's presence in the castle. Claire tells the reader, “I was fifth on the agenda. A placement, I thought, carefully calculated to indicate to the assembled crowd the importance of my presence in the Castle” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 109). This, of course, is a formality and a way to show the people

they can welcome her, seen as he has already told her in private she will not be returning to Inverness just yet. During his public acceptance of Claire, however, he makes it clear that while she has been welcomed as a guest she is not to be trusted as one of them. In Claire's words,

I didn't miss the emphasis laid on 'English', and neither did anyone else in the hall, I'm sure. So, I was to be tolerated, but held under suspicion. Had he said 'French', I would have been considered a friendly, or at worst, neutral intrusion. It might be more difficult than I had expected to get away from the castle (GABALDON, 2005, p. 110).

We'll learn that Collum as well as Dougal suspect her to be an English spy and want to observe her more closely before releasing her. It is during the same "hall" that we learn of another aspect of this society, its patriarchal structure. Right after Collum gives his decision regarding Claire's stay in the castle, a girl named Laoghaire is brought forth by her father who is accusing her of "loose behaviour" for "consortin' improperly wi' young men against his orders", according to Mistress FitzGibbons, who is acting as translator for Claire as the people are now speaking in Gaelic (Idem). The father wants the girl to be punished for disobedience, but Claire is not able to discern the type of punishment. Collum announces his decision and just as the girl is being brought for punishment, Claire tells us "the crown was watching with the sort of intent excitement that attends public executions and road accidents. Suddenly a Gaelic voice from the back of the crowd rose, audible over the shuffle and murmur" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 111). It was Jamie, offering to take the punishment for the girl and at Claire's exclamation that Collum would not allow it seen as Jamie is injured, Mrs. Fitz explains to her that "'tis allowed for a o' her own clan to offer for her" (Idem). The punishment, Claire finds out was to be being belted in public, but Jamie chooses fists instead of the strap and the sentence will be carried out until blood is drawn. The whole scene unfolds with a certain degree a camaraderie between Jamie and the executioner, as Claire observe, "Amazingly, a wide, impudent grin lighted his face briefly. Stranger still, there was a quick answering smile on the face of the giant" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 112). Claire observes the punishment in apprehension for her patient and after quite a few carefully placed blows tells us

The executioner apparently now decided that the punishment had gone on for the prescribed length of time. He drew back and let fly a massive blow, Jamie staggered and fell to his knees. The two guards hurried

forward to pull him to his feet, and as he raised his head, I could see blood welling from his battered mouth. The crowd burst into a hum of relief, and the executioner stopped back, satisfied with the performance of his duty.

One guard held Jamie's arm, supporting him as he shook his head to clear it. The girl had disappeared. Jamie raised his head and looked directly at the towering executioner. Amazingly, he smiled again, as best he could. The bleeding lips moved.

"Thank you," he said, with some difficulty, and bowed formally to the bigger man before turning to go (GABALDON, 2005, p. 113).

After informing Claire she would be staying in the castle for a while, Collum offers her a position as the clan's healer seen as they had been without one since the last healer died. Both Dougal and Mrs. Fitz have recommended her to Collum as they have seen her working with the injured under several circumstances. She accepts the offer seen as she "was becoming slightly bored with the round between garden, stillroom, and kitchen. I was curious to see what the late Mr. Beaton had considered useful in the way of paraphernalia" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 126). Claire, however, had no illusions regarding her position in the clan as she was certain she was being watched:

When I went to the garden, someone went with me. When I climbed the stair to my room, I would see someone casually glance up from the foot to see which way I turned. And as we had ridden in, I hadn't failed to note the armed guards sheltering under the overhang from the rain. No, I definitely wasn't going to be allowed simply to walk out of here, let alone be provided with transport and means to leave (GABALDON, 2005, p. 128).

Although she is enjoying some amount of freedom and autonomy, Claire is still very much a prisoner at Castle Leoch and under suspicion. So much so that a few days later, Collum invites her for a musical presentation in the hall and plies her with wine before subtly questioning her.

"And as I also told you before," I said abruptly, bringing him out of his momentary inattention, "I'd like to be on my way to France as soon as possible."

"So ye did," he said again, pleasantly, and picked up the decanter with a questioning lift of the brow. I held my goblet steady, gesturing at the halfway point to indicate that I wanted only a little, but he filled the delicate hollow nearly to the rim once more.

"Well, as I told you, Mistress Beauchamp," he said, eyes fixed on the rising wine, "I think ye must be content to bide here a bit, until suitable arrangements can be made for your transport. No need for haste, after all.

It's only the spring of the year, and months before the autumn storms make the Channel crossing chancy." He raised eyes and decanter together, and fixed me with a shrewd look.

"But if ye'd care to give me the names of your kin in France, I might manage to send word ahead—so they'll be fettle'd against your coming, eh?"

Bluff called, I had little choice but to mutter something of the yes-well-perhaps-later variety, and excuse myself hastily on the pretext of visiting the necessary facilities before the singing should start. Game and set to Colum, but not yet match (GABALDON, 2005, p. 145-146).

Colum “was law, jury, and judge to the people in his domain—and clearly accustomed to having things his own way” and she was clearly an unwelcome outlander and suspected spy (GABALDON, 2005, p. 125).

When the time comes for Dougal to go through the MacKenzie land to collect the rent, he tells Claire Colum ordered him to take her and Jamie with him, the reasoning being that he was good with horses and she could be escorted to Fort William so the commander there could help her get to her family in France or, as Claire puts it “to assist *you*, I thought, in determining who I really am” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 199). It makes sense also that they would take someone with Claire’s healing skills as they visit the cottagers as she would be able to help with minor ailments or assist the clansmen in case of injury on the road. Before they reach Fort William, however, Dougal takes Claire to a nearby village where the commander of the garrison is staying to decide what they should do regarding her. Upon arrival they find out that the commander is none other than Jack Randall. Alone with him Claire finds out why Dougal looked unhappy about the identity of the commander as Randall punches her in the stomach as means to find out who she is. When Dougal finds out this took place, he quickly takes Claire from the inn and takes her to a small pool of water in the middle of the forest. They both drink from the water and have a conversation about Randall’s character where Dougal tells her how he’s the one responsible for the scars on Jamie’s back. He explains to her that he’s under order to hand her in for questioning at the garrison and the only way to get out of it is to turn her from an English subject to a Scot through marriage to Jamie. She realizes Dougal is willing to go against a direct order from an English commander and questions his belief regarding her being a spy

"So at least you believe me when I say I'm not an English spy?"  
 "I do *now*." He spoke with some emphasis.

"Why now and not before?"

He nodded at the spring, and at the worn figure etched in the rock. It must be hundreds of years old, much older even than the giant rowan tree that shaded the spring and cast its white flowers into the black water.

"St. Ninian's spring. Ye drank the water before I asked ye."

I was thoroughly bewildered by this time.

"What does that have to do with it?"

He looked surprised, then his mouth twisted in a smile. "Ye didna know? They call it the liar's spring, as well. The water smells o' the fumes of hell. Anyone who drinks the water and then tells untruth will ha' the gizzard burnt out of him" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 252).

As the clansmen become convinced Claire's not a spy and she marries Jamie a shift can be seen in the way they treat her and in her standing among them. After the marriage Jamie gave Claire his dirk and when they're attacked while camping out it is decided that Claire should be taught how to use it properly. Claire tells us,

So I was marched out into the centre of a clearing and the lessons began. Seeing the activity, several of the MacKenzie men came by to investigate, and stayed to offer advice. In no time, I had half a dozen instructors, all arguing the fine points of technique. After a good deal of amiable discussion, they agreed that Rupert was likely the best among them at dirks, and he took over the lesson (GABALDON, 2005, p. 344-345).

Once the training is completed to the men's satisfaction, Claire is given a small sock dagger

I accepted without argument the men's judgment that even the lighter small sword was too heavy for me to wield efficiently. The tiny sgian dhu, the sock dagger, was deemed acceptable, and I was provided with one of those, a wicked-looking, needle-sharp piece of black iron about three inches long, with a short hilt. I practiced drawing it from its place of concealment over and over while the men watched critically, until I could sweep up my skirt, grab the knife from its place and come up in the proper crouch all in one smooth move, ending up with the knife held underhand, ready to slash across an adversary's throat.

Finally I was passed as a novice knife-wielder, and allowed to sit down to dinner, amid general congratulations—with one exception. Murtagh shook his head dubiously.

"I still say the only good weapon for a woman is poison."

"Perhaps," replied Dougal, "but it has its deficiencies in face-to-face combat" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 348-349).

It is clear from both these passages that Claire has gained the esteem and respect of the men she's travelling with. From this point forward, she is treated as a part of the clan

and more than that as one of the men. This attitude goes against the social logic that dictates, as Bourdieu states, that,

It falls to men, who belong on the side of all things external, official, public, straight, high and discontinuous, to perform all the brief, dangerous and spectacular acts which, like the sacrifice of the ox, ploughing or harvesting, not to mention murder or war, mark breaks in the ordinary course of life; women, by contrast, being on the side of things that are internal, damp, low, curved and continuous, are assigned all domestic labour, in other words the tasks that are private and hidden, even invisible or shameful, such as the care of the children or the animals, as well as all the external tasks that are attributed to them by mythic reason, that is to say, those that involve water, grass and other green vegetation (such as hoeing and gardening), milk and wood, and especially the dirtiest, most monotonous and menial tasks (BOURDIEU, 2001, p. 30).

In fact, Claire practices in a very important occupations of the time which put her in contact with most of the people in the keep and earned their respect for her skills as a healer.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the barrier can present itself in different ways, it can be internal, external, or even both. It presents the reasons why the hero and female hero cannot marry. This may relate to their society, geographical distance, economic situation, a previous psychological trauma by either party, or a variety of other issues. In Claire and Jamie's case, the barrier does not prevent their actual marriage seen as it took place out of necessity and convenience. It does, however, prevent them from overcoming their marriage of convenience and becoming a real couple. The main barrier in their case is Claire's previous marriage to Frank. There is also a secondary barrier that works against them, that is twofold, it is represented by Claire's omission of her origins and by Jamie's inability to reconcile with his past. This twofold barrier is shown through several scenes which reveal the intricate relationship between Jamie and his family, and the lengths to which his uncles are willing to go to prevent him from ascending to the MacKenzie's chieftainship. Claire's time travelling and the fact that her husband is not actually dead prevent her from truly giving herself over to their relationship. Her secrets are only revealed after Jamie rescues her from burning at the stake as a witch, but they create obstacles in their relationship throughout the novel. It is also interesting to note that the surpassing of the secondary barriers eventually leads to the overcoming of the main barrier.



Claire and Jamie's union faces both internal and external barriers, they marry not long after meeting, out of necessity, to protect Claire. This marriage of convenience is one of the first barriers they will have to face. In fact, the simple act of getting married will be a barrier of sorts for Claire, as she goes through the struggle of realizing this is her only option to prevent Randall from interrogating her. She is adamantly against the idea of marrying, even to Jamie whom she considers a friend. Once Randall requests that she be handed over to the garrison for questioning, Dougal presents to her the only way for her to be protected,

"Randall's the right to take ye for questioning because you're a subject of the English crown. Well, then, we must change that."

I stared at him, uncomprehending. "What do you mean? You're a subject of the crown as well, aren't you? How would you change such a thing?"

"Scots law and English law are verra similar," he said, frowning, "but no the same. And an English officer canna compel the person of a Scot, unless he's firm evidence of a crime committed, or grounds for serious suspicions. Even with suspicion, he could no remove a Scottish subject from clan lands without the permission of the laird concerned."

"You've been talking to Ned Gowan," I said, beginning to feel a little dizzy again.

He nodded. "Aye, I have. I thought it might come to this, ye ken. And what he told me is what I thought myself; the only way I can legally refuse to give ye to Randall is to change ye from an Englishwoman into a Scot."

"Into a Scot?" I said, the dazed feeling quickly being replaced by a horrible suspicion.

This was confirmed by his next words.

"Aye," he said, nodding at my expression. "Ye must marry a Scot. Young Jamie" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 250-251).

What is interesting in this exchange is the fact that Dougal had already been figuring out how to make Claire inaccessible to Randall even before she met with him at the garrison. This presents two questions, whether Dougal knew the garrison commander was Randall, and still took Claire to meet him, and what is the source of his concern for wellbeing when, for all intents and purposes, he suspects her to be a spy. These questions do not occur to Claire, but we learn later in the narrative that at least one of them occurred to Jamie. They expose the intricacy of clan politics. As he explains to Claire while revealing the complex relationship between him and his uncles,

"Being half MacKenzie is one thing, (...) Being half MacKenzie wi' an English wife is quite another. There isna much chance of a Sassenach wench ever becoming lady of Leoch, whatever the clansmen might think

of me alone. That's why Dougal picked me to wed ye to, ye ken"" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 300).

We never learn whether Dougal knew who the garrison commander was beforehand, however, we certainly know why he was so intent on marrying Claire to Jamie and that it might not necessarily be about her wellbeing.

Claire is adamant about not marrying, no matter who the groom might be, even though she knows this is the only way to keep Randall away. She tells Dougal so at St Ninian's spring, that the situation "ridiculous! Such things don't happen!" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 251), and once he shows up with the marriage contract, she is still putting up a fight, "'But I don't want to marry!' I said stubbornly. It occurred to me as well that mine was not the only point of view involved. I remembered the girl with blond hair I had seen kissing Jamie in the alcove at the castle. 'And maybe Jamie doesn't want to marry me!' I said. 'What about that?'" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 254). This obstinate refusal stems not only from her feelings regarding marriage, but also from her sense of self ownership. Claire is an independent woman and the notion that marriage to a man is necessary to keep her safe sounds not only absurd, but also offensive.

It, however, eventually becomes clear to Claire the marriage is inevitable; so, after signing the marriage contract, she drinks until losing consciousness. Once they arrive at the church where the ceremony will take place on the next day, Claire faces another challenge,

Through the drizzle and mist, I saw the chapel jutting out of the heather. With a sense of complete disbelief, I saw the round-shouldered roof and the odd little many-paned windows, which I had last seen on the bright sunny morning of my marriage to Frank Randall (GABALDON, 2005, p. 263).

Another important aspect of the barrier on Claire's side is the fact that she is out of place, she was born in the twentieth century and somehow travelled two hundred years back in time straight into the eighteenth century. This creates several problems of varying complexity, from something as simple as her not knowing how to go back to stones on her own, to her actions and lack of knowledge about the society she is inserted in putting her own life and others' in danger. A good example of this cultural displacement is the situation that takes place during the gathering of the MacKenzies. Unaware of Jamie's position within the clan, she exposes him to the oath taking ceremony he was avoiding.

Jamie is son to Colum's sister, officially a Fraser, but close enough to the MacKenzies so that, were he to take the oath, he would become a contender for the clan's chieftainship if the clansmen decided so. This puts him in danger because, whether he replaces Colum, or his son Hamish, he represents a threat to his uncles' leadership as he explains to Claire on their wedding night,

"Well, you've seen Colum for yourself. Anyone can see that he'll not make old bones. And wee Hamish is barely eight; he'll no be able to lead a clan for ten years yet. So what happens if Colum dies before Hamish is ready?" He looked at me, prompting.

"Well, Dougal would be laird, I suppose," I said slowly, "at least until Hamish is old enough."

"Aye, that's true." Jamie nodded. "But Dougal's not the man Colum is, and there are those in the clan that wouldna follow him so gladly—if there were an alternative."

"I see," I said slowly, "and you are the alternative." (...)

"Do you mean to be laird, if Colum dies?" It was one way out of his difficulties, after all, though I suspected it was a way hedged with its own considerable obstacles.

He smiled briefly at the thought. "No. Even if I felt myself entitled to it—which I don't—it would split the clan, Dougal's men against those that might follow me. I havena the taste for power at the cost of other men's blood. But Dougal and Colum couldna be sure of that, could they? So they might think it safer just to kill me than to take the risk."

My brow was furrowed, thinking it all out. "But surely you could tell Dougal and Colum that you don't intend... oh." I looked up at him with considerable respect. "But you did. At the oath-taking." (...)

"Aye. If I had sworn my oath that night, chances are I wouldna have seen the dawn" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 295-296).

The barrier, for Jamie, is both internal and external and embodied by the figure of Captain Randall. It is external due to Randall's actions towards his sister and Jamie himself, as well as due to Dougal's interference in the aftermath of Jamie's imprisonment. It is internal because all these actions have a deep psychological effect in the way Jamie sees himself and his perceived responsibility over what happened to his sister Jenny. His first run in with Captain Randall had been during a raid of the English army in Lallybroch. Jamie had arrived home to find soldiers raiding the pantry and his sister being held captive. He tells Claire the details of his arrest and that the least thing he remembers from that day is seeing his sister go into their house with Randall, presumably to have sex with him in exchange for her brother's life. Afterwards Dougal tells him Jenny had gotten pregnant by Randall and then taken up with another English soldier and Jamie had not gone back home since because he felt responsible about what had happened to his sister. Randall's

influence, however, does not end after this situation. Jamie ends up sentenced to two floggings and, after the first one, he tells Claire, Randall summoned him to his office and revealed his true interest,

"He half-apologized to me, saying he was sorry that our relations had been so difficult to the present, and that he wished the circumstances had been different, and so on." Jamie shook his head. "I couldna imagine what he was talking about; two days earlier, he'd been trying his best to beat me to death. When he finally got down to it, though, he was blunt enough."

"What did he want, then?" I asked. Jamie glanced at me, then away. The dark hid his features, but I thought he seemed embarrassed.

"Me," he said baldly. (...)

"He was quite plain about it. If I would... ah, make him free of my body, he'd cancel the second flogging. If I would not—then I'd wish I'd never been born, he said." (...)

"I was already wishing something of the sort," he said, with a glint of humour. "My belly felt as though I'd swallowed broken glass, and if I hadna been sitting, my knees would have knocked together."

"But what..." My voice was hoarse, and I cleared my throat and started over. "But what did you do?"

He sighed. "Well, I'll no lie to ye, Sassenach. I considered it. The first stripes were still so raw on my back I could scarce bear a shirt, and I felt giddy whenever I stood up. The thought of going through that again—being bound and helpless, waiting for the next lash ..." He shuddered involuntarily.

"I'd no real idea," he said wryly, "but I rather thought being buggered would be at least a bit less painful. Men have died under the lash sometimes, Sassenach, and from the look on his face, I thought he meant me to be one of them, were that my choice." He sighed again.

"But... well, I could still feel my father's kiss on my cheek, and thought of what he'd say, and... well, I couldna do it, that's all. I did not stop to think what my death might mean to my father." He snorted, as though finding something faintly amusing. "Then, too, I thought, the man's already raped my sister—damned if he'll have me too." (...)

"So, I took what little courage I had left by then, and said no. I said it loud, too, and added whatever filthy names I could think of to call him, all at the top of my lungs" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 412-413).

For this, we learn, Jamie paid a high price as not only his father died while watching him be flogged, but he was also accused of killing a soldier during a rebellion in prison - Randall's revenge for his refusal. Both his belief that Jenny had been raped by Randall and his consideration of Randall's offer seem to weight heavy in Jamie's mind and prevent him from moving on with his life. During a fight, he tells Claire, "My pride is hurt. And my pride is about all I've got left to me" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 387).

The point of ritual death in *Outlander* almost results in Claire's literal death when she is brought to trial for witchcraft along with Geillis Duncan. Jamie is away with the Duke of Sandringham in an attempt to get a pardon for his crimes. The reason for the witch trial is fairly complex and involves Geillis' involvement with the clan's war chief Dougal. She becomes pregnant with his child and Collum's solution is to have her condemned as a witch. Claire is involved in this plot because Laoghaire hears Collum and Dougal talking and lies to Claire saying Geillis is sick and asked for her. Just as Claire arrives at Geillis' home and discovers she was not called by her friend; a mob of villagers take over the house and arrest them. Their arrest is succeeded by two days trapped in the thieves' hole, described by Claire as a "black stench, alive and wriggling with unseen forms" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 516). Midway through the trial, Ned Gowan, the MacKenzies' solicitor arrives to provide Claire's legal defence.

Ned's arrival puts a temporary halt in the development of the trial. Up until this moment the legal action has been led by a frenzied collective desire to have some sort of punishment for Geillis and Claire, regardless of whether they are guilty or innocent. Ned calms this frenzy by talking for hours without interruption to have the judges evaluate the evidence. He manages to adjourn court until the next day and Claire is taken to an inn instead of the thieves' whole. He also convinces the judges to trial Claire separately from Geillis. He explains to Claire, "Time is on our side, ye see, for the worst of these trials take place in a climate of hysteria, when the soundness of evidence may be disregarded for the sake of satisfyin' blood-hunger" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 535).

Ned's plan is not completely ruined as the judges, after being unable to determine their guilt based solely on evidence, decide to submit both Claire and Geillis to a trial by water. The procedure is explained to Claire by one of the judges, "The suspected witch shall have the right thumb bound by a cord of hemp to the great toe of the left foot. Likewise, the left thumb shall be bound to the right great toe. And then..." (GABALDON, 2005, p. 537). The dunking of the suspected witch into the water is implied by the judge's glance towards the loch and by the two fishermen at the edge of it, on of whom skips a rock into the loch just to show it sinking seconds after. They continue the explanation of the trial saying, "Upon entering the water (...) a guilty witch will float, as the purity of the water rejects her tainted person. An innocent woman will sink" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 538). Claire's reaction to this is not well received and one of the

judges orders them to be whipped. The contrast between Ned's defence of Claire and the way in which the villagers treat her, as well as the absence of anyone else from Castle Leoch at the trial shows the contrast between the initial society presented in the novel, the one that is flawed and corrupt and must be transformed by the female hero and hero's union and the society Claire and Jamie have created for themselves – a network of friends and family members who are willing to face the greater society they are a part of in defence of the couple.

Claire's ritual and nearly literal death comes to a halt in a similar manner as she had wished at the beginning of her trial. Just before Ned's arrival, she muses, "This, I thought cynically, trying to still my panic, was surely where the dashing young hero was meant to ride through the crowd, beating back the cringing townspeople and scooping the fainting heroine up onto his saddle" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 532). Her first hero was not young, neither dashing, but he certainly delayed the proceedings enough so that Jamie – who had been travelling – could come to her rescue. Claire's musing and the imagery surrounding the rescuer hero are at the very least sarcastic, if not derisive, due mainly to her original society being the twentieth century where this sort of situation not only does not happen, but also is not necessary. It is important, however, to remember that Claire is now in the eighteenth century and independently of how strong-minded and capable she is, there are situations in which brute strength and male authority are the only one accepted and respected. Jamie's arrival and his talent for showmanship put a halt to the trial and Geillis, knowing she cannot save herself, gives them the distraction needed to escape.

The subsequent scenes comprise what Regis calls the recognition, that is, the presentation of "the new information that will overcome the barrier" (REGIS; 2007; p. 36). Once they are out of harm's way, Jamie confronts Claire, "'I said before that I'd not ask ye things ye had no wish to tell me. And I'd not ask ye now; but I must know, for your safety as well as mine.'" He paused, hesitating. "Claire, if you've never been honest wi' me, be so now, for I must know the truth. Claire, are ye a witch?'" and her reaction is not exactly reassuring as her description shows,

I tore myself out of his grasp and ran across the clearing. Not far, only to the edge of the trees; I could not bear the exposure of the open space. I clutched a tree; put my arms around it and dug my fingers hard into the bark, pressed my face to it and shrieked with hysterical laughter (GABALDON, 2005, p. 549).

It is at this moment that Claire decides to tell Jamie the truth about her origins and her time travelling. She does so dramatically too,

"Yes," I said, backing away, still heaving with gasps of unhinged laughter. "Yes, I am a witch! To you, I must be. I've never had smallpox, but I can walk through a room full of dying men and never catch it. I can nurse the sick and breathe their air and touch their bodies, and the sickness can't touch me. I can't catch cholera, either, or lockjaw, or the morbid sore throat. And you must think it's an enchantment, because you've never heard of vaccine, and there's no other way you can explain it" (Idem).

This moment is significant for the development of the novel because up until this point both Claire and Jamie had been keeping secrets from each other. It was not until her imprisonment in the thieves' hole that Claire admitted she loved Jamie and it is not until this conversation that Jamie admits he would do anything for her, even commit a sin punishable by damnation to hell.

Jamie's unguarded belief in her story, even in the absence of a reasonable explanation, is very meaningful to the development of their relationship, not only because it indicates his trust in her, but also because it allows him to understand her actions up to that point. It is at this moment that the recognition itself takes place. Confronted with the prospect of going back to her time and to Frank, Claire is paralyzed and unable to decide guided either by logic or by emotion. Although this is the moment in which Claire realizes Jamie is the most suited for her, the recognition has begun before this moment of revelations and declarations. Regis points that in contemporary romances, which usually present an internal barrier, "the recognition scene consists of the heroine understanding her own psyche better. In the course of the book she has learned to know herself and to distinguish sound perceptions from unsound. She sees the hero clearly and realizes her love for him" (2007, p. 37). The actual scene in which Claire decides to stay in the eighteenth century does not depict any of these situations, however, the scenes leading up to it show us Claire's admission regarding her feelings for Jamie and how his actions depict the kind of man he is. The recognition has already happened, and Claire's decision has already been made, even if only subconsciously. This unconscious decision is depicted through her reasoning,

As the evening star began to glow among the black pines' branches, I concluded that in this situation reason was of little use. I would have to rely on something else; just what, I wasn't sure. I turned toward the split rock and took a step, then another, and another. Pausing, I faced around and tried it in the other direction. A step, then another, and another, and before I even knew that I had decided, I was halfway down the slope, scrabbling wildly at grass clumps, slipping and falling through the patches of granite scree (GABALDON, 2005, p. 561).

Despite her affirmation of not knowing what she has decided, she has already admitted to Geillis that she loves Jamie. In addition to that, Jamie's reaction to her confession of being a time traveller supports and strengthens the positive aspects of his character already known to her.

Jamie also suffers a ritual death after he and Claire have returned to Lallybroch and taken their place as lord and lady Broch Tuarach. As revenge for Jamie's interference in his dealings with his son, a cottager of Lallybroch turns Jamie's whereabouts to The Watch – a group of men who police the Highlands in exchange for money. Even though he eventually escapes The Watch, he is captured by a group of English soldiers and taken to Wentworth prison, where he is sentenced to hang. The death sentence itself is a ritual death of sorts, however it does not present the biggest risk to Jamie's life and selfhood as Captain Randall is also at Wentworth prison. Once Claire discovers where Jamie was taken, devises a plan to break him out of prison, and gains access to him, she finds him in a dungeon, half-conscious from being tortured by Randall. She describes him,

Jamie swayed where he sat, eyes closed, the sweat beading in hundreds of tiny pearls on his skin. Plainly he was near to fainting, but opened his eyes for a moment at my voice. Moving with exquisite care, he used his left hand to lift the object he had been cradling in his lap. It was his right hand, almost unrecognizable as a human appendage. Grotesquely swollen, it was now a bloated bag, blotched with red and purple, the fingers dangling at crazy angles. A white shard of bone poked through the torn skin of the middle finger, and a trickle of blood stained the knuckles, puffed into shapeless dimples (GABALDON, 2005, p.711).

Claire is not able to free Jamie before Randall's return and after an intense struggle between Randall's assistant and Jamie – which ended with the later unconscious and Randall holding Claire at knife point – Jamie makes a deal that will have him fighting for his sanity afterwards. While Claire desperately tries to find a way to save him, Jamie is tortured and sexually assaulted by Randall. Once she finally succeeds in rescuing him, she



examines his injuries and Jamie's first description of what took place and his state of mind after the assault is the ritual death he will have to overcome so he and Claire can finally be together,

"I don't want ever to think about it again, but short of cutting my throat, I think I have not got a choice about it. Nay, lass, I dinna want to tell ye about it, any more than ye want to hear it... but I think I am going to have to drag it all out before it chokes me." The words came out now in a burst of bitterness.

"He wanted me to crawl and beg, and by Christ, I did so. I told ye once, Sassenach, ye can break anyone if you're willing to hurt them enough. Well, he was willing. He made me crawl, and he made me beg; he made me do worse things than that, and before the end he made me want verra badly to be dead."

He was silent for a long moment, looking into the fire, then heaved a deep sigh, grimacing at the pain.

"I wish ye could ease me, Sassenach, I do wish it most fervently, for I've little of ease in me now. But it's not like a poisoned thorn, where if ye found the right grip, ye could draw it clean out." His good hand rested on my knee. He flexed the fingers and spread them flat, ruddy in the firelight. "It's not even like a brokenness anywhere. If ye could mend it bit by bit, like ye did my hand, I'd stand the pain gladly." He bunched the fingers into a fist and rested it on my leg, frowning at it.

"It's... difficult to explain. It's... it's like... I think it's as though everyone has a small place inside themselves, maybe, a private bit that they keep to themselves. It's like a little fortress, where the most private part of you lives—maybe it's your soul, maybe just that bit that makes you yourself and not anyone else." His tongue probed his swollen lip unconsciously as he thought.

"You don't show that bit of yourself to anyone, usually, unless sometimes to someone that ye love greatly." The hand relaxed, curling around my knee. Jamie's eyes were closed again, lids sealed against the light.

"Now, it's like... like my own fortress has been blown up with gunpowder—there's nothing left of it but ashes and a smoking roof-tree, and the little naked thing that lived there once is out in the open, squeaking and whimpering in tear, tryin' to hide itself under a blade of grass or a bit o' leaf, but... but not... makin' m-much of a job of it." His voice broke, and he turned his head so that his face was hidden in my skirt. Helpless, I could do nothing but stroke his hair (GABALDON, 2005, p.759-760).

Randall's presumed death during Jamie's escape is not of much importance, as he has been officially condemned to hang and his struggle is internal. This point of ritual death is the most difficult in the narrative to be overcome, more pressing than Jamie's physical wounds are the psychological ones. It is interesting to note that romance novels have a reputation of exposing the female hero to sexual violence – not fully uncalled for as it was part of the genre's early culture – and, although Claire is a victim of it, the one who

is assaulted and suffers the aftermath of it is the hero. This subversion of the genre's older customs, however, is about more than rebelling against sexist tropes. It puts a character that is physically strong and considers himself the leader and action taker in a situation of intense vulnerability and emotional turmoil. This last violent act by Randall forces Jamie to deal with his past and with the looming shadow of Randall's obsession for him.

### 3 HEROISM IN THE ROMANCE NOVEL

Although it is not the objective of the present chapter to analyse the minutiae of the journey the three heroes in the novels studied take and the archetypal patterns present in these novels, these theories will, however, inform the analysis being presented in this chapter. Although they treat the female hero's journey with different terms and, at times, through different interests, Regis, Pearson, and Pratt all deal with the same theme: that of the personal development and self-discovery of female characters throughout the history of the novel written in English.

#### 3.1 THE HEROIC JOURNEY IN WOMEN'S LITERATURE

In her study of archetypes in fiction written by women, Annis Pratt explores the archetypal patterns, that is, the "categories of particulars, which can be described in their interrelationships within a given text or within a larger body of literature" (1981, p. 5). For her, "a dogmatic insistence upon preordained, invariable sets of archetypal patterns would distort literary analysis: one must not deduce categories down *into* a body of material but induce them *from* images, symbols" (Idem). In the introduction the author explains that, prior to the research's start, she expected to find superficial differences from the traditional quest patterns, however, she says,

When I compared quest patterns described by Jung, Campbell, and Frye to plot structures of women's novels, however, I found more than surface variations in image and plot. After close reading of more than three hundred women's novels I discovered, quite contrary to what I had expected, that even the most conservative women authors create narratives manifesting an acute tension between what any normal human being might desire and what a woman must become (PRATT, 1981, p. 6).

Pratt goes on to explain that the experiences shows in women's fiction markedly diverges from that in male narratives due to society's gender prescriptions influence on the female growth ambitions. She points that,

Whether women authors are conscious of this feminism or force pro femina in their novels or not, or whether they are overtly concerned with being and writing about women, the tension between what Apollo intends and Daphne is willing to accept between forces demanding our submissions and our rebellious assertions of personhood, characterize far too much of our fiction to be incidental (PRATT, 1981, p. 6).

Starting from Jung's conceptualization of women, Pratt makes use of a process she says the French feminists are fond of called *volant*, that is, "usurping elements of masculine theory useful to them while discarding the biases" (1981, p. 7). Following their example, Pratt selects the parts of archetypal theory that are useful in the analysis of women's archetypes. The author explains that "women, in Jung's schema, are either exterior or containers for male projections or subordinate elements of the male personality. The feminine quality becomes a prized elixir sought and usurped by the male, to whom real, individual women are objects of use" (PRATT, 1981, p. 8). Pratt explores the concepts of *anima* and *animus*, saying

Erotic, emotional, and associated with the moon, the *anima*, or soul, provides the male with love, mystery, and the completion of his individuality. Logical, spiritual, and in association with the powerful creativity of the sun when present in the male psyche, the *animus* only makes a woman opinionated, masculine, and shrill (1981, p. 7).

She concludes that

Jung's most important contribution to psychology is his recognition that a fully developed individual personality must transcend gender. His recognition of the destructive effects of excessive masculinity and femininity goes beyond the psychological to the social realm, where he attributes our century of total war to the disjunction in the repressed personality (PRATT, 1981, p. 10).

When discussing what she calls the novels of marriage, Pratt explains "the clash between social norms and individual desires persistently underlies archetypal narrative patterns and images in women's fiction. These archetypes remain intact because the

alienation in which they originate still exists” and the modern novels of marriage are still depicting the traditional model of patriarchal economic and political control (PRATT, 1981, p. 42). For Pratt,

freedom to come and go, which involves the right to make decisions about one’s own time, work, and other activities, is a basic element of authenticity. The irony that permeates so much of women’s fiction results from a recognition of the discrepancy between premarital dreams of authenticity and marital realities (1981, p. 45).

This creates patterns that show in “the nineteenth-century author’s desire for affectional marriages and the twentieth-century author’s desire for romantic and erotic ones”, which drives “them to create textual constructions and narrative strategies that emphasize these themes” (PRATT, 1981, p. 44). Pratt also points that, in novels of equal marriage, the relationship does “not begin as “equal” but involve a man and a woman in the process of struggling through societal obstacles to equal partnership” (PRATT, 1981, p. 54).

In the chapter titled *Love Between Man and Woman*, Pratt explores the ways in which this complex relationship is depicted in novels written by women through the time. The author points that

The greatest problem facing the woman writer of love fiction is not so much society’s resistance to the revolutionary subject matter as her own internalization of social norms. Authorial ambivalence in combination with the necessity for drowning out the nature of her hero’s true feeling creates a labyrinthine twisting of attitudes in this genre, most often manifest in the author’s encoding of self-doubt and blame into the hero’s consciousness. Apt to be convinced that whatever happens to her as a result of her eroticism is “her own fault” and that she has her punishments “coming to her,” the hero of this fiction is, like her author, a victim of both external, societal structures and self-flagellation (1981, p. 75).

Pratt also explains that, although the quest for romance has a prominent place in these types of novels, the endings are usually tragic or inconclusive. She explains that,

In women’s love fiction the denouement of social isolation persists, but the *Liebestod*, or love death, traditionally dealt out in medieval fiction for extramarital love often replaces survival. Such punishments continue, even for minor infractions, to the present day, and the cause of the love death is not a mutual passion, as between Tristan and Isolde, but the mere

existence of the hero's eroticism. In addition, the denouements of many love novels that are not strictly tragic nonetheless are clouded by authorial ambivalence towards the subject matter, manifested in split characterization, mixed points of view, and tonal ambiguity - literary effects used to jam messages that the authors fear are antisocial. Even in the very few examples of freely exchanged, reciprocal Eros the heroes remain alienated from their societies (1981, p. 75),

Pratt then draws on Frye's definition of romance, a "genre in which ideal worlds are polarized against abhorrent ones and in which the hero battles for a vision of good against a counter vision or antithetical world of evil" to explain that in women's fiction involving love stories the "world of abhorrence is not so much the world of the seducer as society itself" and that "visions of hell are not needed here, nor even is very much of the gothic: the iron hand of the patriarchy constitutes the evil force against which the heroes struggle in vain" (1981, p. 76-77). More astonishing than these stories were the "violent outbursts occurring upon publication of books in which the heroes err only by quite modestly expressing their love for a chosen mate" (PRATT, 1981, p. 77). The climax of the fight for the acceptance of female eroticism that took place in the twentieth century presents a paradox with its direct opposite result from the initial intention. As Pratt points out,

The turn-of-the-century discovery that women indeed had sexuality of their own led not to greater freedom of sexual choice for Women but to greater insistence that they make themselves sexually active or else risk neurosis, complexes, and an even more severe social ostracism than the accorded celibates in previous centuries. By the 1920s women who did not participate in sexuality were warned that they might become riddled with complexes; men cited popularized Freudianism to aid sexual conquests, and women found that the sexual emancipation they thought that they had won was likely to mean sexual availability (1981, p. 78).

Eros being a natural part of the human personality and its pursue part of the growth process, women find themselves in a contradicting situation. On the one hand, they experience Eros as part of their development; on the other hand, they face societal reproach for experiencing it as it is not considered a natural female trait. Pratt explains that

"the gender norms for feminine behaviour that should provide signposts to adulthood are obscured, destroyed, or reversed. Modern women's love fiction reflects this situation in a disjunction of narrative structure

characterized by quests gone awry, labyrinthine wanderings, and a general tone of confusion and perplexity” (1981, p. 82).

Pratt’s study shows that this authorial ambivalence towards female pleasure fulfilment shows itself in the narrative through detached narrators. She affirms that even “when a woman author dispenses with the on-the-scene and infatuated narrator and plunges into the moils of the action more directly, she still manipulates her point of view to allow for ambivalence about Eros” (PRATT, 1981, p. 83).

The different depictions of heroes in female fiction makes it less difficult to understand the opinions of feminist critics regarding romantic love and their comparison of it to an opiate that “dulls a woman’s self-determination” (PRATT, 1981, p. 84). Despite their conflicting attitudes towards Eros, it persists as “a quest in which women have both a need and a right to participate” (Idem). The trouble remains for those who seek equal marriage as “the breakthrough that Dinah cannot achieve is the birth of the androgynous self, the self beyond “male” and “female” roles” (PRATT, 1981, p. 88). It remains that, as Pratt points,

the woman author and her hero have internalized the social dictates against erotic authenticity to the extent that they experience Eros as a “shadow” or a denial of individual aspirations. Self-censorship, both conscious and unconscious, drowns the revolutionary power of Eros in these novels of love between men and women (1981, p. 89).

Although theorists have considered Eros a positive value throughout history because it “drives both individuals and societies towards a better vision and a richer life”, Pratt points out that “the individuals whom these philosophers describe are assumed, of course, to be male, the object of their passions to be female” (1981, p. 93).

The problem with Eros in a heterosexual romantic environment is to define whether the destructive attributes of romantic love in the female psyche is due to the heterosexual quality of the relationship or to the prescription of gender roles imposed by society which are constantly in conflict. Pratt’s analysis shows that when “there are excessive “male” qualities in a man’s approach to love (...), they are apt to be counterpointed by pathologically submissive “female” behaviours in the woman character” (1981, p. 93). Pratt explains that

In novels of erotic fulfilment, however, we find that characters (...) are described as achieving authenticity after stripping off false roles, breaking through the grid of societally imposed “male” and “female” behaviours. (...) It is no coincidence that the authors of the few equal-marriage novels and novels of erotic fulfilment talk of phoenixes, of androgyny, or of, in Lehmann’s phrase, a “new gender,” a state of consciousness in which individual men and women shed the destructive attributes of gender and reach towards those moments of truly human exchange (1981, p. 94).

This battle between opposing gender norms makes it so that heroes can only transcend them “in asocial and bizarre conditions”, whether it is a novel of development, equal marriage, or of true love (PRATT, 1981, p. 94).

The archetypal patterns are not the only aspect of the quest which vary from male to female narratives, the female quest itself is different from the male one, usually depicted in theoretical studies as explored by Pearson in *The Female hero in British and American Literature* (1987). Classical studies of the hero’s journey affirm that “the basic heroic pattern in all cultures can be reduced to a monomyth” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 3). Jung sees the hero’s journey as a representation of our “inner development towards maturity and psychological wholeness” (Idem). Campbell’s theory on the hero’s archetypal journey presents it in three stages: departure, initiation, and return, each with several sub-stages. For Pearson a fundamental problem can be found at the very definition of the spiritual and psychological archetype as it has been limited “by the assumption that the hero and central character of the myth is male” (1981, p. 4). This hero is also mostly presumed to be white and of the upper class. In this scheme, “racial minorities, the poor, and women are seen as secondary characters, important only as obstacles, aids, or rewards in his journey” (Idem). The insertion of “patriarchal sex-roles assumptions into the discussion of the archetypal hero’s journey” distracts from “the true archetypal elements of the pattern” (Ibidem). For Pearson,

freeing the heroic journey from the limiting assumptions about appropriate female and male behaviour, then, is an important step in defining a truly human – and truly humane – pattern of heroic action. The macho hero represents in only an inadequate and distorted way the archetypal heroic ideal; for this reason, the recognition of female heroism is important, not only as a way of reclaiming women’s heritage, but also as a corrective to the male bias implicit in traditional discussions of the hero (1981, p. 5).



When writing female characters who participate in a heroic quest creativity is a necessity seen as the traditional plots available in literary history are not very ‘female hero friendly’. For Pearson,

any author who chooses a woman as the *central* character in the story understands at some level that women are primary beings, and that they are not ultimately defined according to patriarchal assumptions in relation to fathers, husbands, or male gods. Whether explicitly feminist or not, therefore, works with female heroes challenge patriarchal assumptions. In addition, both traditional and contemporary works with a female hero typically depict her primary problems as outgrowths of the culture’s attitude about women and of women’s economic and social powerlessness (1981, p. 12).

Contemporary literature usually presents the reader male central characters who act as anti-heroes living a meaningless existence who see themselves and everyone else as “powerless victims of metaphysical nothingness and technological, bureaucratic society” ((PEARSON, 1981, p. 13). Female heroes, in opposition, are usually positive and hopeful despite their bleak lives and prospects and show themselves to be strong and capable of dealing heroically with whatever life throws at them.

For the female hero to embark in her heroic quest it is necessary that she identifies the conditions and institutions that constrain her development. In Campbell’s theory on the hero’s journey, “the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo” (2008, p. 289). For men this may be a traditional career or any number of general social conventions. In the case of the female hero there are four societal myths that often confines or damages her and stops her from uncovering her true self and finding a home in the world: “the myth of sex differences; the myth of virginity; the myth of romantic love; and the myth of maternal self-sacrifice” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 18). These representations of the status quo must then be ‘slayed’ or overcome for the hero to embrace and realize her true self. The journey towards self-realization and release from societal constraints depicted in the heroic journey is comprised of three primary stages. In all of them the hero will learn “to trust her full humanity in a world that sees men and women as incomplete complements of each other” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 68).

The first stage of the journey, defined by the hero's departure from the garden of her conventional life occurs when she comes to see "that the people she had previously seen as guides for her life – parents, husbands, religious or political authorities – are her captors" (PEARSON, 1981, p. 68). To gain freedom the hero needs to "leave the garden of dependency on these captor figures, slay the dragon of virginity myth, and assume the role of spiritual orphan" (Idem). In the second stage the obstacle to be surpassed is a seducer. This seducer may be her parents, a lover, a career change, an ideology or any other such obstacle. At first the seducer presents itself as a positive actor of change but in time she comes to realize it is preventing her from fulfilling the quest independently. Pearson notes that "the hero usually meets with a series of seducers of various types – individuals, groups, philosophies – that ultimately leave her disappointed. Each time, she is inevitably thrown back on her own resources" (1981, p. 142). The third stage of the quest is when

the hero either literally or symbolically journeys to her ancestral home in search of her father, and discovers instead that it is her mother with whom she seeks to be rejoined. In this stage, a rescue figure aids the hero in freeing herself from the myth of female inferiority and in identifying a viable female tradition" (PEARSON: 1981, p. 68).

Throughout this journey, the hero learns to trust herself fully when the world sees her as incomplete:

In the first stage, authorities fail her and she draws on her own inner resources for the first time. In the second, she learns that the qualities she believed were masculine and therefore looked for outside herself are also hers. In the third, she learns that these human heroic qualities can be seen within a female tradition. The recognition that she is a hero in a tradition of female heroes is the prerequisite for the reward of community (PEARSON: 1981, p. 68).

As with Regis' essential elements of the romance novel, these stages of the hero's quest are not necessarily apparent in the narrative, Pearson explains that

Any effort to define and illustrate these stages is complicated by the fact that they do not necessarily occur in the same order, nor are they always clearly separate: The same moment or situation in the hero's life may occur over a long period of time. Unlike the literal dragon-slaying in myth, epic, and romance, which usually occur as a single episode, the struggle with the dragon in realistic literature may be depicted as an instant of epiphany or as a gradual process that lasts through several scenes. Furthermore, it may be an isolated experience in the hero's

journey or it may occur simultaneously with one of the other stages (1981, p. 77).

The hero's journey is rarely linear, instead it "is more often a circuitous, labyrinthine one, in which she moves back and forth between dualities, and through an incongruous series of true and false guides and trials" and appearance and reality are difficult to discern (PEARSON, 1981, p. 77). The successes of the quest are often surrounded with self-doubt and the hero is in a constant process of discovery about herself and the world. It is also challenging to discern allies of the quest from enemies. Despite all this, "each seducer, false dragon, wrong road, or seemingly unproductive endeavour or conflict brings her closer to a full understanding of herself" (PEARSON, 1981, p. 77). For Pearson,

In some ways, the metaphors of the departure, the meeting with the god and tempter, and the reconciliation with the mother repeat in varying degrees of complexity the same general pattern, while simultaneously building complexity and depth. In each, the female hero identifies and slays a dragon and wins a related treasure. Thus, the journey is more adequately described by spiral or circular metaphors than as a linear path (Idem).

### **3.2 THE HEROIC JOURNEY IN *OUTLANDER***

The theme of the heroic journey lends itself very well to Regis' definition of the essential elements of the romance novel partly due to her theoretical framework - Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism, based on the theory of myths. The other reason is that the narrative structure of the romance novel genre generally revolves around a quest. It has been defined as a quest for happiness, for romantic love, for one's identity, for a normalization of patriarchal culture, and many others. Whether for freedom or imprisonment, the common theme is always that of a quest. Continuing the discussion of the previous chapter, we are now going into the analysis of the relation between the heroic quest and the four elements previously analysed within the narrative of *Outlander*, as well as explore the similarities and differences between the three novels of the corpi.

The first element to be discussed is the definition of society. According to Regis this society is always corrupt or lacking in some way and will be reformed by the union

between hero and romantic partner. It is important to remember, as mentioned in the introduction, that, due to the genre's origin in the comedic genre, this reform, this improvement, is always in relation to the society presented at the beginning of the narrative. Due to the theme of time travelling, *Outlander* has some particularities regarding this element as it presents the reader with two different sets of societies that are flawed. The definition of society or societies is related to the exit from the garden defined by Pearson. When the reader first meets Claire, she has returned from the front where she has spent over two years working as a nurse and is trying to settle into the role of housewife and to the social requirements of an Oxford professor's wife. As discussed previously, it is clear that this position does not suit her disposition or her aspirations. Despite her "exit" having taken place involuntarily, she was clearly meant to go on the quest. Pearson explains that as the quest is uncertain and frightening,

at least one key factor may distinguish the successful hero from the confused victim: a single voice (...) telling her she is worthwhile, that she has a right to happiness and fulfilment, and that she has ability to find it. This voice parallels the call to adventure and the intervention of supernatural aid that informs the classical hero's departure on the quest (1981, p. 83).

Claire's call to quest takes place when, after witnessing an old Druid sun-feast ritual in a nearby henge, she returns to the stone circle and travels back in time by touching the stones. Just before Claire's actual displacement in time, she hears eerie sounds,

There was a deep humming noise coming from somewhere near at hand. I thought there might be a beehive lodged in some crevice of the rock, and placed a hand on the stone in order to lean into the cleft.

The stone screamed. (...)

I had never heard such a sound from anything living. There is no way to describe it, except to say that it was the sort of scream you might expect from a stone. (GABALDON, 2005, p. 49).

The choice of the word "scream" in reference to the sound emitted by an inanimate and unmoving object is not exactly common, it is usually said rocks grind against each other or make a noise, but only when it is displaced. Stationary objects are not commonly described producing sounds. Screaming is usually reserved for living beings, people to be specific. Taking that into consideration it is reasonable to refer to the stone's scream as a

call for quest of sorts. Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* has a similar call for quest in the form of storms that deeply affect Lucy's life. Pearson also explains that "many times the call is a common event, a change in circumstances, which forces the hero to move beyond the familiar and secure life, and to discover new possibilities in the world and in herself" (1981, p. 85).

It is also important to note that "when the initial separation from convention is involuntary (...) the hero may lose her prescribed place and subsequently have freedom of action and of attitude to discover other possibilities, which her previous assigned position obscured for her" (PEARSON, 1981, p. 88). In Claire's case, before going back in time she was restrained by the requirements of Frank's profession as an Oxford professor, she could not continue working as a nurse and could not express herself freely as seen in the scene containing the incident with Mr Bainbridge. Claire refers to herself as "the Perfect Don's Wife" and the use of capitalization in each word, just as in a given name, is suggestive of a character that she plays when amongst his peers. It also during this scene that Frank tries to apologize for her use of swear words when she drops the hot teapot on Bainbridge's lap explaining that she had spent the last two years in a field hospital. He claims, "I'm afraid my wife picked up a number of, err, colourful expressions from the Yanks and such" to which Claire replies that "Men tend to be very 'colourful when you're picking shrapnel out of them" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 16). Underlying this discussion there is the tension between Claire and Frank regarding the fact that she was the one who went to the front during the war, while he stayed working intelligence for MI6, mostly from an office. What Claire gains after her initial displacement is the possibility of not only exercising her profession but being respected and admired for it. She also gains the freedom of speaking her mind, even though it invariably puts her in danger.

The second element of the romance novel analysed was the barrier, the obstacle or obstacles that prevent the hero and her romantic partner from being together. In Claire's case the two main barriers relate to Frank. One is her previous marriage to him, the other is Frank's ancestral, Black Jack Randall, obsession for Jamie. It does, in some ways, relate to the matter of the obstacles the hero faces during the journey. The first one is the seducer, which can be just one or several. Pearson explains that

Any idea or person may entice the female hero into a new situation that teaches her an important lesson. It may be a parent, a lover, a husband, the past, a new job, a return to academia, the role of virgin or mother or feminist, a political ideology, or a new psychological theory. Such an encounter, however, often restricts the hero so that she cannot act independently to slay the dragon by her own hand, in her own way (1981, p. 143).

Even before her time travelling Claire faces a seducer in the role of Frank. Although the reader has limited access to that period of her life, it is clear that, despite her unusual upbringing, Claire was still very much living her uncle's life, she goes where he goes and does as he says – until she meets Frank. Marriage to him, however, turns out to be a false “agent of fall” as now she finds herself living Frank's life, going where his profession demands, not dedicating herself to her own endeavours. That is until the war, the discovery of a passion for medicine and helping people heal fulfils a need Claire was not even fully aware of. It, however, does not last long, as when the war ends she is expected to settle in Oxford and support Frank's career by participating in and hosting social events for him.

The second seducer Claire encounters is the McKenzie clan and, by consequence, Jamie. The clan represents a seducer in the sense that they first rescue her from a sexual assault by Black Jack, but almost immediately take her as a prisoner of sorts due to their suspicion that she be a spy. Jamie is a seducer in the sense that their marriage of convenience at first presents itself as a positive agent of the quest by protecting her from Black Jack. Despite marriage and, by consequence, becoming a subject of the Scottish crown, being the only way to keep Claire safe, she cannot choose who she is marrying and is not consulted during the decision making. And although Jamie has the most honourable intentions, as he has experienced Black Jack's fury first hand, the fact remains that Claire will have to eventually face Black Jack and so will he. Jamie himself, however, is not a negative agent to Claire's quest as he helps Claire to get in touch with her sexuality in a way she had not achieved with Frank. As Jamie was a virgin at their marriage, Claire gets to be the instigator in their first sexual encounter, she muses after explaining to him about female orgasms, “I felt rather like the Wife of Bath, or a Japanese geisha. I had never envisioned myself as an instructress in the arts of love, but I had to admit to myself that the role held certain attractions” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 288). At the same time the honesty she and Jamie promise to share after they marry allows her to make herself vulnerable and

admit the areas in which she is inexperienced. When Jamie asks her whether women enjoy receiving oral sex she tells him,

“Well, you know,” I said, slowly, “I don’t really know.” I had been doing my best to keep my thoughts of Frank at bay, feeling that there should really be no more than two people in a marriage bed, regardless of how they got there. Jamie was very different from Frank, both in body and mind, but there are in fact only a limited number of ways in which two bodies can meet, and we had not yet established that territory of intimacy in which the act of love takes on infinite variety. The echoes of the flesh were unavoidable, but there were a few territories still unexplored (GABALDON, 2005, p. 289).

It is also clear that despite having his own personal reasons to marry Claire, he admires her and considers her an equal. After their nuptials, Claire wakes up from a nightmare scared and Jamie promptly offers to have their marriage annulled for non-consummation if she cannot tolerate being married to another man, he explains that, despite the witnesses of them having spent the night together, that ““Aye well, witnesses or no, it's only you and me that can say for sure, isn't it? And I'd rather be embarrassed than wed to someone that hated me.”” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 290). In addition, despite the blood vow made during the wedding ceremony in which they declared “I give ye my Body, that we Two might be One” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 267), Jamie’s idea of marriage is somewhat different as he reassures her, ““Don't be afraid," (...)“There's the two of us now”” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 291).

Before the subject of Black Jack Randall can be discussed, it is necessary to introduce the element of the ritual death as he represents both a barrier and is the responsible for Jamie’s ritual death. As previously discussed, the ritual death is the point in the story where it seems most impossible for the couple to be together. Claire’s ritual death occurs when she is brought to trial for witchcraft along with Geillis. The ritual death that presents Claire with a better opportunity from growth, however, is Jamie’s. He is captured, taken to prison, and his uncle Dougal refuses to risk himself and his men for someone he considers beyond rescue. Claire spends weeks on the road with only Murtagh for company, singing and divining fortunes, spreading the word that they are in the area in hopes of the information reaching Jamie. It ends up reaching Dougal and, after his refusal, she manages to rally a few of the men to attempt sneaking Jamie out of prison. Black Jack, however, has already found Jamie and is finally able to torture him for refusing his sexual advances. In

the end it is Claire's determination and strength that saves Jamie, but not before he is sexually assaulted and brutalized by Black Jack. It is at this point that Claire manages to demythologize Jamie as a seducer as up until now he had been a protector and rescuer and now she has taken over those roles. At the same time, her success in rescuing him serves as a destruction of sorts of the myth of female inferiority. In addition to Claire's discovery of her own heroism, Jamie also acknowledges it by making a deal with Black Jack, to let him do what he wants with him sexually in exchange for letting Claire go alive, once she is discovered inside the prison. He agrees to being sodomized not because he has given up, as Claire believes, but because he knows what she is capable of. He tells her under the guise of saying goodbye, "He will let you go because he thinks you are helpless. I know you are not" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 722).

The element of the recognition can be connected to the hero's refusal of conventional values. Pearson explains that "the hero renounces the values of the old world because these values, which may have rejuvenated the culture in times past, have become the new orthodoxy that strangles new growth" (1981, p. 97). In Claire's case she only realizes "the treasure implicit in the exit", that is, the opportunity to grow out of the role of housewife and social 'assistant' to Frank when she is given the option of going back to the twentieth century. Claire realizes that the treasure provided by the exit was the opportunity to create a new life, one in which she is free to be her true self, enjoy a romantic relationship without giving up any aspect of her personality, and to exercise a meaningful profession. Paradoxically, she exerts more social freedom in the eighteenth century than in the twentieth. This of course, is related to Jamie's beliefs on marriage and women. His parents had married out of love and against the wishes of both families, until his mother's death he witnessed a union based on mutual respect and affection. His mother was a very strong-minded woman, the daughter of the MacKenzies chieftain, she challenged her brother's authority to marry the man she desired in place of the one who presented the most advantageous financial deal for the clan. Her sister Jenny had the same strong-mindedness of his mother, neither in the habit of bowing down to the men in their lives. It makes sense that Jamie would be attracted to a woman of similar character. When Claire and Jamie finally find their way to his home, Lallybroach, he tells he married her out of love,



Staring absently out at the driving rain, he said, "There was another reason. The main one."

"Reason?" I said stupidly.

"Why I married you."

"Which was?" I don't know what I expected him to say, perhaps some further revelation of his family's contorted affairs. What he did say was more of a shock, in its way.

"Because I wanted you." He turned from the window to face me. "More than I ever wanted anything in my life," he added softly (GABALDON, 2005, p. 595-596).

### 3.3 THE HEROIC QUEST IN THE ROMANCE NOVEL NARRATIVE THROUGH TIME

Discussing the issue of conciliating romantic love and female heroics, Pearson rightly observes that

Of course, the ultimate problem faced by a writer who uses the romantic love story as a vehicle for exploring a woman's growth toward wholeness and independence is designing an appropriate ending. Most often, the author kills the hero rather than detailing a compromising accommodation to a patriarchal society inimical to female heroism. When accommodation does occur (...) the hero usually has some independence from social opinion – as a farmer or revolutionary – and, in addition, sublimates her sexuality. Occasionally (...) the love story ends with an egalitarian relationship between two people, each of whom has stopped repressing the qualities society reserves for the other sex (1981, p. 175).

She also explains that, "historically, in literature, man is presented as woman's sole source of status and approval. Her only avenue to material and social advantage in the world, he has the power to judge her and, according to his whim, to damn her to poverty, disgrace, and disregard" (PEARSON, 1981, p. 34).

This is the case of Pamela and Mr. B—, who first seduces Pamela – if his sexual violence can be considered a seduction – and subsequently discards her when he realizes she will not be corrupted. After he reads most of her letters to her parents, he invites her to talk and asks for forgiveness for putting her through so much suffering. He is particularly

moved by her attempt to escape by faking a drowning. It is clear Mr. B— expects her to fall readily into his open arms when he tells her

“Come, kiss me, said he, and tell me you forgive me for pushing you into so much Danger and Distress. If my Mind hold, and I can see those former Papers of yours, and that these in my Pocket give me no Cause to alter my Opinion, I will endeavour to defy the World, and the World's Censures, and make my *Pamela* Amends, if it be in the Power of my whole Life, for all the Hardships I have made her undergo (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 241).

His offer of amends is clearly conditional to her feelings and thoughts not causing him unpleasantness. So much so that when she – still suspicious of the possibility of a sham marriage – does not readily accept his offer by claiming “Your poor servant is far unworthy of this great honour; for what will it be but to create envy to herself, and discredit to you? Therefore, sir, permit me to return to my poor parents, and that is all I have to ask”, he reacts in fury (Idem). She tells us “He was in a fearful passion then” and reproduces his reply:

“And is it thus, said he, in my fond conceding moments, that I am to be despised and answered?—Precise, perverse, unseasonable Pamela! begone from my sight! and know as well how to behave in a hopeful prospect, as in a distressful state; and then, and not till then, shalt thou attract the shadow of my notice” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 241-242).

Once she returns to his estate to finally give in and accept his proposal, he rewards her chastity with a marriage in which she is only praised and rewarded when practicing total obedience and submission to him. He warns her “I will not forgive your doubts now” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 262) and that “I love you too well not to be jealous of the least appearance of your indifference to me, or preference to any other person” (RICHARDSON, 2008, p. 266).

In contrast, *Jane Eyre* presents a much more independent hero and a much less traditional view of male and female relationship. The notion of the all-powerful “man-god” – “the male ideal worthy of a woman’s self-sacrifice and worship, for whom she is expected to set aside herself and her life” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 35) – is rejected by Jane. Pearson points out that

It is very difficult indeed to depart from a relationship that, according to conventional wisdom, provides the meaning of a woman’s life, giving her status and security. By and large, heroes leave their mates when they

begin to feel caged, diminished, or actually swallowed up by their husbands (1981, p. 127).

Pamela does not have the strength and independence to leave Mr. B–, even when he releases her from literal imprisonment, she returns at the first sign of interest in his part. It is only for being directly reject by her captor and sent away that Pamela leaves repression. It is not a self-made decision, so much so that she returns to him as soon as he requests it.

Jane is much more independent in this regard, even before meeting Rochester she escapes the oppression of the Reeds and “becomes for the first time truly heroic and human” (PEARSON, 1981, p. 165). She is then sent to Lowood where the myth of virginity is ingrained into girls’ minds from early childhood. Pearson explains that there she

is taught that the good Christian woman should repress the self, sublimate her physical desires, and serve others. According to the morality with which she is indoctrinated, there are two kinds of women. The first is embodied in her friend Helen, a spiritually pure but physically weak classmate who dies with Jane beside her. Helen embodies the virginal ideal of pure spiritual goodness, selflessness, and martyrdom (PEARSON, 1981, p. 165).

Despite suspecting that Helen might be right, at least partially, Jane refuses to conform to this self-sacrificing model. She tells Helen when they first meet “But I feel this, Helen; I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved” (BRONTË, 1999, p. 48). When Brocklehurst visits the school and humiliates Jane in public Jane reacts to Helen’s affirmation that she would not be punished for she was innocent by thinking “Another minute, and she will despise me for a hypocrite,” thought I; and an impulse of fury against Reed, Brocklehurst, and Co. bounded in my pulses at the conviction. I was no Helen Burns” (BRONTË, 1999, p. 55). When Rochester proposes she goes against all her values and becomes his mistress, questioning who in the world cared for her other than him, she resists, telling him

“I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received

by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth—so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane—quite insane: with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot” (BRONTË, 1999, p. 280).

Jane leaves in the middle of the night to save herself after realizing that “Not a human being that ever lived could wish to be loved better than I was loved; and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshipped: and I must renounce love and idol” (BRONTË, 1999, p. 279). Pamela, on the other hand, cannot extricate herself from the clutches of the man-god and only steps away when Mr. B— tells her to, Jane flees as soon as she realizes the danger he represents to her selfhood and soul.

Going against the tradition of novels written by women in the twentieth century in which “marriage has been defined by convention as separate from passion, the experience of being married can entail as much death-in-life as the sexual-romantic existence it is designed to supersede”, *Outlander* presents the reader with a love interest and marriage for which Claire does not need to sacrifice her selfhood or sexuality (PEARSON, 1981, p. 36). Right at the start of the narrative, Claire is looking at a shop’s window and sees a set of vases which leads her to muse “I had never owned a vase in my life. During the war years, I had, of course, lived in the nurses’ quarters, first at Pembroke Hospital, later at the field station in France. But even before that, we had lived nowhere long enough to justify the purchase of such an item” (GABALDON, 2005, p. 7-8). In *The Heroine’s Journey, Claire Beauchamp Reclaims the Feminine*, Patti McCarthy analyses Claire’s heroic journey by exploring the metaphor represented by this vase. She explains that

Full or empty, this vase is a symbol of those things in her life that Claire fears, has denied expression, or needs in order to become a fully balanced individual. This vase represents a journey then, that Claire needs to make in order to recapture something she has lost, something that has disappeared—something she once had, but is now gone (MCCARTHY in FRANKEL, 2016, p. 182).

The absence of such a frivolous item as a vase can be seen as a representation of the state of her marriage to Frank. They are married but have not actually built a life together.

The end of the war presents her with an opportunity to settle into her marriage, however, her attitude towards the role she will have to play is at the very least ambivalent. Thus, comes the need for her quest, she must discover who she is after having been through a long period of independence and solitude, as well as the horrors of war. Mrs. Graham offer to read Claire's tea leaves and palm act as a premonition of what is to come. She tells Claire about her tea reading "Everything in it's contradictory. There's the curved leaf for a journey, but it's crossed by the broken one that means staying put. And strangers there are, to be sure, several of them. And one of them's your husband, if I read the leaves aright" (GABALDON, 2005, p. 32). When reading her palm, Mrs. Graham admits she had never seen a pattern like hers,

"Now, there, a well-marked lifeline; you're in good health, and likely to stay so. The lifeline's interrupted, meaning your life's changed markedly—well, that's true of us all, is it not? But yours is more chopped-up, like, than I usually see; all bits and pieces. And your marriage-line, now"—she shook her head again—"it's divided; that's not unusual, means two marriages..." (...) She squinted nearsightedly at my palm, running a short, ridged nail gently down the deep marriage line. "But most divided lines are broken—yours is forked." (GABALDON, 2005, p. 34).

McCarthy explains that

Saying "no" is a dangerous narrative because it is subversive. It threatens the status quo and those in authority. To reclaim her true self and power our heroine must learn during her journey to say "no," question authority, grow up and make her own path, rather than follow the one prescribed for her (MCCARTHY in FRANKEL, 2016, p. 191-192).

Claire's journey is one to reclaim her independence and her identity, which had begun to fade once her and Frank's lives restarted and would only diminish once she became his dutiful and supportive wife. Her union with Jamie aids in this search for herself as Claire learns to trust and believe in herself, to appreciate her assertiveness and cool mindedness. Jamie teaches her that compassion is a sign of strength and "it is this strength and courage of the feminine (willing to sacrifice for another) that will, in the end, prove to be her core and will ensure" her success (MCCARTHY in FRANKEL, 2016, p. 194-195). In the end, Claire realizes the dragon to slayed was not marriage as an institution but specifically marriage to someone whose expectations regarding the relationship do not match her own.

## CONCLUSION

As stated in the Introduction, women's desire for an authentic and complete existence is in constant conflict with society's expectations of how women should act and think. A woman who prioritizes her own wellbeing above that of her children and partner is considered by many as selfish. Literary representations of womanhood are not exempt of this conflict, in fact, "women's fiction reflects an experience radically different from men's because our drive towards growth as persons is thwarted by our society's prescriptions concerning gender" (PRATT, 1981, p. 96). This study had as its objective to analyse how the narrative patterns of the romance novel genre influence the heroic journey of its protagonists and the possible limitations it might impose on the female search for selfhood.

The first chapter allowed us to explore the origins of the romance novel genre as well as the literary context in which these works were published. This was an important factor for the study because all three novels under analysis have in some way or another been considered as transgressive. Richardson's *Pamela* not only questions issues such as the supposed inferiority of women and the non-aristocratic portion of society, but it also deviates from its contemporary formal rules of the novel form. The use of vulgar language and dialect, the use of the epistolary format, and of a female servant as the narrator and protagonist were all sources of great polemics at the time the novel was published. A century after Richardson, Charlotte Brontë caused a similar level of upheaval with the publication of *Jane Eyre*. As Pratt explains, "all the heroes of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* did to provoke the wrath of the patriarchy was to overtly declare their affections" (PRATT, 1981, p. 77). In fact, the simple that Charlotte was a published author in itself is already a supreme act of transgression.

In the second chapter we were able to observe the climax of the social and literary revolution that took place in America during the seventies and eighties regarding formula fiction focused on a female readership. As pointed by Thurston the wave of the erotic historical romance crested in the first half of the nineteen eighties. Romance novels as a contemporary genre are pointed by Thurston as projecting

a powerful sense of shared experience and unity among women, one that transcends both time and place and is often explicitly articulated (...) In addition, they mark the first appearance of a large and coherent body of sexual literature for women, providing the opportunity to learn to use sexual fantasy and to explore an aspect of their identities that patriarchal society has long denied women (1987, p. 88).

*Outlander* was published in nineteen ninety-one, just six years after the romance novel solidified itself as an important part of the literary market, making it close enough that the after effects of the previous period were still affecting the contemporary production of romance novels, but far enough that it was outside of the frenzy of publication in large volumes of titles. The importance of the romance novel in the market cannot be denied, it holds over forty percent of the mass paperback market in the US alone and has annual sales values in the billions of dollars. *Outlander* was also a big success at the time of its publishing, receiving a RITA award for Best Romance of 1991 from the Romance Writers of America Association<sup>3</sup>. It was also the object of a lot of polemic discussion between the romance novel readers due to the fact it diverged from more traditional romance novel plots, such as the use of first person and Claire being older than Jamie. These differences, however, are what makes it so rich and a good representative of the genre if one were necessary.

As stated in the introduction, one of the main criticisms made regarding the genre is that it works as a reinforcement of patriarchal values and a thwarter of female development. The third chapter looked at the matter of the hero's journey towards self-fulfilment and authenticity, focusing on Claire, but also comparing the differences and similarities of the quests' results for Pamela, Jane, and Claire. A lot has to be taken into account when making a cross-analysis of works published at different time. Even more so when focusing on the feminine condition and analysing works written by both women and men. Although the gender of the writer cannot be solely responsible for the values depicted in it, it is undeniable that Richardson's gender and beliefs are an important part of Pamela's fate. The social and psychological changes taking place before and during the publication of *Pamela*, according to Watt. He explains that they "go far to explain two of

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<sup>3</sup> Source: RWA association website.

the major qualities posed by Pamela: its formal unity, and its peculiar combination of moral purity and impurity” (WATT, 1963, p. 171). Explaining this duality, Watt argues

As a novelist, then, Richardson is capable of considerable objectivity; but it is clear that as a conscious moralist he is completely on the side of Pamela, and it is here that the most serious objections to his novel arise. His sub-title, ‘Virtue Rewarded’, draws attention to the immitigable vulgarity of the book’s moral texture; it is surely evident that Pamela is in any case chaste only in a very technical sense which is of scant interest to the morally perceptive (...) As to Mr B’ vaunted reformation it is difficult to see that it amounts to any more than a promise (1963, p. 177-178).

It becomes clear from chapter three that there has been an evolution both in the representation of women as three-dimensional individuals, but also of their placement in society. The analysis of the heroic quest allowed us to see more clearly this evolution chronologically according to publication. In the first novel, *Pamela*, we have a hero who suffers all sort of abuse from both her supposed suitor and his servants. After resisting repeated attempts of sexual assault, imprisonment, having her money withheld from her, and all attempts at exerting her will thwarted, the hero is ‘rewarded’ with marriage to her aggressor. Schmidt put it wisely in *The Novel* (2014) when he said that “modern readers find it hard to accept that she can forgive him so many offenses and deliver herself up to him” (SCHMIDT; 2014; p. 121-122). Pamela’s reward of class and wealth improvement fall too short for representatives of authenticity and self-fulfilment.

Jane fares a much better fate because she is capable of being truly heroic. She resists Rochester attempts at thwarting her existence in a similar fashion as that of Pamela when he explains

You mean you must become a part of me. As to the new existence, it is all right: you shall yet be my wife: I am not married. You shall be Mrs. Rochester—both virtually and nominally. I shall keep only to you so long as you and I live. You shall go to a place I have in the south of France: a whitewashed villa on the shores of the Mediterranean. There you shall live a happy, and guarded, and most innocent life (BRONTË, 1999, p. 268).

Faced with such an offer, her sense of self-worth does not waiver and she departs with her dignity intact and consciousness clear. The reunion of lovers only takes place when Jane has the means to maintain her autonomy and Rochester can no longer threaten



it: she receives her uncle's inheritance and Rochester is so injured at the fire that he loses a hand and becomes blind. It is interesting to note that in *Outlander* the turmoil of will they-won't they between Claire and Jamie only comes to a halt when Jamie – just as Rochester – is physically maimed and incapacitated. In Jamie's case there is also the aggravating factor of the psychological violence of a sexual assault combined with torture.

It is my hope that the current study has contributed to development of romance novel research both in my local context and internationally. There is still much to be explored in this avenue, both of romance novels in general and in the subject of the heroic quest and narrative of the genre. What the future holds for the romance novel genre is not yet known, but I look forward to continuing to explore its rich content in the academic environment.

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