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Simone Eva Höhn

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One Great Family

Domestic Relationships in Samuel Richardson's Novels

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Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten
Swiss Studies in English

Begründet von Bernhard Fehr
Herausgegeben von Andreas Fischer (Zürich), Martin Heusser (Zürich), Daniel Schreier (Zürich)

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Conventions

In the following pages, the long s has been silently modernized, and extra spacing before punctuation marks has been removed. When quoting the first sentence of a chapter, the convention of capitalising the first word has not been retained. Otherwise, quotations from eighteenth-century editions remain unchanged.

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Introduction

A few years before the publication of Samuel Richardson's last novel, he and his young friend Hester Mulso, later Hester Chapone, conducted a debate in letters on filial duty, she generally taking the side of children, he of parents. Richardson had invited Mulso to put her views in writing. She did so, as she wrote in the first letter (Oct 12, 1750)[1], "to expose my opinions to you, in order to have them rectified by you" (Mulso 205). As it turned out, Mulso's opinion was not easily "rectified". By the third and last letter of her side of this exchange, she even began to doubt that he had any need to correct her. She writes that "I began to perceive (at least I thought I did) that we were both on the same side of the question" (227). To make sure of this, however, she systematically rehearses the questions which had spawned their debate in the first place. In a passage which reflects not only the debate itself, but also the mode in which it had been conducted, she writes:

> But that I may know with certainty how far we agree or differ, will you give me leave, for once, to be a saucy girl, and catechise my adopted papa? Though indeed I do not mean to do it saucily, but really and truly for my information. For when you left it to me to make the applications, inferences, and conclusions, from all the quotations, stories, and observations you produced, you left me a task which would have been much better performed by yourself; my head is not clear enough to do it as I ought. Permit me then, my dear sir, to put it upon you to decide on the questions I am going to put: and when I have your positive answer to these, I shall know whether we have all this while been arguing about words, and whether what Mr. Locke calls *honour*, what I called *gratitude*, and what you called *duty*, be indeed the same thing or not. (228)

It is no coincidence that the terms whose meaning is so disputable are "honour", "gratitude", and "duty". All three define the moral obligation of children towards parents, but perceived from different angles. "Honour" specifies the form which filial "duty" should take, and "gratitude" specifies what such behaviour is based on, while the term "duty" emphasizes adherence to rules. Ideally, these concepts prove mutually reinforcing, but they can also come into conflict. Mulso's word "gratitude", for example, indicates her preference for viewing a child's "duty" as the natural response to parental kindness *when it occurs*, while Richardson's

1 The other two letters are dated November 10, 1750 and January 3, 1751, respectively.

"duty" shows his reluctance to admit a factor of variability into filial obligations. Mulso's disclaimer – "I do not mean to do it saucily, but really and truly for my information" – is therefore less innocuous than it might look at first. Her inquiry aims to distinguish, at least in the context of this debate, terms which are frequently mixed – in order to define the basis of a child's duty and, thus, its limits. The 'testing ground' for these limits is Richardson's second novel, *Clarissa.*

Richardson's anxiety that his readers draw the correct "inferences" from his novels is well-documented (e. g. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 60). Indeed, some of the rules to be deduced from his texts are specified at the beginning and ending of his books. In *Pamela*, these teachings appear in their least subtle form, as a list whose lack of complexity perhaps justifies the ironic or apologetic way in which critics tend to mention them. The "[a]pplications" that readers should draw from the "[i]ncidents" of *Pamela* (500), or from his other works, tend to be both general and uncontroversial. The following exhortation is fairly representative: "From the same good Example [of Pamela], let *Children* see what a Blessing awaits their Duty to their Parents, tho' ever so low in the World: And that the only Disgrace is to be dishonest; but none at all to be poor" (502). Mulso would probably have agreed that Pamela's parents deserve all the "duty" – or gratitude – she shows them in return for their love and care. This "application" of Pamela's story is therefore *too* clear; Pamela has so much reason to respect her parents that little about the limits (if any) of filial duty can be learned from her case.

The situation is different in *Clarissa*, which announces on its title page that it will illustrate "the distresses that may attend the misconduct both of parents and children, in relation to marriage". Tom Keymer has suggested that this novel is designed to depict an exact balance between a situation where the daughter is right to rebel and where the parents may uphold their authority, thus exercising the reader's judgment (cf. *Richardson's* Clarissa 122, 140–1). In this regard, Hester Mulso's debate with Richardson indicates the urgency of showing the point at which the balance tips in favour of the weaker party – the child. Her italics emphasise the importance of the points to be decided, and the directness of her questions – simple syntax and frequent question marks – leaves as little room as possible for her correspondent to manoeuvre in his answers:

> What must *their* children [those of unnatural parents] do, if "the want of duty on one side, justifies not the non-performance of it on the other, where there is a reciprocal duty?" […] (228)

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> But give me leave […] to ask you, whether the child […], when *injured*, when *cruelly* and *inhumanly* treated, when *deprived of its natural rights, and reduced to a state of slavery,* is not *then* at liberty to disobey, or the subject to rebel? […] (229)
> But this is one question which I would refer back to you for an answer, viz. who is to be judge in points contestible, of the reasonableness, or unreasonableness of the exertion of the parent's authority? (229)
> […] The question is then, whether the bare title of father or mother, shall give to such, a right to make their children miserable for life? And if not, what kind or degree of duty is owing to such, and on what grounds? (230)

These pointed questions indicate just how little justification for filial disobedience is granted in *Clarissa.* Although Richardson's best characters – and many of his worst ones – are preoccupied with questions of proper conduct, and despite (or because of) his avowed didactic intention, he refuses to clarify exactly when and how a child may refuse to obey an unjust command. In this, he follows texts like the classic *The Whole Duty of Man*, attributed to Richard Allestree, or Patrick Delany's *Fifteen Sermons Upon Social Duties.* Both these works acknowledge the rights of children only in so far as parents have duties. As a consequence, the right of rebellion can either be denied outright – as in *The Whole Duty of Man* – or be glossed over, as in Delany's sermons (see part I). This poses a problem for those serious-minded readers who seek to reconcile duty to personal liberty. Indeed, Mulso's slightly tongue-in-cheek remark – "my head is not clear enough to do it as I *ought*" (emphasis mine) indicates that she counts herself in this number. The duty of a good reader is to draw not just any, but the *correct* inferences, and the correct inference is also a moral one.

Richardson's part of this debate is not extant[2], but from the evidence of his last novel, as well as of some of his letters, his answers to the questions cited above would have been evasive once more (cf. also Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 122). *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* once again takes up many of the conflicts in the earlier novels, especially in *Clarissa.* These conflicts concern not only relations between parents and children, but also between husband and wife, master and servant, neighbours, and friends. In contrast to *Clarissa*, however, the focus of *Grandison* is not on ongoing struggles, but on the depiction of an ideal community where conflicts can be reconciled (cf. also Doody, *A Natural Passion* 340). This allows Richardson to address the issue of conflicts of duty while, at the same time, avoiding the critical point where they might lead to the breakdown of social relations – either through the abuse of authority or through rebellion on the part of those who should obey. Instead of solving the question of

2 Cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 97.

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how the virtuous can defend themselves, he shows how virtue can be *propagated* – creating a world which affords the secure space for the good (especially good women) which they may not carve for themselves. Thus, whereas *Clarissa* is a novel of division, *Grandison* is one of unification. In the former, the different demands of virtue are found to be in conflict, and human frailty and virtue, body and soul, pull in different directions. In the latter, body and soul, friendship and love, the control of one's self and influence over others merge in a harmonious whole which enables virtue and happiness to spread. The answer to conflict is not the exact settling of rights – including the right to rebel – but the teaching of harmony.

A number of critics have discussed Richardson's three novels as they relate to each other. Studies of his works tend to be structured in three parts, beginning with *Pamela* and ending with *Grandison* (e. g. Doody, *A Natural Passion*; Gwilliam; Shepherd). This sequence parallels Richardson's own thinking – he recalled his earlier novels in the preface to *Grandison*, for example. As Derek Taylor has noted, "the author approached each new novel as an opportunity to clarify, generally in a conservative direction, issues of morality or propriety a previous novel had raised" (*Reason and Religion* 103; cf. also Eagleton 95). Likewise, Linda Zionkowski states that "Richardson's novels take as their subject the power of obligation within patriarchal family life, with *Sir Charles Grandison* attempting to answer the questions raised in *Clarissa*" (*Women and Gift Exchange* 19). Bonnie Latimer, too, connects all three novels, but reverses the direction of analysis by reading Richardson's novels "through the lens" of his last one (cf. *Making Gender* 3).

Such a proceeding tends to change one's perception of the values endorsed by each novel. After reading the sequel to *Pamela*, for example, the heroine's proud statement in the first part – "No Husband in the World […] shall make me do an unjust or base thing" (194) – is put into perspective by her forced submission to her husband's prohibition to breastfeed their child. Similarly, after reading *Grandison*, one is left to wonder just what is the difference between Clarissa's mother, who is criticized for not supporting the heroine more actively, and the mother of Sir Charles Grandison, who is praised for her exemplary submission to her husband. The picture changes yet again, however, if one returns from such a potentially demoralizing second reading of the apparently more radical novels to a second reading of *Grandison*. If the first process leads to the conclusion that patriarchy is endorsed without question in Richardson's works, the second leads, among other things, to a realization that his last novel unexpectedly opens a space for women who diverge from the ideal of passive submission.

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My own interpretation is the result of such a combined reading of Richardson's novels, based on the questions raised by his correspondent Hester Mulso. What happens when a subject with a low position in the hierarchy – a position which is the lot of most women – tries to act on the basis of *all* her duties as outlined by writers such as Allestree or Delany? On the basis of this question, the narrative trajectory of the three novels can be summarised as follows. In *Pamela*, Richardson illustrates how an individual who seems powerless may yet exert an influence which is beneficial not only to herself, but to those around her. Pamela, young, female, and a servant, must submit to her superiors in age, gender, and class. Nevertheless, she manages to influence her would-be seducer, Mr. B., through her virtue. In the original novel, her efforts are rewarded by a Cinderella-like marriage; in the sequel, she slowly but surely influences her husband until he becomes indeed an excellent husband, father, and master of a household. Through her example, the reader is shown how even those occupying a very humble position within the system of duty have the power to do good. In *Clarissa*, in contrast, the focus is on the factors which disturb this system. Its heroine, though virtuous herself, is hindered from fully exerting her good qualities by those who have power over her, be it rightful and according to what I call the system of duty – as in the case of her father – or usurped – as in the case of Lovelace. The novel is a powerful plea against the abuse of power, as well as a plea to the powerless to do what is right even in apparently hopeless circumstances. *Grandison*, finally, focuses on the good which will result if those in power are thoroughly good themselves. Viewed in another way, *Clarissa* illustrates the problem that those without authority also lack the power to be both good and happy, while *Pamela* and *Grandison* present a (partial) solution to this problem.

This shift in Richardson's focus can be observed on many levels, for instance with regard to agency. In *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, the emphasis is on the ability to *act*, and to act well. For considerable portions of each novel, the heroine's right to act on her own judgment is denied by those holding authority and/or power over her. In both cases, moreover, the heroines have to combat deceitful lovers who would force them to commit immoral actions. In contrast, such conflicts are rarely depicted in *Grandison*. Even when unjustified coercion occurs – such as Sir Thomas's tyrannical behaviour to his daughters – it is not clear that it would lead to deeds which are wrong in themselves and which the victim of oppression has a moral duty to resist. Even the most striking example of violence, Sir Hargrave's abduction of Harriet, differs from Mr. B.'s and Lovelace's confinement of Pamela and Clarissa, respectively, for its purpose – marriage – is not immoral, although the means he takes to enforce it certainly are. Although

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Harriet has to undergo a brief period of fear and heroic resistance, this first ordeal is not the real test of her character. Instead of treacherous lovers or abusive parents, the main conflicts she has to confront are situated inside herself.

After being rescued by the hero, Harriet's struggles are with the right interpretation of events and characters as well as with her own feelings. The first of these is not important for her actual safety – as in the case of Pamela and Clarissa, whose doubts about their would-be seducers' intentions need to be resolved so that they can properly defend themselves. Instead, her accurate assessment of other people's characters and actions will result in her own moral behaviour, as well as her correct choice of a moral mentor. Thus, when she ponders the history of the Grandison family, the doubtful cases she comments on concern such questions as whether or not the Grandison sisters were justified in writing to their brother despite paternal prohibition. Her judgment has little direct bearing on herself; rather, it serves to highlight her sense of morality and to elucidate the characters of the Grandison siblings. Moreover, when she criticises Sir Charles for some of his actions and opinions – for example, the indications of (compassionate) misogyny, or his general secrecy even towards his sisters – such considerations often turn out to be less significant with regard to the hero than to the heroine. Indeed, Harriet's criticisms of Sir Charles are often emphasised in order to combat her growing love of him or her own self-doubts.

The characters of *Grandison*, then, have to learn mainly how to control themselves. This is true even for the hero, who frequently claims that he has had to combat his tendencies toward rash anger or pride, and who is "very much dissatisfied" (2:63) with his violent behaviour even to men who draw swords against him in his own house. The same can be said of the hero's mother, whose actions – and, it is suggested, whose feelings – are bent on wifely love and submission, but who is shown to act thus out of her own free will. When conflict is externalised, as on many occasions when Sir Charles has to fight assassins or evade a duel, or when his sisters have to choose between love and filial obedience, it is usually set in the past. By the time Harriet hears of Sir Thomas's tyranny, for example, the reader already knows that it has had no irremediably bad effects on his children's future. The *present* of the novel, in contrast, is concerned with the good influence which characters have on each other, and the successful struggle for self-control. Despite several discussions on duties and rights, in the present of the novel, right feeling – and displays of right feeling – takes precedence over issues of authority. The shift is visible in the hero, who acts as a father figure but who derives his authority not from

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biological fatherhood, but rather from providing protection, advice, money, and affection to those around him.

This re-orientation of ‘fatherhood’ corresponds with a new focus on the forging of relationships and the spreading of virtue. The open exercise of authority is replaced with what is now called ‘nudging’: the hero and the other virtuous characters (often by the former’s assistance) prepare incentives for the more faulty characters to mend their ways. Often, however, reform is voluntary and merely welcomed and supported by the steadily growing community of the good. Indeed, one way in which the conflict between individual liberty and authority is contained is by voluntary self-control once control has been granted to the individual. Thus, the emphasis on absolute duties in *Clarissa* is replaced by a less clearly defined process of conferring benefits[3], which allows for individual agency within limits.

Thus, another way to describe the shift from Richardson’s earlier novels to *Grandison* is that it is a shift of focus from hierarchy to network as the organising element of human relationships. In a thought-provoking study, Caroline Levine has shown how forms such as hierarchy and network inform structures of narratives (or of relationships within those narratives). Several forms can occur together, either in conflict or mutually reinforcing. The role these forms play in narrative is both limited and flexible:

> To capture the complex operations of social and literary forms, I borrow the concept of *affordance* from design theory. *Affordance* is a term used to describe the potential uses or actions latent in materials and designs. […]
> Let’s now use affordances to think about form. The advantage of this perspective is that it allows us to grasp both the specificity and the generality of forms—both the particular constraints and possibilities that different forms afford, and the fact that those patterns and arrangements carry their affordances with them as they move across time and space. […] Networks afford connection and circulation, and narratives afford the connection of events over time. […]
> To be sure, a specific form can be put to use in unexpected ways that expand our general sense of that form’s affordances. (6)

Levine’s concept is useful because it unites the stable features of form (such as materials, patterns, etc.) with their – potentially unlimited – applicability. Thus,

3 A case in point is Emily, Sir Charles’s ward. Her position has the potential to illustrate a conflict of duty, where she must decide whether she obeys the guardian appointed by her father, or, rather, her mother who is yet living. However, instead, the focus is on Sir Charles’s protection of her and on the process which leads to the reform of her initially vicious mother.

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it offers a means to describe readers' differing reactions to a text as they focus on different affordances of the same materials. Similarly, Levine's concept is applicable to the very different conclusions which Richardson's contemporaries, as well as he himself, drew from the authority of the Bible (cf. parts I and II). Applied to Richardson's novels, affordance is a means by which to describe the stable features of his works – including concepts of moral duties and structures of relationships – as they appear in different forms and to different effect. Indeed, the moral system underlying each novel seems remarkably stable, even though its *application*, and Richardson's focus, vary. This variability is due, in part, to the moral system being organised according to two differing principles, namely hierarchy and network.

The etymology of the word 'hierarchy' is curiously well adapted to its use by moral writers such as Allestree or Delany: it derives "from the Greek *hieros*, meaning 'sacred,' and *arche*, meaning 'rule'" (Levine 82). As we shall see, when a relationship is especially important, hierarchy – and the 'sacred' duty to submit to it – is crucial, as well. "[H]ierarchies arrange bodies, things, and ideas according to levels of power or importance. Hierarchies rank—organizing experience into asymmetrical, discriminatory, often deeply unjust arrangements" (82). It is notable that to "discriminate" means first and foremost "to distinguish", although this can happen "in an unjust or prejudicial manner" (*OED*, "discriminate, *v.*" 1 & 4). Hierarchies distinguish what is different, imposing order. In contrast, "[s]prawling and spreading, networks might seem altogether formless, perhaps even the antithesis of form. For some influential theorists, in fact, it is their resistance to form that makes networks emancipatory—politically productive" (Levine 112). In contrast to the 'above' and 'below' of hierarchy, networks can spread laterally, accommodating an indefinite number of component parts. Although the term 'network' is not mentioned by the moral writers I consider for this study, it is a convenient shorthand for describing those relationships which are not governed by hierarchy, indefinite in number and flexible in the obligations they impose (notably friendship). Interestingly, the contrast between hierarchy and network even seems to find its way into the structure of *The Whole Duty of Man.* If the chapter on 'parents' and the duties owed them begins in a strictly orderly fashion, duties owed to one's 'brothers' (i. e. approximate equals) seem to spill into each other.

Both hierarchy and network are present in all of Richardson's novels, but not to an equal extent. In *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, the plot structure pits the heroine against an antagonist trying to gain the upper hand – in the earlier novel, this is Pamela's master, whose position as gentleman and employer, he assumes, gives him rights over her which she does not have over him. In

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Clarissa, the antagonists are the heroine's family, insisting on their authority, and later Lovelace, whose desire for her, and dread of control by her, grows increasingly pathological. Indeed, one of the images that Clarissa's uncle John uses to describe the family conflict – that of an "*embattled phalanx*" (150) – by implication excludes a number of possible forms that relationships can take. The Harlowes are not a unified, harmonious whole[4] – as they were, they insist, before Clarissa's refusal to marry at their behest. Nor are they a group of individuals whose specific needs are to be negotiated. Instead, they are all – regardless of individual preferences – subsumed into a single group which is entitled to, and required to uphold, paternal authority. Those who refuse this subjugation are seen as rebels who should be subdued and then re-absorbed. Although alternative structures of relationship exist in these two novels – such as the loyalty among fellow servants which leads them to interfere unsuccessfully on Pamela's behalf, or the friendship between Anna and Clarissa – they are shown to be at odds with the hierarchies at the heart of the novels' conflicts.[5]

In *Grandison*, in contrast, hero and heroine are never in open opposition, nor are they entirely subsumed in each other. Each encounters, befriends, or has conflicts with, a number of people, and each meets with his/her own struggles. None of these – with the exceptions of Harriet's abduction and Clementina's madness – take centre stage for long, and even these exceptions are not allowed to take over the narrative entirely. All encounters tend to increase, rather than diminish, the heroes' social relationships, resulting in two separate but overlapping networks which are combined in the marriage of hero and heroine. While issues of hierarchy resurface intermittently, they are pushed into the past or quickly subsumed into the movement of the expanding network. One example of a theorist finding networks "politically productive" which is mentioned by Levine is particularly intriguing in the context of this study. Citing Ella Shohat, Levine raises the idea that "only networked flows and circulations will allow us 'to transcend some of the politically debilitating effects of disciplinary and community boundaries'" (112). The network, I hope to show, is the (implicit) counterpart and corrective to hierarchy in Richardson's last novel.

The happy ending of *Grandison* – as "sprawling and spreading" as any happy end – is brought about by the successful accommodation of hierarchy

4 Here and elsewhere, I use the term "whole" in a slightly different sense from Levine, who clearly distinguishes between network and whole and discusses the latter in terms of its destructive potential as well as its enabling aspects.

5 Significantly, Mr. B. still harbours a grudge against his 'disloyal' servants who tried to help Pamela even when he has already forgiven Pamela herself (247).

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and network. The flexibility of the latter allows individuals to preserve their agency while voluntarily taking their places in a hierarchical society. By conceptualising individuals as the centre of a network, scope is given for processes of decision-making, self-control, and feeling – even though the desirable aim of these inner processes may be structured hierarchically. The focus on network as a structuring principle is, in part, brought about consciously by the characters themselves. An early example is Harriet's determination never to let her love even for a husband "swallow up" her other loves (1:180). She will be supported in this feeling by her husband, who promises, after their wedding, that marriage will confirm rather than lessen her other duties (3:239). One of the affordances of hierarchy, as *Clarissa* shows, is that it has the power to disrupt networks. In *Grandison*, in contrast, hierarchy sanctions and protects networks. This protective function is then re-interpreted as the core of hierarchies (of generations, but especially of gender). The structure of networks helps mask the dangers of hierarchy. Masquerade in this sense – conceptualising reality in a certain way – is part of the story of *Grandison*. It shapes the behaviour of the characters, who use social roles and role-play both to do their own duty and to influence others. And it informs the structure of the plot, arranged in such a way as to foreground harmony, hiding a narrative of rule-enforcing behind a narrative of individual empowerment – hiding it all the more convincingly because the 'cover' narrative has truth in it.

In the following chapters, I will juxtapose the way in which *Clarissa*, on the one hand, and *Grandison*, on the other, treat the issues just outlined. In the first part of this study, I will concentrate on the system of duty as it appears in the writings of Allestree and Delany and in those of Richardson. I will analyse the network of obligations which good people should fulfil, the extent and limits of the agency it allows those not in power, and the problems this raises in *Clarissa*. In the second part, I will discuss alternative patterns of structuring and conceptualising moral behaviour. After outlining these patterns, I will show how they can be used either to reinforce or to challenge the system of duty. In a second step, I will demonstrate how the abuse of power in any of these systems disrupts networks among the less privileged – notably ties of friendship among women and the ties between family members. In the third part, finally, I will show how the focus in *Grandison* shifts from power struggle to inner conflict, which allows Richardson to contain the vulnerability of virtue in a vision of steady and benevolent reform from within. The result is a world where successful patriarchy and female wish-fulfilment seem to operate simultaneously, where the one is, indeed, the basis of the other.

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Richardson's second and third novels are complementary in structure. The respective form of each novel fits well with the patterns of relationships that are emphasized: hierarchy in *Clarissa* and network in *Grandison*. While *Clarissa*, despite its 'to-the-moment' style (cf. 721), has something of the measured, symmetrical structure of a tragedy[6], *Grandison*'s form is indeed "sprawling and spreading". At the same time, the style and scope of these two novels are similar, which facilitates a comparison between them. Occasionally, I will also draw on *Pamela* to complement my reading of the two later novels. Richardson's first novel shares elements of both later ones, although its style – suitably for its heroine – is considerably less sophisticated[7]. While it is an important point of comparison, therefore, the patterns I am interested in are less obvious in this novel than in the later ones.

For reasons of practicability, I use the first edition of each novel, even though this arguably neglects Richardson's development as an author. The relative merits of the early and late versions of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are still far from decided, and the considerable textual changes between the first edition of the former and the last edition based on Richardson's own emendations have led Joe Bray to remark that "the extent of his revisions in the 1801 text of *Pamela* makes this edition a new novel in itself: his fourth and last" (76). Nevertheless, the potential of the patterns that Richardson uses – potential for tragedy as well as happiness – can be shown well even when only the first editions are considered.

My main interest in this study is socio-historical. I am interested in understanding how, and why, Richardson and his contemporaries conceptualised social relationships, how these concepts influenced literary forms, and how the consideration of such concepts affects the impact of his novels. It is inevitable, of course, that my analysis of these issues is informed by modern concepts – and, in turn, any analysis of past ideologies changes one's perspective on related contemporary issues. Accordingly, I use a selection of letters and treatises which are roughly contemporary with Richardson's writings to support my reading and point out how his works fit in their historical context. In addition, I draw on several works from 20th–21st century sociology, anthropology, and philosophy.

6 Indeed, for Robert Erickson, "[t]he overall structure of *Clarissa* may be seen as a religious narrative drama in five acts" (186).

7 Lynn Shepherd has accounted for a part of the difference between *Pamela* and the later novels by noting that Richardson was preoccupied with book illustration and had his portrait painted (alone as well as in a family group) after the publication of his first novel. She speculates that this sharpened his perception of group dynamics, which become so important in *Clarissa* and *Grandison* (cf. 111).

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Although such sources are not specifically connected with Richardson's works, non-historical treatments of such issues as structures of relationships help to highlight related patterns within the novels, which are bound by time and space.

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1. The system of duty

"When I was a girl, one never heard of the
rights of men, one only heard of the duties."
(Gaskell, "My Lady Ludlow" 51)

Richardson's novels are framed in discourses of duty. The "Preface by the Editor" to *Pamela*, for example, outlines a number of functions that the book will fulfil, including the common literary requirements "*to* Divert [...] *and at the same time to* Instruct", aesthetic considerations – "*to draw Characters* justly" – and, most importantly, moral teaching (3). The promises of the preface are shown to be fulfilled in the (untitled) afterword, where the 'editor' summarises the most important lessons that the reader should take to heart: "HAVING thus brought this little History to a happy Period, the Reader will indulge us in a few brief Observations, which naturally result from it; and which will serve as so many Applications, of its most material Incidents, to the Minds of the Youth of both Sexes" (500). Similar didactic framings begin and conclude his later novels, *Clarissa* and *Grandison*. Indeed, it is a commonplace of modern criticism that Richardson's listings fall far short of the complexity of the novels; at worst, they may be seen to detract from the merit of the 'works themselves'. Discussions of his art have long involved assessments of the degree of consciousness he had regarding the effect of his writing. In her monograph *Desire and Truth*, Patricia Meyer Spacks chooses, significantly, an assessment of Richardson's "achievement" to illustrate "the possible contrast between novelists' claims and readers' perceptions" (235). She opens her afterword with a quote by Carol Kay, summarising a familiar view of this novelist's abilities: "The convincing account of learning morality [in *Pamela*] [...] is a more moving, more interesting account than Richardson was ever able to summarize. The list of lessons at the end of *Pamela*, like so many of Richardson's efforts to define his achievement, wretchedly betrays it" (Kay 160). In a slightly earlier article, Janet Butler outlines persuasively the importance of the garden as a symbol in *Clarissa*, but implies that this happened without, and even against, Richardson's intention. For her, Richardson the conscious artist "fell short" of his intention which, apparently,

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can be divorced from his "unerring instinct" as a storyteller (535).[8] And more recently, Taylor has noted that "[c]ritics have become understandably wary of Richardson's frustrating tendency in his comments on his novels to simplify his own complexity beyond recognition; Richardson at times proves a hapless Richardson scholar" (*Reason and Religion* 10).

On one level, such criticism is quite justified. If no-one ever read Richardson's novels for their plot,[9] surely it is even more the case (one is tempted to claim) that no-one read them for their short lists of moral observations. The complex moral dilemmas faced by the main characters put into sharp relief the reductive quality of the rules that the 'editor' distils from them, as Richardson's debates with his readers demonstrate. Nevertheless, Richardson eventually published an entire volume of such observations, *A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflexions, Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* (Eaves & Kimpel 420), and it is unlikely that he did so without encouragement.[10] Moreover, these teachings form an integral part, not only of Richardson's professed aims as "a properly didactic, propagandist writer" who speaks up for his beliefs (Eagleton 24), but also of his novels' power and aesthetics. Keymer has suggested that, at least in *Clarissa*, Richardson attempted to educate his readers' understanding precisely by setting before them moral dilemmas which cannot be reduced to simple rules. By "mak[ing] reading not simple but problematic", he ensures "that the reader's activity in addressing the resulting difficulties will itself be a source of instruction" (*Richardson's* Clarissa 68). As readers try to make sense of the different characters' versions of events, they learn something about themselves, life, and morality. The text, then, is complex because of, not despite, its didactic purpose. The lists at the end of

8 Tom Keymer – perhaps the most outspoken defender of Richardson as a conscious artist – takes issue with Butler's article on precisely that score (*Richardson's* Clarissa 108 n.79).

9 Boswell reported Samuel Johnson as "saying that 'if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted, that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as giving occasion to the sentiment'" (*The Life of Samuel Johnson*; qtd. in Price 18).

10 Eaves and Kimpel note that earlier, "an unknown gentleman had sent Richardson a collection of the moral sentiments in *Clarissa*" (420). The 1751 *Letters and Passages Restored from the Original Manuscripts of the History of CLARISSA* already included *A Collection of […] Moral and Instructive SENTIMENTS […]* to be found in the same novel. According to the preface to this collection, "many readers, who are desirous of fixing in their minds those maxims which deserve notice distinct from the story that first introduced them […] have often wished and pressed to see them separate from that chain of engaging incidents" (qtd. in Price 19).

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Richardson's novels may, thus, be a less exciting – and less useful – means of instruction than that used within the narratives themselves, but they belong, nonetheless, to the same continuum of intention and method.

To apply general rules to specific cases, or to deduce moral imperatives from behaviour instinctively recognized as good and attractive, is an important part of the novels' action, and a challenge put to characters and readers alike. The clearest example of the process occurs in *Pamela*, after Mr. B. has explained to the heroine the peculiarities of his temper (when he is angry, he must be left to himself) as well as given her instructions for her behaviour as a wife (she must show proper submission to his will). Pamela first relates the conversation word by word. In a next step, she summarises it: "Let me see: What are the Rules I am to observe from this awful Lecture?" (448; 'awful' generally signifies 'awe-inspiring' rather than 'terrible', although the modern reader may be inclined to read this differently). The "lecture" boils down to 48 rules, upon some of which Pamela comments. Frequently, her commentary draws attention to Mr. B.'s authoritarian stance, and sometimes to his intention of being a good husband nevertheless; occasionally, her remarks highlight the similarity of his rules to those set out in conduct books: his thought that bad wives encourage seducers "is a fine Lesson" (450).

Frequently, the heroines need to adjust their behaviour in 'critical' cases where the best course of action is far from obvious. Thus, Clarissa ponders the question whether she is justified in continuing her correspondence with Anna Howe against Mrs. Howe's prohibition; her eventual decision to do so is endorsed by Anna's reliable if unexciting suitor Mr. Hickman, "who pretends to a little casuistry in such nice matters" (548). When Harriet Byron, heroine of *Grandison*, hears of the Grandison sisters' similar dilemma (cf. introduction), her response includes not only sympathy, but moral judgment. While acknowledging the complexity of the situation, she attempts to reduce it to a simpler rule: that sisters should "be more *nice*, more *delicate*" in their behaviour than brothers (1:322; Sir Charles, obeying his father, does not write back). All of Richardson's important characters, including the villain Lovelace, regularly compare specific occurrences to general rules or canonical writings, so that their letters provide a commentary on various aspects of (moral) life. Indeed, as Leah Price has noted, Richardson's heroines are "anthologist[s]", most notably Clarissa, who "keeps a commonplace book like Pamela, compiles religious extracts like Clementina, and excerpts letters like Harriet" (13, 14). In each case, the selection and condensation of materials does not deny the complexity of the source or the ability of the heroine to understand it. Instead, it shows that the women are good readers, and able to draw the "inferences" that

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Richardson wished from his readers. The interrelationship between the general and the specific is perhaps best exemplified in the early part of *Clarissa*. The heroine, "having the strictest notions of filial duty" (37), agrees with virtually every other character on the basic definition of a daughter's duty to her parents. What is at issue in the conflict about her marriage are the application of such rules and the relative weight of varying duties. What makes the beginning of the novel claustrophobic – and, possibly, harder to bear than Clarissa's later ordeal at the hands of Lovelace – is the apparently indissoluble conflict between theoretical and practical duty.

Richardson's nuanced fictional treatment of moral dilemmas is innovative. However, the moral system underlying it, which I here call the 'system of duty', is not.[11] I will here discuss in some detail two works professedly dealing with the individual's duties as a Christian: *The Whole Duty of Man*, anonymously published in 1658 and attributed to Richard Allestree, and *Fifteen Sermons Upon Social Duties* by Patrick Delany, Church of Ireland Dean, published in 1744. Delany's sermons lend themselves to such comparison by temporal proximity to Richardson's writings as well as by the fact that Richardson printed several of his works – including, according to John Carroll, the *Fifteen Sermons* (Richardson, *Selected Letters* 23). "[B]y 1739 […], Delany was assuring [Richardson] of his life-long friendship" (Eaves & Kimpel 173). *The Whole Duty of Man*, on the other hand, was a "ubiquitous conduct manual" which remained popular throughout the 18th century (Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 26).[12] Richardson refers to it with approval in *Pamela* (see below). Hester Mulso also testifies to its importance,

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11 In his monograph *Richardson's* Clarissa *and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, Tom Keymer writes of "the basic code from which the novel begins", an "ethical system" invoked by the characters and described in "religious conduct literature" (98). His focus is specifically on the relationship between parents and children, however, so that he does not discuss this "basic code" as a *system* in any detail. Keymer analyses filial duty as outlined in *The Whole Duty of Man*, William Fleetwood's *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants* (1705), and two collections of sermons by Delany. Of these, Fleetwood is the most liberal voice. My discussions of Allestree, Delany, and *Clarissa* in the next two sections parallel Keymer's in many ways. However, while Keymer focuses on the basis for readers' judgment of events, my main concern is with the individual who, in a case analogous to Clarissa's, has to make decisions for her future actions.
Another scholar who touches on what I call the system of duty is Lois E. Bueler, who studies the "intricate web built from the interweaving of three different plot structures" in *Clarissa* (12). As she observes, different conceptions of virtue – "aretic or virtue-based ethics", on the one hand, and "deontic or obligation-based ethics", on the other – are of especial relevance to different plot structures of the novel – (169, n. 9; cf. 126).

12 The last three editions I found on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* date from 1800, 1797 and 1794.

albeit in a different way, namely by indignantly rejecting it as a guide to social duties.[13] In fact, both these writers, especially Allestree, occupied conservative positions. Allestree, a royalist, published his best-known work shortly before the Restoration of the monarchy, and Delany had tory leanings (cf. Spurr and Barnard).

It would be rash to claim that either of these texts fully illustrates Richardson's own attitudes. Indeed, the tone of *The Whole Duty of Man*, in particular, with its frequent references to the hell-fire which threatens the unregenerate reader, is far from Richardson's preference for reforming villains and for his pained, carefully indecisive indications of the probable fates of some of his worst characters. Moreover, as prescriptive non-fiction, these moral writings differ from Richardson's didactic novels almost as much as his lists of applications do from the bulk of his stories. Finally, these two works are only two examples of many similar texts known to Richardson. However, the conservative perspective helps to clarify the way in which the discourse of duties differs from modern conceptions of mutual responsibilities, and what challenges it posed to liberal-minded readers.

The system of duty which is outlined by Allestree and Delany is a "system of reciprocal obligations, mainly domestic" (*Pamela* 525, note to p. 3). These obligations are "status duties", that is, duties on the basis of an individual's relationship to others (Gouldner) – children's to parents, masters' to servants, friends' to friends. To know in what relationship I stand to another person is to know what I owe to that person. For the purposes of these writings, these relationships are envisaged as stable. Children must be born, servants must be hired, and friends must become acquainted, before parenthood, servitude and friendship can exist. However, the focus of the system of duty is not on this dynamic aspect of relationships, but on the static one. *While* individuals stand in specific relationships with each other, *while* they assume certain roles vis-à-vis each other, they have corresponding duties which cannot be cancelled. Works like Allestree's and Delany's are there to specify what these duties are.

13 After writing that Locke, Richardson, and she seem to be in agreement, Mulso further specifies what writers' views she endorses and which she rejects. "[T]he good Bishop Fleetwood" is endorsed, as is Algernon Sydney, while "Bishop Hall" and the "author of the Whole Duty of Man" (228) are rejected. Mulso returns to this point a little later, stating that the teaching of Bishop Hall and *The Whole Duty of Man* must have a bad influence on parents, for "whilst fathers are taught [...] to consider their children as their *goods and chattels*, things which they have as much right to dispose of as their own limbs, they will hardly choose to have their power limited by the wisdom and discretion of their children" (232).

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The system of duty is essentially foreign to our contemporary thinking, even though aspects of it can occasionally still be felt, and it is worth emphasising some of these differences at the outset. One of the central expressions of modern Western ideas of morality is the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". It is easy to forget that this document, which is routinely evoked when questions of morality are at stake, dates only from the mid-20th century. Indeed, the very concept of "universal human rights" – as opposed to human duties, to the value of benevolence, or to the legal rights of a specified group – may well date back no further than the early modern period: "the concept almost certainly began in 1640s London, in the heat of the English Civil Wars, from which it spread eventually to America and France and then to the rest of the world" (Stamos xii). According to David Stamos, John Locke, who was writing in the aftermath of the Civil Wars, played a key role in the dissemination of these ideas.[14] Somewhat more cautiously, professor of philosophy John Simmons sees Locke as writing when "a shift in thinking about moral relations […] was still taking place" – a shift from an emphasis on duties to an emphasis on rights (99). The first position sees God "at the center of all moral relations", and while "[e]ach of us has duties not to harm others, […] these duties are owed to God" (97). The second position, in contrast, acknowledges that "[m]oral relations hold directly between persons as well as between persons and God"; as a consequence, "we have duties that are *owed* to others, not just duties *with respect* to others" (98). Both Stamos and Simmons agree that the idea that "all statements about rights are translatable without loss into statements about their correlative duties" (and vice versa) is false (Simmons 116; cf. Stamos 101).

As the epigraph for this chapter suggests, this point is not simply a philosophical nicety, but was keenly felt at the time when this transition was occurring. Lady Ludlow, the eponymous central character of Elizabeth Gaskell's mid-19th-century tale, fears and deplores the new attention to rights. For her, rights – like the education of the masses – are intimately connected with the "rebellion in the American colonies and the French Revolution" (134). The latter holds particular horror for her, as she not only lived in France before the revolution, but knew and loved some of its victims. It is important to note that Lady Ludlow is a largely sympathetic, if quaint, character. Old-fashioned and headstrong, she is also genuinely kind, has a keen sense of responsibility, and is occasionally capable of overcoming deep-set prejudices. She is thus not a representative of tyranny, but of a past age. From the glimpses that readers receive of her life, it can be deduced that she was born around the time when

14 For his reasons for this dating, see Stamos, chapters 4–5.

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Richardson's novels were first published. Gaskell's character thus bears witness to a crucial change of paradigm which people felt was happening in the decades around the French Revolution.

Simmons identifies three crucial consequences which ensue from emphasising rights rather than duties. First, "[r]ights are grounds for *self*-respect; rightholders are *entitled* to things [...], rather than being entirely dependent on others' personal decisions about whether or not to do their duty" (118). Secondly, "rights are indispensable for such activities as claiming, demanding, or insisting on actions or outcomes" (119). Finally, rights make for more flexibility than duties, since "[r]ightholders [...] may waive [their rights] or invoke them as the situation requires" (120). Of these three points, the first two especially will be shown to be crucial to the value system underlying Richardson's novels. Indeed, Richardson (and the fictional Lady Ludlow) would probably have agreed with Simmons, but would have emphasised the flip-side of the points he enumerates. The system of duty asks what obligations the individual has to all others; a focus on rights leads the individual to ask what all others can do for him or her. As Richardson's statements concerning filial rights imply, he thought it more likely that children would forget their responsibilities than that they would waive their rights.

It is not my contention that the system of duty was the only way to conceptualise relationships in the mid-eighteenth century. Alternatives existed; I will discuss some of them in part II of this study (including Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*). Moreover, then as now, some people simply flouted the dominant system of morality; then as now, they might even be proud of it. This attitude is exemplified in the figure of the rake or libertine, who is neither "restricted by convention or tradition" nor "restrained by morality" (*OED*, "libertine, *n.*"). I argue, however, that the system of duty is vital in order to understand some of the dilemmas in which Richardson's heroines find themselves, and to contextualise some of the solutions which are offered to these problems. In the following sections, I will, thus, first describe the system of duty as outlined by Allestree and Delany. I will then show how this system figures in Richardson's novels, particularly *Clarissa*, which features the most extended and destructive conflict of duties in his work. In the process, I will discuss further problems raised by this system, notably the relationship between duties regarding mental processes and outward action, respectively – or, to put it differently, between true virtue and hypocrisy.

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1.1 Allestree, Delany and reciprocal duties

The Whole Duty of Man remained in print well over a century after its first publication. Its quotable title may have further contributed to its inclusion in Richardson's first novel, where Pamela herself testifies to its worth. When she writes to her parents towards the end of the second volume, arranging their visit to the Bedfordshire estate and their later settlement on one of Mr. B.'s farms, she asks them to give presents to former benefactors: "As Farmer *Jones* has been kind to you, as I have heard you say, pray, when you take Leave of them, present them with three Guineas worth of good Books, such as a Family-Bible, a Common-Prayer, a Whole Duty of Man, or any other you think will be acceptable" (476). The work may, however, be more familiar from a more memorable passage in Henry Fielding's first parody of *Pamela*, where the eponymous anti-heroine Shamela packs up her belongings. They include "*The Whole Duty of Man*, with only the Duty to one's Neighbour, torn out" (332).[15]

Knowledge of Christian tenets is hardly requisite to grasp the irony of the juxtaposition of the totality implied in the work's title and the sadly fragmentary state of Shamela's copy. A cursory acquaintance with the New Testament suffices to recognise that the missing part alludes to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), and thus to one's duty to all men. Further, albeit perhaps less funny, ironies are present to readers familiar with *The Whole Duty of Man*. Shamela's easy dismissal of the missing chapter – it is "only" the duty to one's neighbour which she misses reading – emphasises her selfishness. Presumably, she is more comfortable reading passages dealing with one's duty to God (and, by association, to his ministers, with one of whom she has a bastard child) and one's duty to oneself. However, a cursory survey of Allestree's account of our "DUTY to our SELVES" shows how far Shamela is from discharging even this – for it means to live "Soberly" and to possess the virtues of humility, meekness, consideration, contentedness with one's condition, diligence in the care of one's soul, chastity, and temperance. The reader will be hard-pressed to find evidence of any of these in Shamela. The duty to oneself, Allestree explains, consists in "keeping within those due bounds which God hath set us" (139; Sunday VI) so as to avoid immediate ills (such as sickness or a bad reputation) and to prevent the

15 The scene is a parody of Pamela's division of her possessions into three bundles (cf. also 408, note to p. 332) and emphasises, among other things, Shamela's slatternliness: both her clothes and her books tend to be damaged or incomplete. Fielding refers to *The Whole Duty* at least twice more in his parodies of *Pamela*: it is among the books virtuous Joseph Andrews has read (20), and foolish parson Tickletext compares it rather unfavourably to *Pamela* at the opening of *Shamela* (311).

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punishment of hell-fire: "*Think with your selves, how you will be able to endure* Everlasting Burnings" (preface, section 6, n.p.). Similarly, Delany names some of the duties to oneself as "ministerial virtues; as being subservient to virtues of greater consequence" (108; sermon VI). While self-interest is acknowledged as a motive for human action, this is legitimate only in the context of the larger scheme of one's eternal welfare – the opening sentence of the preface to *The Whole Duty of Man*, section 1, states that the "Treatise" is "a short and *Plain Direction to the very meanest Readers,* to behave themselves so in this world, that they may be happy for ever, in the next". Next to the gratitude that, as Allestree emphasizes, is due to God's mercy, fear of punishment is the most pervasive argument for doing one's duty, although he also stresses the folly or cruelty of not doing one's duty to one's 'neighbour' or oneself.

The above-mentioned tripartite structure of *The Whole Duty of Man* is based on Titus 2.12. From this passage, Allestree states, we learn "*That we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*; where the word, *Soberly*, contains our *duty* to our *Selves*; *Righteously*, our *duty* to our *Neighbour*; and *Godly*, our *duty* to *God*" (4; Sunday I). The text as a whole is relatively loosely structured. It is divided into 17 chapters (divisions being based mainly on chapter length), "[o]ne whereof being read every Lord's Day, the Whole may be read over Thrice in the Year" (title page). Allestree starts with the duty to God, highest and the basis of all other duties, goes on to the duty to one-self, and ends with the duties to other men. These take up roughly 5, 4, and 8 Sundays, respectively. Although cross-references are frequent, they tend to emphasize that all duties – or "debts" (e. g. 267; Sunday XIII) – ultimately are duties to God. Allestree makes it clear that "there is no sin we commit but is either mediately or immediately against [God]. For though there be sins both against our Selves and our Neighbours, yet they being forbidden by God, they are also breaches of his Commandments, and so sins against him" (129; Sunday V). What is usually missing from such cross-references is the attempt to negotiate the relative importance of duties or potential problems when they clash.

Allestree opens the sermons dealing with one's duty to one's neighbour with the general duties of "Justice and Charity" (213; Sunday X), which include, among other things, respect towards others' property and reputation. He proceeds to specific status duties, beginning with the most important and hierarchical one, the duty to "the Civil, the Spiritual, the Natural" parents (i. e. ruler, clergy, and biological parents; 288; Sunday XIV), followed by the duty of parents to their children. He then goes on to "[t]he second sort of Relation [...] that of a Brother" (317; Sunday XV). While this "may in the largest extent contain under it all Mankind" (317), Allestree specifically includes under this

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heading siblings and more distant relations, spouses, friends, and masters and servants. The final sermons mainly concern the duty of charity, which is due to everyone.

Interestingly, Allestree includes some hierarchical relationships in his list of brotherhood ties. He does so without further comment, or is at least not careful to demarcate the point when he ceases to speak of relationships between equals. What seems to matter about 'brotherhood' is, apparently, not equality, but closeness. This is all the more remarkable because of the general consensus that the relationship between husband and wife is hierarchical. The early feminist Mary Astell, for example, concluded that a woman "who Marrys ought to lay it down for an indisputable Maxim, that her Husband must govern absolutely and intirely, and that she has nothing else to do but to Please and Obey" (116). If the tone of her remark is bitterly ironic, she nevertheless subscribed to its general tenor. Because women are valuable beings, and because wives ought nevertheless to obey, women should "duly examine and weigh all the Circumstances, the Good and Evil of a Married State" before they decide for or against it (127; cf. also Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 69). Similarly, Hester Mulso, who argued against Richardson that the duties of sons must be the same as the duties of daughters, acknowledged a difference of duties in the case of husband and wife – based on the marriage vows (Mulso 236–7). The relationship of brotherhood, then, can be understood only as the relationship between *potential*, not actual, equals. By grouping together diverse sorts of relationships, Allestree emphasizes anew the paramount importance of the father-child relationship – while skimming over conflicts in other hierarchical relationships.

Delany's fifteen sermons are structured more clearly according to content and in a way which highlights the principle of reciprocity. Their focus is the "social duties" – Allestree's "duty to one's neighbour". However, these are clearly to be understood as part of the wider framework of duties detailed in *The Whole Duty*. Delany makes the explicit link at the outset of sermon VIII: "All the precepts of religion respect either our duty to God, to our Neighbour, or to Ourselves: [...] the duties we owe to ourselves, are but secondary and subservient to those [other duties]" (139).[16] Each sermon takes a particular scriptural quotation for

16 Anna Howe challenges this, to some extent, by noting that "Justice is due to one's self, as well as to everybody else" (*Clarissa* 210). Similarly, Mulso argues that "marriage with a hated object [...] is contrary to our duty to God, to a husband, and to ourselves" (231). While it is possible that she means that such a marriage is contrary to duty to oneself because it is a sin and therefore hurts the soul, the fact that she distinguishes between duty to God and duty to oneself indicates that she also wishes to imply that one ought to act for one's own happiness.

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its starting point, and, in most cases, a particular social relationship is allotted exactly one sermon. The first sermon serves as a kind of introduction, insisting, similarly to Allestree, that "*Universal Righteousness [is] absolutely necessary to social Honesty*" (1). Sermons II and III[17] concern the duties of marriage partners, while sermons IV–VII address the duties of parents to children. Interestingly, and in contrast to Allestree, Delany starts with the chronologically earlier duty. Allestree emphasizes the duty due *to* parents; by placing children's duties first, he structurally confirms the point which he also makes explicitly, namely that children have no excuse to rebel against a tyrant parent. The rights of parents take precedence over – come before – the welfare of children. If Delany, on the other hand, starts with the parents' duty, he implicitly stresses parents' responsibility to their offspring and attributes blame to them if their children should be undutiful.[18] And when, again like Allestree (298), he includes gratitude as a reason for obedience, he tacitly acknowledges that filial gratitude requires parental kindness. This is not, however, to say that Delany does not take children's duty (sermons VIII–IX) seriously. In one point, he goes even further than Allestree, stating that "I have often admired it, as a glorious instance of discipline in the *Jewish* commonwealth, that an undutiful child was to be stoned to death by the people" (149). The term 'admiration' is clearly not meant in the sense of 'wonder' – in the next passage, Delany continues to call this law "the wisest institution that ever obtained in any nation" (150).[19]

Sermon X is concerned with servants' duties to masters, its counterpart, XI, with masters' duties to servants. Sermons XII–XIII are concerned with more general relationships among men, particularly the duty of paying debts. Based on the same quotation, Delany goes on, in sermon XIII, to discourse on the duty of love. Sermon XIV concerns the duties of a ruler toward his subjects, a topic which Allestree had refused to discuss – a difference which may be explained in the different political situation. Allestree, a royalist writing shortly before the Restoration, had reason enough to complain that most people were "already much better read" in the "duty of their Supreme" than in their own (291; Sunday XIV). Delany's final sermon, XV, concerns the "*[m]utual Duty of* Princes *and* People". Remarkably, this sermon, "*Preached on the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of* King Charles I" (299), unites in its title reverence for a king who believed in the absolute authority of kings with

17 According to the table of contents, only sermon II.

18 Allestree does this, too, but there is no such structural reinforcement.

19 Such radically conservative statements go hand-in-hand with an attention not only to foreign customs, but to science, including contemporary medical sources – for example, in his discussion on a mother's duty to breastfeed her child (79–87; sermon IV).

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an emphasis on reciprocity.[20] Despite the explicit admiration of Charles as possessing "more personal virtues, than perhaps any one Prince recorded in history" (305), an equal emphasis is awarded to the (English) ruler's function as "the guardian of the liberty and rights, religious, and civil, of his people. This is his true character, and the only foundation of his power" (304). Without going so far as to explicitly condone rebellion, Delany here leaves some ground for the supposition that the breach of duty in one party may justify rebellion in the other. The contrast to his attitude to the parent-child relationship is striking: the concept of absolute obedience appears more resilient in private than in public life (cf. Kay 169).

Despite their differences, both Allestree and Delany ground their system of moral duty in a combination of reciprocity[21] and patriarchy – the system which Richardson draws on for the moral dilemmas played out in his novels. Hierarchical structures overlay more egalitarian ones of brotherhood (or, in Richardson's novels, bonding among women), and the authority at the top is envisaged as male and based on fatherhood.[22] Reciprocity is equally crucial. Insistence that the breach of duty in one party does not cancel the other's duty goes hand in hand with the presumption that undutifulness commonly amounts to ingratitude. What is missing in the moral tracts, however, is a detailed response to *conflicts* of duty, although Allestree and Delany present the individual as enmeshed in a network of obligations. In the case of the former, this network appears particularly complex: alms-giving, for example, is owed on two different grounds: "He that is in poverty and need, must be relieved by him that is in plenty; and he is bound to it, not only in charity, but even in justice" (283;

20 For perspectives on the civil war, the Glorious Revolution and the Jacobite rebellion in connection with issues raised in *Clarissa*, see Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa (for Delany, specifically 168–170).

21 The principle of reciprocity is also recognised by writers who grant more rights to children than Allestree does and than Delany seems to do. The principle is evoked not only by Locke, but also in the passage from Pufendorf which Mulso quotes (235–6; cf. part II).

22 The law, just like moral writers, distinguished between the male and the female parent. Thus, William Blackstone notes that it is possible in special cases to waive the requirement of a mother's or guardian's consent to the marriage of minors, "but no provision is made, in case the father should labour under any mental or other incapacity" (426; bk. I, ch. XV). Blackstone also specifies that "a mother, as such, is entitled to no power [over her child], but only to reverence and respect" (441; bk. I, ch. XVI). In contrast, Locke, speaking of the power which parents have by God's command, emphasizes that it is parental rather than paternal – an argument which is useful for refuting Filmer, but which is more concerned with moral obligation than with the law (321; II § 52).

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Sunday XIII)[23]. Similarly, good counsel is due to a spouse, to friends and even enemies (significantly, it is not mentioned as a *filial* duty[24]), and, finally, every duty to one's "neighbour", and even to one's self, is tied up with duty to God. With regard to servants, for example, Allestree writes: "God has commanded Servants thus to obey their Masters; and therefore the obedience they pay is to God" (335; Sunday XV). Yet although he acknowledges the possibility that a person in authority may issue "unlawful commands", and although he insists that these must not be obeyed, he provides little to no framework for dealing with conflicts of duty.

It is, perhaps, more a symptom than a cause of this that the word 'reciprocity' so frequently mentioned in Richardson's novels is used in a two-fold sense. "It is my notion, that one person's remissness in duty, where there is a reciprocal one, does not absolve the other party from the performance of his", Harriet Byron writes, commenting on Sir Thomas's domestic tyranny (1:315). She makes a similar point when discussing Lady L.'s secret correspondence with her later husband: "Ought you not to have done *your* duty, whether your father did *his*, or not?" (1:333). The severity of the remark is somewhat mitigated by the fact that it is not addressed to Lady L. directly, but occurs as an apostrophe in a letter to Lucy Selby. In contrast, Lovelace makes a very different use of the term. Thus, when he writes to Belford concerning his uncle Lord M.'s public criticism of him, he comments: "He is very undutiful, as thou knowest. Surely, I may say so; since all duties are reciprocal" (415). Clearly, what differentiates the usage of 'reciprocity' by the heroine of *Grandison* and the villain of *Clarissa*, respectively, is more than their good or bad intentions. Rather, their concepts of reciprocity are different. For Harriet, reciprocal duty means a stable relationship between two parties who are each obliged to do some specified good to the other. For Lovelace, reciprocity means an exchange of goods as in a contract. Thus, if his uncle "rave[s]" at him, he may be called undutiful in return (415). Whether he talks of duties or of voluntary benefits, exchange is at the heart of Lovelace's concept of reciprocity, and he takes care to be the one who has more to give. Significantly, he is too proud to accept financial help – and, in consequence, "control" – from his relations (50).

The sociologist Alvin Gouldner provides the vocabulary to problematize the system of reciprocity underlying Allestree's and Delany's as well as Richard-

23 "If any think it improper, that the same acts should be made part of Justice and Charity too, I shall desire them to consider that Charity being by Christ's command become a debt to our brethren, all the parts of it may in that respect be ranked under the head of Justice, since 'tis sure, paying of debts is a part of that" (Allestree 387–8; Sunday XVII).

24 Except perhaps indirectly in the case of dementia (cf. 302; Sermon XIV).

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son's works. In his classic article "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement" (1960), he distinguishes between complementarity and reciprocity. A little confusingly, he first enumerates four types of "complementarity", before specifying that "[p]roperly speaking, *complementarity* refers only to the first two meanings", while the last two "involve true instances of *reciprocity*" (57). I quote his definitions and examples in some detail because their relevance to Richardson's works (as well as to Allestree's and Delany's) becomes thus immediately apparent:

> Complementarity 1 may mean that a right (x) of Ego against Alter implies a duty (- x) of Alter to Ego. […] The interesting sociological questions, however, arise only when issues of empirical substance rather than logical implication are raised. For example, where a group shares a belief that some status occupant has a certain right, say the right of a wife to receive support from her husband, does the group in fact also share a belief that the husband has an obligation to support the wife? Furthermore, even though rights may logically or empirically imply duties, it need not follow that the reverse is true.
> Complementarity 2 may mean that what is a duty (- x) of Alter to Ego implies a right (*x*) of Ego against Alter. On the *empirical* level, while this is often true, of course, it is also sometimes false. For example, what may be regarded as a duty of charity or forbearance […] need not be *socially* defined as the *right* of the recipient. (56)

Intriguingly, Gouldner's two examples concern cases very much at the heart of Richardson's work. Indeed, it is of vital importance to differentiate between 'right' and 'duty'. Although, as Gouldner implies, there are many cases when the right of one party and the duty of the other amount to the same thing, such a connection is by no means inevitable.

Adam Smith notes the distinction in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, using the "trite example" of "a highwayman" who, "by the fear of death, obliges a traveller to promise him a certain sum of money. Whether such a promise, extorted in this manner by unjust force, ought to be regarded as obligatory, is a question that has been very much debated" (330; VII.iv.9). One of those who has "debated" it is Lovelace. Beginning to suspect Clarissa of a lie, he complains to Belford that "it is a sad thing for good people to break their word when it is in their power to keep it". Belford, of course, may have an obvious reply to this, so Lovelace continues: "You perhaps will ask: What honest man is obliged to keep his promise with a highwayman? for well I know your unmannerly way of making comparisons: but I say, *every* honest man is" (1269). This convenient conclusion – which binds the "honest" Clarissa but not the "profligate wretch Lovelace" (1270) – is, once more, enforced by the concept of reciprocal duty: "can my not doing *my* duty,

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warrant another for not doing *his*? Thou wilt not say it can" (1270). As long as Lovelace can demand that Clarissa exercise Gouldner's "forbearance", it does not matter that he does not deserve it.

Even in cases where "a right (x) of Ego against Alter implies a duty (- x) of Alter to Ego" and vice versa, the emphasis is often on only one of these terms. The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", for example, implies, by listing the essential rights of each individual, a corresponding duty of each individual (as well as institutions) to respect and guarantee such rights (evidenced, on the linguistic level, by the frequent appearance of the word "shall"). However, the choice of the term 'right' rather than 'duty' emphasizes the inalienability of these rights and, potentially, the privilege to enforce them. In contrast, Allestree's and Delany's emphasis on duty not only highlights the individual's responsibility, but frequently and explicitly comments on the fact that such duty must not be knit to any corresponding rights. In *The Whole Duty of Man*, for example, unconditional obedience to rulers is enforced by the following comment: "And 'tis observable that these precepts were given at a time, when those powers were Heathens, and cruel persecutors of Christianity; to shew us that no pretence of the wickedness of our Rulers can free us from this duty" (2[90]; Sunday XIV). The (non-)enforcement of reciprocity is clearly linked to issues of hierarchy and equality, as well. The pressure not to recognise another's duty as one's own right is particularly strong on those who hold an inferior position.

Gouldner's third and fourth types of "complementarity" are two formulations of virtually the same thing: one party's right towards another also implies a duty towards that other. These are the types which he goes on to call "reciprocity" and which are concerned with notions of fairness and balance, although he stresses that reciprocity does not automatically mean *equal* returns. "In short, complementarity connotes that one's rights are another's obligations, and *vice versa.* Reciprocity, however, connotes that *each* party has rights *and* duties" (57).

Applying these two concepts to *The Whole Duty of Man* and *Fifteen Sermons*, one can make several interesting observations. First, as indicated above, complementarity is suppressed. Although a parent, for example, is bound in duty to support his[25] children in a style suitable to his fortune and position, there is no corresponding right of the children to enforce such provision: indeed, Clarissa is "determined not to litigate with my papa" (134) even for an estate

25 Although the plural term parents – implying both father and mother – tends to be used when a child's duty is described, the father's position is differentiated from the mother's frequently enough to justify the general use of the male pronoun – especially as the husband also has a duty to support his wife.

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that is already hers by law. The young Charles Grandison goes even further, representing the allowance his father grants him as a gift rather than something owed him. Therefore, when Sir Thomas is forced to ask his son to "join in the security" for a debt, the latter can reply: "Why, Sir, did you condescend to write to me on the occasion, as if for my consent? […] That I *am*, under God, is owing to you. That I am *what I am*, to your indulgence. Leave me not any-thing!" (1:329–330).

However, although both Allestree and Delany emphasize the unconditional nature of duty, their strictures against enforcing another's duty are directed exclusively at the subordinate party. Allestree, in particular, specifies both in the case of children and of wives that no fault of father or husband can excuse their own lack of obedience (304, 325; Sundays XIV, XV). He makes no similar point with regard to husbands' or fathers' duties to wives and children. Although he is always ready to remind his readers of the dangers of hell, and although he warns parents and others that enticing anyone to sin will lead to damnation, the condemnation of every kind of 'rebellion' leaves subjects, children, wives and servants at the mercy of their superiors. The duty of the superior party, meanwhile, is described in more conflicting terms. Despite general injunctions that all duties must be performed as coming from God (and are thus due to *His* mercy, rather than to benefits conferred by humans), the duties of leaders spiritual and political, as well as of fathers, husbands and masters, explicitly include responsibility for their subordinates' behaviour. They are thus, to some extent, compelled to enforce the other party's duty.

Nevertheless, the suppression of complementarity in *some* cases may help to obscure the unfairness and oppressive potential of the system of duty as a whole; theoretically, at least, parents and husbands, too, must do their duty even to bad children and wives. Therefore, in contrast to complementarity, reciprocity is emphasized by Allestree and Delany. It is noteworthy, however, that it is 'conceptual', rather than 'actual', reciprocity that matters to them. In Gouldner's terms,

> [s]pecific and complementary duties are owed by role partners to one another by virtue of the socially standardized roles they play. These may require an almost unconditional compliance in the sense that they are incumbent on all those in a given status simply by virtue of its occupancy. In contrast, the generalized norm of reciprocity evokes obligations toward others on the basis of their past behavior. (59)

The duties of parents and children, for example, are reciprocal in so far as each side owes the other certain benefits; however, each side is obliged to confer such benefits whether or not they also receive any. For Allestree and Delany, status

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duties are structured according to norms of reciprocity, but are severed from them in actual practice. This can be done, in part, because benefits conferred on other human beings are conceptualized as being mostly returns for divine benefits. That is, while social duties are structured according to the norm of reciprocity, *actual reciprocal exchange* takes place mostly, and matters most, in the relationship of the divine and the human. For example, since God is the source of "all our plenty", and since this gift cannot be repaid directly, "whatever we should by way of thankfulness give back again unto God, our alms is the way of doing it" (Allestree 374; Sunday XVII). The person receiving alms may have done nothing to deserve them, but this is unimportant compared to the exchange taking place between God and the donor of charity. Practical reciprocity is brought in, on the one hand, to emphasize God's mercy in contrast to the poor returns that men are able to make; incidentally, men are so sinful that even the best can have no *right* to divine beneficence. On the other hand, reciprocity acts as an additional incentive for the performance of one's duty. Although there may be parents, as Allestree concedes, who neglect and tyrannize their children, most confer (god-like) benefits that no child can expect to repay (Allestree 299; Sunday XIV).

Richardson largely shared the values outlined in *The Whole Duty of Man*; indeed, both his novels and his letters provide ample evidence of this.[26] Nevertheless, his works also problematize the system of duty. They do this, on the one hand, by emphasizing the misery of the victims of the system – often barred from self-defence by the very principles which are trampled on by their oppressors – and, on the other hand, by presenting his heroines as the centre of a network of duties which they try to negotiate. This is less true of the hero; although Sir Charles is shown as successfully fulfilling all his duties, he is rarely depicted facing contradictory obligations.[27] As a man, moreover, he escapes some of the conflicts which Pamela and Clarissa have to confront. *The Whole Duty of Man* does not explicitly gender its reader; the "man" of the title is a human being, who

26 To several correspondents, Richardson formulated his views on reciprocity in terms very similar to those used in his novels. Writing to Frances Grainger, he insists: "Be pleased, Madam, always to remember this Great Rule, inculcated thro'out the History of Clarissa, That in all reciprocal Duties the Non-Performance of the Duty on one Part is not an excuse for the Failure of the other" (*Selected Letters* 144; 22 Jan. 1749/50). He had made the same point to Susanna Highmore (131; 26 Nov. 1749) and would make it again to Sarah Chapone (201; 2 Mar. 1752).

27 The greatest trial which Sir Charles has to face in the present of the novel – marriage negotiations with a Roman Catholic and her family – is not quite a conflict of duty; although he loves and admires Clementina, he is not, strictly speaking, under any obligation to marry her.

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may be either a woman (who needs to pay attention to a wife's duties) or a man. However, this apparently neutral gendering actually obscures the differences in the situations of women and men – just as modern gender-neutral language may obscure this today (cf. Pateman 16–7). Edward Young "called *Clarissa* '*The Whole Duty of WOMAN*'", implicitly, and perhaps unconsciously, drawing attention to the fact that the "whole duty" of an individual is partly gender-based (qtd. in Eaves & Kimpel 286).[28] In Richardson's hands, then, the individual is feminised.[29] The system of duty now takes on an ambivalent function: it constrains women by limiting the heroines' options of rebellion, but it also empowers them by validating some forms of disobedience.

1.2 *Clarissa* and the system of duty

The problem of (reciprocal) duty appears most prominently, and most problematically, in Richardson's second novel, although it also features in various discussions in *Grandison.* The presentation of few fictional heroines is as focused on universal "duty" and usefulness as that of Clarissa Harlowe. In contrast, Richardson's Harriet Byron is shown in those social relationships and moral struggles which are least connected to status duties, and Clementina's struggles are, for the most part, far removed from quotidian duties, let alone household tasks. It is unclear if either of them takes part in managing the house, while much is made of Clarissa's housekeeping. Pamela is closest to Clarissa in that especially her life after marriage centres on her responsibilities as mistress of a family and wife of a rakish man. The presentation of duty and of conflicts of duty, however, is quite different (cf. part II).

At the same time, it should be emphasized that, if few heroines are defined by dutifulness and useful self-organization as Clarissa is, there are also few as explicitly intent on guarding both their "free will" and their private time and space (cf. also Spacks, *Privacy* 16–8). With regard to the first, Clarissa goes so far as to accuse Solmes of intending her dishonour, "if endeavouring to force a free mind is to dishonour it!" (323). (At this point, she still refuses to consider the possibility that her "honour" may be threatened in a more conventional sense).

28 Some conduct books were, in fact, based on gender and class; Allestree himself is also credited with the authorship of *The Gentleman's Calling* (Spurr) and *The Ladies Calling* (cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 106 n.75).

29 Clarissa demonstrates her ability to adapt the male pronoun in religious writings to her own case when she creates her meditations out of biblical passages (cf. R. Erickson 196).

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Throughout most of the novel, Clarissa also defends her private space, not only as a sanctuary from her family's and Lovelace's oppression, but as a space of meditation and (epistolary) communication. Michael Suarez draws attention to the fact that Lovelace "understands that what she really wants is autonomy; accordingly, he routinely promises Clarissa the freedom that she is denied at home" (75). In marked contrast to his promises, one of their earliest quarrels is brought on when he grudges her the time she spends writing to Anna – an issue which comes up repeatedly (420).

After Clarissa's death, Anna describes her usual distribution of her private time before the conflict with her family. Significantly, the division she makes is based on a "self-set lesson" and includes considerations of duty as well as of pleasure (1470). Her short night – six hours of sleep only, like Lovelace (74) –, Anna explains, is for her a cordial rather than a mortification: "She thought herself not so well, and so clear in her intellects (so *much alive*, she used to say) if she exceeded this proportion" (1470).[30] Most of her hours are allotted to social engagements in the broadest sense (including household management and visits to the poor), yet the first three are for "closet-duties" and letter writing. Despite the apparent strictness of Clarissa's self-imposed system, she is always ready to "*borrow*, as she called it, from other distributions" (1470) in order to gratify her family or visitors. Her – or Anna's – terminology highlights the way in which such accommodation constitutes private time: her hours are Clarissa's to distribute and manage, just as she manages the money from which she donates alms. Her daily schedule is in accordance with contemporary conduct books for women (cf. Kukorelly, "Domesticating the Hero" 157), yet the emphasis is consistently on "choice". Indeed, Clarissa emphasises that she does not regard her strict time-keeping as a duty, "but when it is more pleasant to me to keep such an account than to let it alone; why may I not proceed in my supererogatories?" (1472). This is one of the ways in which the system of duty is presented as one which enables good women: Clarissa expresses her individuality through acting on the best rules known to her. Like Richardson's other heroines, she "defines herself through the *ability* to make moral and rational choices, and this is true even when the power of *acting* on such choice is obstructed" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 71).

Like modern 'positive thinking' and self-improvement, this kind of (female) agency is double-edged: it has the potential to empower the individual, but may also deflect attention away from larger social problems by focusing on

30 This fits Allestree's statement on temperance with regard to sleep: "it can scarce be said, that the sluggard lives" (205; Sunday IX).

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individual responsibility. Incidentally, if strict time-keeping is not, as Clarissa admits, a duty, the formulation calls attention to the fact that a considerable part of life *is* precisely that. However, duty can also enable resistance. Thus, Pamela's steadfast rejection of her master's advances is justified by the duty of chastity. Her self-defence – which includes her spreading knowledge of his behaviour to parents and potential helpers as well as her using 'impertinent' language – requires her to be actively disobedient. Allestree's idea of "passive obedience" (2[90]; Sunday XIV) – that is, refusing to act on unjust commands, but without taking precautions to evade punishment – is here out of the question. If the consequence of obedience to Mr. B. is the sin of debauchery, then the consequence of disobedience without self-defence is her rape. Yet Pamela verbally turns the tables on Mr. B. When he asks, after having kissed her in the summer house, what harm he has done to her, she answers: "You have taught me to forget myself, and what belongs to me, and have lessen'd the Distance that Fortune has made between us, by demeaning yourself, to be so free to a poor Servant" (23). Pamela manages to rhetorically change his position (Mr. B. is now closer to her, having debased himself) and simultaneously to rebuke him for not living up to his status (which, ordered by Fortune, should be stable), even while blaming any impertinence she might commit on his "teaching". According to Allestree, teaching his inferiors morality is a crucial branch of a master's duty (cf. 338; Sunday XV). Thus, when Pamela accuses Mr. B. of leading her astray (even if only to impertinence rather than lewdness), her words are a reminder of the duties he should fulfil. Moreover, she has changed the ground from a discussion of her own misbehaviour to his – she will not claim to behave perfectly herself, but the worse her actions are, the worse are his for tempting her to commit them (as we will see, after their marriage it is Mr. B. who employs a similar strategy).

Duty, then, can be perceived as the foundation of power of *the person owing* the duty. This is true to different extents in confrontations with people who do, or who do not, acknowledge the system of duty. Pamela's main antagonist, Mr. B., may choose to live according to common practice rather than Christian morality when trying to seduce his servant, but this does not mean that he rejects Pamela's standard entirely (cf. Kay 163). Indeed, his conversion is brought about to a large extent through his recognition that Pamela's virtue is genuine rather than affected. Richardson's rival Henry Fielding indirectly testifies to the power of this standard in his parody: in order to depict his anti-Pamela, Shamela, as a hypocrite, he makes her not only cunning and designing, but unchaste (so much so, in fact, that she is finally "caught […] in bed with *Williams*"; 344). Deviation from Christian morality to rakish practice must be justified through the alleged insincerity of the desired woman.

Clarissa's problem, in contrast, is that the system of duty does not clearly privilege her position over that of her parents. She and her family agree that a child should obey, and in general, Clarissa is "the most dutiful daughter anyone in her world has ever known" (Zwinger 14). Yet now that their interests clash, they find that "no law interprets itself" (Kay 163). Even if it is acknowledged that a daughter may passively resist *some* commands, and possibly voice criticism in some cases, the point at which this happens is subject to interpretation and contention. For Allestree, such a point is almost literally unmentionable. In the case of wives – whose relation to a husband, as indicated above, is more equal than that of child to parent – he specifies that, if they are commanded "something, which though it be not unlawful, is yet very inconvenient and imprudent [...] it will be no disobedience in her, but duty, calmly and mildly to shew him the inconveniences thereof" (324; Sunday XV). Although they must yield if they find their husband unpersuadable, duty not only justifies, but almost compels, some resistance; Pamela acts on this principle when she tries to persuade Mr. B. to let her nurse their son herself (cf. part II). However, Allestree gives no similar justification for exhortation to children, who must obey every command which "is either good, or not evil" (301; Sunday XIV). Delany is somewhat more alert to the possibility that a child may need to resist parents, although this admission is carefully placed in the midst of an exhortation to children to show reverence: "Respect is a natural restraint upon us [...] even when we are obliged to reason and remonstrate against [parents'] conduct. Such is that earnest intercession of *Jonathan* to his father *Saul*, for the life of *David* his friend" (144; Sermon VI).[31] Anna – whose friendship with Clarissa is compared by the latter to Jonathan's – justifies her conflict with her mother by her duty as a friend (477).

Delany's cited exception to the rule of obedience, however, is based on duty to others. When it comes to resistance as self-defence, he is even more reticent. He acknowledges only implicitly that unquestioning obedience may be relaxed, but not dispensed with, in the case of marriage. Significantly, he does so while discussing parental, rather than filial, duty (thus, once more, evading the question of children's *rights*). Addressing parents' authority in the question of marriage, he condemns not only violence, but also over-persuasion, reminding parents that a dutiful child may be led to not mention her justified, or at least involuntary, aversion to a proposed marriage partner: "But although they [parents who persuade] act with less appearance of violence, may be as

31 Even Allestree, who is so insistent on a child's duty of obedience, remarks favourably on Jonathan, who "draws his Father's anger upon him, to turn it from *David*" (332; Sunday XV). He does so, however, when talking of the duties of friends, not of children.

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guilty; and by insinuations and artful address prevail over fearful and modest minds, and obtain a consent, when they have not courage or assurance enough to resist or contend on such an occasion" (135; Sermon VII). He does not go so far as to say a child may speak out without the parents' invitation, or even point-blank refuse to obey. However, by stating that the *most* dutiful children *may* be silent until urged by the parents to voice their feelings, he leaves room to assume that a respectful resistance is not condemnable.

Nevertheless, admitting that there are cases where parents should not insist on their authority does not automatically clarify how such a situation should be negotiated. All the Harlowes, including Clarissa, agree that she should obey those commands which are neither impossible nor immoral. However, as Gouldner notes, the fact "[t]hat the norm commonly imposes obligations of reciprocity only 'when the individual is able' to reciprocate does not guarantee agreement concerning the individual's 'ability'" (66). After all, Clarissa says she cannot honestly marry Solmes; her family say she can – but who is to judge? And how can Clarissa voice her opposition with due respect if her parents do not allow her to speak? The difficulty of doing so is, ironically, highlighted by comments of sympathetic critics who admire her resistance. Janet Todd, for instance, approvingly notes that "[i]t seems that she is overtly obedient then, while covertly recalcitrant" (12). Clarissa would not have been comfortable with this assessment of her behaviour, for it implies that she is a rebel, just as her family claim – not an obedient daughter faced with an impossible command, as she herself argues.

In order to justify her resistance to hierarchy, Clarissa draws on the network of duties. Within the novel that bears her name, she is the most determined spokesperson for general duty. At one point – disgusted by the selfishness she perceives both in Solmes and in her own relations – she writes wistfully: "And yet, in my opinion, the world is but one great family; originally it was so; what then is this narrow selfishness that reigns in us, but relationship remembered against relationship forgot?" (62). Her statement is based on the system of duty, with its insistence on the mutual ties which bind all men to each other, but it is also a daring revision of it. If "family" is just another term for "mankind", then there is no place for absolute (human) authority, no justification for privileging the demands of one person over the interests of all others.

Such a conviction puts into question not only the attitude of the Harlowes, but that of others who wish to claim a privileged position with regard to the heroine – including Lovelace and Clarissa's best friend Anna. Thus, Todd notes with some regret that "Clarissa cannot wholeheartedly return Anna's love, seeing it detracting from the primary love of family" (54). She

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identifies "a coldness here that speaks not only of Clarissa's distress at Anna's awkward aid but of her uneasy fear of 'unbridled' friendship" (55). Despite these misgivings about Clarissa's apparent lack of fervent friendship, Todd also suggests that the heroine's death is in part a response to a world which does not accept single-minded devotion to a friend. Clarissa, according to her, "now understands that to live is to live for more than her friend and to be forever in conflict" (58). However, the heroine has always known that she must live for more than either her friend or her family. Indeed, the fervency of her friendship with Anna takes such prominence precisely because she is cut off from most of her other relationships in the course of the novel. Far from wishing to confine her sense of duty and relationship to any one person, Clarissa yearns for a world where all relationships can work together, rather than against each other.

At least one of Richardson's early readers clearly recognised this aspect of *Clarissa* and spelled out the implications of diversity of duties. In a letter dated 22 April 1750, David Graham, then a student at Cambridge (Schellenberg 11 n.1), writes about misreadings of Clarissa's behaviour. Readers who criticise her for disobedience, lack of self-assertion, prudery, or coquetry, fail to appreciate her, he thinks, because her behaviour

> is not leaven'd with their [own] infirmities: Their mistake proceeds from their ignorance of the grand rule of morality; which seems to consist in an unreserved obedience to the divine will: In which, as in a fix'd point, all the duties resulting from the several relations of social life, like lines drawn in a circle, so as not to interfere with each other, should ultimately center. But 'tis the privilege of few to be able steadily to keep their Eye on that mark, without being misled by those delusions, which education and custom have sanctified by the name of Virtue [...]. (Schellenberg, *Correspondence* 14–5)

In accordance with moral writers, Graham notes that at the centre of one's conduct stands not any single human relationship, however important, but the "divine will". In contrast to them, however, he continues to show that in order "to keep one's eye on that mark", the individual herself needs, as it were, to take a step back from any single relationship as well as from "those delusions" attached to common conceptions of virtue. Besides implying that the performance of duty necessitates not only good intentions but clear perceptions, he includes the impediments to truly moral behaviour: false preconceptions, but also, if only by implication, the possibility that the "lines drawn in a circle" might, despite everything, "interfere with each other". If one reverses Graham's image by putting into the centre the individual who needs

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to act, rather than the (sun-like) God, and if one combines this with a parallel image of other individuals, a network forms – and, almost inevitably, the lines will indeed "interfere with each other". Graham's imagery, moreover, puts *all* duties on one level; they all equally derive from God. The logical implication – which, unsurprisingly, he does not spell out – is that unlimited human authority cannot easily coexist with diversity of duties. Thus, the necessity of judging for oneself, rather than obeying blindly, is justified on an abstract conceptual level.

However, once the individual leaves this abstract level to deal with a specific situation, matters become complicated. Within the system of duty, Clarissa must obey any command by her father that is not in itself "unlawful". If her situation is perceived to be mainly about *filial* duty, her options shrink to the simple binary opposition of obedience or rebellion. If, in contrast, her dilemma is interpreted as a *conflict of duties*, the situation becomes more complex. As she repeatedly argues, she cannot marry Solmes without disregarding the just claims of many others. For example, Solmes proposes to settle all his money irrevocably on her and her family. This would deprive his own relations of "their just expectations"; therefore, she is justified in refusing him (81). In addition, since "he is not only narrow, but covetous", he would interfere with her charity to the poor (153). More importantly, her avowed fear that she will be unable to love and respect Solmes – and thus to fulfil her marriage-vow – in her view even compels her to resist marrying him. Mulso agreed with her: the very weight of the marriage vow, she thought, calls for female self-determination before marriage. In her debate with Richardson, she at first argued that marrying a man one does not love is a breach of the marriage-vow and therefore sinful (206). In this specific case, she could even have drawn on *The Whole Duty of Man* for support, for Allestree explains that, if someone thinks erroneously that the action he is going to commit is a sin and does it nevertheless, this "may make an indifferent action that is in itself no sin, become one. For though my Conscience should err in telling me such a thing were unlawful, yet so long as I were so perswaded, it were sin for me to do that thing" (74; Sunday III).

Richardson eventually brought Mulso to partly retract her statement and concede that the marriage vow is not a statement of present love, but a promise to "*endeavour* to love" (219). In a world where daughters have little power to evade a forced marriage, it is to some extent reassuring to believe that Clarissa, had she yielded to her parents, would not have been guilty of perjury. On the other hand, this interpretation could be a justification for forced marriage, as Mulso was quick to notice. Richardson seems to have suggested to her that

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Clarissa would have loved Solmes had she married him.[32] Mulso reacted with shocked indignation:

> […] I did not expect […] *of Mr. Richardson*, that however strong your aversion may be to your *lover*, you can't fail of loving your *husband*; as if the ceremony of marriage could […] remove the natural antipathy between worth and baseness, between good sense and folly, between the grovelling, dirty little soul of a Solmes, and that of the almost divine Clarissa. (215)

She therefore still insisted that Clarissa, and in fact "every woman", "as a rational creature, […] must have a right to refuse to shackle her conscience with a vow, if she does not choose it" (245). After all, Clarissa herself describes the traumatic aspects even of a happy marriage in a moving plea to her uncle John:

> To be given up to a strange man; to be engrafted into a strange family; to give up her very name, as a mark of her becoming his absolute and dependent property: to be obliged to prefer this strange man to father, mother—to everybody: and his humours to all her own—Or to contend, perhaps, in breach of a vowed duty for every innocent instance of free will: to go no-whither: to make acquaintance: to give up acquaintance—to renounce even the strictest friendships perhaps; all at his pleasure, whether she think it reasonable to do so or not. Surely, sir, a young creature ought not to be obliged to make all these sacrifices but for such a man as she can approve. (148–9)

Since the status of wife entails a re-construction of the bride's entire network of duty and of her very identity, it should never be forced on a woman.

Besides the diversity of duties, Clarissa (and her creator) draw on her general dutifulness as evidence for her good motives in this case. As both Anna and Lovelace observe, and as the Harlowes themselves occasionally complain, it is they who are blamed in their contention with Clarissa. From the first letter, it is clear that Clarissa is both "the subject of the public talk" and "the public care" (39). Indeed, as Anna formulates it, "[e]very eye, in short, is upon you with the expectation of an example" (40). Despite her integration into her family and the community as a whole, Clarissa's merits have singled her out, disposing people to take side with her (at least in theory), but also ensuring the inconveniences of public talk – which will enrage, but not otherwise influence, the Harlowes.

32 Similarly, he wrote to Sarah Chapone that, had Clarissa "been prevailed upon to go to the Altar with Solmes, there can be no doubt, but she would have made him an excellent Wife. She would have endeavoured to love him; and if she could not, it would have been a very hard Sentence, to pronounce upon her, that she incurred the guilt of Perjury" (*Selected Letters* 207; 18 Apr. 1752).

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(Lovelace, too, has been attracted by public talk about Clarissa's virtues, cf. 143). While the "family union" (80) lasted, Clarissa's reputation reflected positively on the Harlowes (584). However, once she resists one of their commands, the "union" is broken, and the contention invites comparison between the relative merits of the different family members. Thus, if Clarissa is in the right, it follows that blame must attach to the other Harlowes, and if she is in the wrong, then the family paragon must have feet of clay. To compel her to obey, the Harlowes quickly confine Clarissa's sphere of action. She is 'discouraged' from attending church (62), an action which in itself casts doubt on the purity of their motives, as "no man must […] absent himself [from public worship] without a just cause" (Allestree 49; Sunday II; cf. also Latimer, *Making Gender* 144).

Given their negligence of the duty of public worship, it is not surprising that the Harlowes also confine Clarissa's actions in the worldly sphere and limit her opportunities to fulfil her duties to her 'neighbours'. The keys needed for, as well as symbolising, her housekeeping are taken away; servants are discouraged from talking to her; she is forbidden to visit, leave the house or correspond. The only freedom left to her is that of going into the garden – a freedom which, on the level of the 'real author', is necessary for the continuance of the story. On the level of the diegesis, it is motivated by the Harlowes' trust in their servants' watchfulness (cf. 164) and Clarissa's continuing 'prudence'. More than this, however, it highlights the way in which Clarissa is less confined *to* a place than barred *from* places, people, and action. Her imprisonment involves a sudden stop not only of her socialising (although, as Uncle Antony taunts her, she was never "fond of" visiting anyway; 155), but of her visits to the poor, of alms-giving, of advising and being advised by her friends or mentors. She loses the opportunity of doing active work in the household or of teaching the servants. That she has done the latter is implied by the gullible, treacherous servant Joseph Leman, who tells Lovelace (and himself) that he has "kept my young lady's pressepts always in mind" (386) at the very time that he has become the villain's agent. If Clarissa's "precepts" have done little good in this case, they are at least preferable to the Harlowes' choice of Leman as a spy on Lovelace – something which gives the latter an opportunity to corrupt him.

By reducing her scope of action to the one duty they want her to perceive, Clarissa's family hope to subdue her strength. Succeeding in cutting off Clarissa's correspondence out of the house would amount to a restriction of her field of action to private prayer and meditation, on the one hand, and to her duty as a daughter, on the other. They basically set the form of hierarchy – the almost unlimited duty of child to parent – against the form of the network. It is James Harlowe junior who expresses this point most openly: "But, *sweet* child! as your

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worthy mamma Norton calls you, think a little less of the *matrimonial* (at least till you come into that state), and a little more of the *filial*, duty" (223). There is an element of hubris to such an enforced reduction of Clarissa's sphere of action: the Harlowes – even while neglecting some of their own duties – place themselves at the centre of Clarissa's obligations, a place which is due only to God. As the novel plays out and Clarissa's sphere of action is further reduced, she does indeed focus her duty on its ultimate source: "God Almighty would not let me depend for comfort upon any but Himself" (1356). Thus, by preventing Clarissa from attending to *all* her duties, both the Harlowes and Lovelace force on her a single-minded attention to God, the ultimate source and centre of all duties. However, even here, Clarissa does not neglect any subsidiary duties, as is shown, among other things, in her meticulous inclusion of everyone connected to her in her will, and in her gradual, conscious "weaning" (cf. 1306, 1372) herself of even her dearest friendships.

As the Harlowes attempt to confine Clarissa, they also confine themselves. A little over a month after she herself has been stopped from church-going (cf. 62), the heroine can remark: "Nobody, it seems, will go to church this day [April 9]. No blessing to be expected perhaps upon views so worldly, and in some so cruel" (362). More charitable constructions would be possible; after all, the family had been shocked and frightened by Lovelace's appearance at their church not long ago (where, significantly but "happily", Clarissa's brother was absent; 140). Nevertheless, their voluntary absence is an indication that they set their aims concerning Clarissa above public worship – she, in contrast, never voluntarily stops going to church, even at the risk of falling into the hands of her parents, after the elopement, or of Lovelace, after her first escape from him. The Harlowes' negligence is at least more harmless than Lovelace's attitude, however: when Clarissa prepares to go to church for the first time in London, he is surprised and almost comically unprepared: "Who could have dreamt of such a whim as this?" (538).

The Harlowes' exclusion of anyone who disagrees with their views about Clarissa's marriage similarly suggests their rejection of moral considerations in this matter. They stop Mrs. Norton's visits to Clarissa, "her opinion not being to their liking" – although, as Clarissa claims, "she is the person of all the world, next to my mamma, the most likely to prevail upon me were the measures they are engaged in, reasonable measures" (62). Clarissa's mother, of course, fails to prevail upon her. Indeed, Clarissa even struggles with her reluctance to ask Anna Howe for sincere advice concerning Solmes, fearing that even this friend may advise her to marry him (66). However, Clarissa's reluctance to accept unpalatable advice is clearly surpassed by that of her family, who

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reject her request that an "impartial person", such as Dr. Lewin, judge between her and her brother (227). Clarissa's cousin Dolly even reports that Dr. Lewin disapproves so much of the Harlowes' behaviour that they have arranged for a different clergyman to marry her to Solmes (364). Other family sins emerge as the Harlowes grow more aggressive against both Lovelace and Clarissa: greed, haughtiness, implacableness, desire for revenge. James swears in front of the entire family, "unchecked either by eye or countenance" (60). Most shockingly, Mr. Harlowe's curse of Clarissa – consigning her not only to worldly ruin, but to hell – directly clashes with parents' duty to bless their children and runs counter to the injunction that when we pray, we must "look that we ask nothing that is unlawful, as revenge upon our enemies, or the like" (Allestree 123; Sunday V).[33]

However, the Harlowes seem to be caught themselves in the conflicting axioms of a system which grants some individuals almost unlimited authority, but also requires every person to be just to *everyone* with whom he or she is connected. All members of the family suffer at least occasionally from the deadlock in which they, as well as Clarissa, find themselves. Repeatedly, the more kind-hearted ones, like Mrs. Harlowe or Uncle John, try to plead for Clarissa, only to be brought to order again. Indeed, John Harlowe's simile of the "*embattled phalanx*" (150) is telling: the family agreement of enforcing Clarissa's obedience is based on military discipline and control. The individuals comprising this seemingly strong and privileged group are as much entangled as Clarissa is. The celebrated "family unity" transpires to have been a phantom all along.

1.3 Duty and interiority

If individual duty is conceptualised as a network of obligations rather than as a dualistic, hierarchical relationship between one who commands and one who obeys, interiority becomes of central importance. A simple hierarchical rela-

33 In the question of Mr. Harlowe's curse, Mulso seems to have won over Richardson to her position that the heroine's fear is superstitious (cf. Mulso 245–6 and Eaves & Kimpel 316). Among the revisions for the 3rd edition of *Clarissa* is a modification of the heroine's attitude to her father's curse. In the first edition, the heroine speculates that her rape may have been the consequence of the malediction; in the revision, she rejects this possibility. This modification, small though it is, has important consequences for the interpretation of the novel. Thus, Florian Stuber uses the revised passage of the 3rd edition to argue that Clarissa's "attitude toward her father's authority" changes in the course of the novel, and he concludes "that Richardson is suspicious of authority" ("On Fathers and Authority" 572, 570).

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tionship may or may not include demands on the inner life of the subordinate (or even the dominant) partner; it may require only obedience or "cheerful obedience". A network, however, always demands that the individual balances his or her diverse duties. Even the most obedient, admiring, humble subject must, according to Allestree, check whether "active obedience" to his prince is in accordance with divine laws. Indeed, *Pamela*'s despicable Mrs. Jewkes illustrates the dangers of the system of duty without this kind of individual judgment: "Look-ye," she tells an indignant Pamela, "[Mr. B.] is my Master, and if he bids me do a Thing that I can do, I think I ought to do it, and let him, who has Power, to command me, look to the Lawfulness of it" (110).

Unlike a hierarchy, a network thus invests the individual with more responsibility and with agency. This agency, in turn, may be open – admitting of debate with all parties concerned – or secret, taking place entirely within the individual consciousness. In its most extreme forms, moral duties like the obligation to love and honour may even demand that the individual hide his or her own thought processes, once completed, from themselves, remembering only their result. In *The Whole Duty of Man*, both extremes are present. On the one hand, it contains pages of advice on how to bring oneself to true repentance. For example, Allestree advises us "sometimes to abridge our selves somewhat of our lawful pleasure" in order to practice the self-denial we need to resist temptations to sin (29; Sunday I). Similarly, he explains with what spirit we should approach the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and how to induce the proper mood in ourselves. For example, in order to feel contrition, we should not only come to a sense of fear of God's punishment – instead,

> the sorrow of a true Penitent must be joyned also with the love of God, and that will make us grieve for having offended him, though there were no punishment to fall upon our selves. The way then to stir up this sorrow in us, is first, To stir up our love of God, by repeating to our selves the many gracious acts of his mercy towards us [...]. (78; Sunday III)

And "at the holy Table", he advises us to "meditate on those bitter sufferings of Christ [...] for the increasing thy Humility and Contrition: then in the second place think of them again, to stir up thy Faith" (90–1; Sunday III).

The aim of such carefully-managed thought processes is absolute control of one's feelings: after all, it "is the peculiar property of God's Laws, that they reach to the heart" (270–1; Sunday XIII). Thus, as children "we"

> must not upon any pretence of infirmity in [our parents] despise or contemn them, either in outward behaviour, or so much as inwardly in our hearts. If indeed they have infirmities it must be our business to cover and conceal them [...] and that in such a

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> manner too, as even themselves might not behold it. We are as much as may be to keep our selves from looking on those nakednesses of our Parents, which may tempt us to think irreverently of them. (297; Sunday XIV)

This leaves little space for the managing of interiority to take place. Ultimately, implicit obedience must come from the heart, and mere outward respect is not enough. Interior thought-processes are necessary for the discharge of one's duty. However, these same processes, if not managed properly, turn only too easily into the seeds of rebellion against the system of duty.

Many critics have discussed interiority with regard to Richardson's novels. Often, these discussions centre on the characters' hidden motivations. Thus, Pamela notoriously delays her departure from her predatory master (cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 20). Clarissa, although the heroine of a much more sophisticated novel perhaps informed by the *Pamela* controversy, has similarly been detected to be a less than transparent character. In this regard, Samuel Johnson's remark that "there is always something which she prefers to truth" is probably the most often-cited contemporary example (*Johnsoniana* 72).[34] John Dussinger, who opens his essay "Truth and storytelling in *Clarissa*" with Johnson's quotation, sums up the reasons as follows: "Clarissa's sincerity as storyteller, we have seen, is in doubt not only because she may have something to hide but, more significantly, because language inevitably leaves something out" (49). Indeed, as Keymer has shown, Clarissa's thoughts remain inaccessible in the absence of an omniscient narrator, for her letters are, he argues, "more immediately concerned with influencing her readers than with representing the truth" (*Richardson's* Clarissa 133). It seems that few critics can envisage a heroine who is both truthful and assertive. Thus, Scott Paul Gordon argues that Clarissa "protects her actions from the taint of self-interest by eliminating her will entirely, by denying that she has an interest to pursue" (*Power* 209). Wendy Ann Lee, meanwhile, is one of the few critics who credits the heroine both with active purpose and with truthfulness. She argues that Clarissa, in fact, aims at absolute objectivity. In her view, the coldness of which this heroine is accused as often as of hypocrisy is, in fact, the result of her aiming at Lockean "indifferency", a detachment which allows her to judge with impartiality.

Each of these accounts elucidates important aspects of *Clarissa*. However, one aspect of the novel seems curiously absent from these discussions. Assembling

34 The remark, recollected by Hester Thrale Piozzi, occurs in the context of a comparison with Fielding's Amelia, whom Johnson praised as "the most pleasing heroine of all the romances" (72).

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evidence that "Clarissa's narrative is misleading" (134), Keymer draws attention to several places where the heroine defends herself from Anna's suspicion that she secretly loves Lovelace but hides this from her friend:

> When she talks of keeping in mind as she writes 'what it became a person of my sex and character to *be* and to *do* … where the imputed love is thought an undutiful, and therefore a criminal, passion', or of her 'desire of appearing … the person I ought to be; had I no other view in it, but to merit the continuance of your good opinion' […], she inspires little confidence. Her letters seem determined not by 'reality' but by the self-image she prefers to project, and they are based on a model of daughterly exemplariness that is increasingly at odds with her actual state. (*Richardson's* Clarissa 134–5)

As a denial of love, the claim cited above is indeed less than satisfactory. However, in the light of the system of duty, Clarissa's reflection on "what it became a person of my sex and character to *be* and to *do*", as well as her "desire of appearing" so, need to be reconsidered. Keymer is right that Clarissa's highest priority is not "reality", at least not in the sense of an uncensored expression of thoughts and emotions – just as Johnson is right that there is "always", or at least often, "something which she prefers to truth". So she must. There is at least one case where truth must be suppressed: children, according to Allestree, must not perceive their parents' faults. In order to be a good daughter, then, Clarissa needs to censor her thoughts, especially those most at odds with the system of duty – her love (if it is that) of a rake and her perception of her father's faults. In the former case, she denies love but "[thinks] it but justice to put in a word for" Lovelace when others criticise him more than is his due (49). In the latter case, her last resort is to "lay down [her] pen" (65) before she succumbs to the urge of criticising him in a letter to Anna.

This is not to deny conscious manipulation on the heroine's part; indeed, Clarissa herself is uncomfortably aware that she is "driven to have recourse to […] artifices" in her own defence (365). My focus here, however, is not to discover the 'true' Clarissa or to conclude that she cannot be 'discovered' by the reader. Instead, I am interested in the implications which the demands of the system of duty have with regard to characters' interiority. Whether or not Clarissa "wrote [her] heart" (176) to Anna is, in this context, less relevant than what this heart ought to feel, and how such feelings can be controlled in cases

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where attractive rakes or despotic fathers provide temptations to lust, anger, and other sins.[35]

In general, the implication of Richardson's novels is that improper impulses can best be restrained when the individual acknowledges the system of duty but is otherwise left to his or her free agency. Both *Clarissa* and *Grandison* thematise individual processes of self-control and their results.[36] In both, methods of self-restraint range from the suppression of inner conflict to its open display. However, while the constraints put on the heroine in the former lead to tragedy, *Grandison* shows how individual agency – whether inner struggles are hidden (Sir Charles) or exposed (Harriet) – leads to a successful connection of individual and public good. As Clarissa expresses it when criticised by Anna for sacrificing her own convenience to that of her servants: "I have my choice: who can wish for more? […] You see what free-will enables one to do; while imposition would make a light burden heavy" (1470).

Yet the exertion of her free will is constantly threatened, and this threat is very much associated with gender division. Agency is, and apparently should be, affected by sex. Despite exposing Clarissa's arrogant brother James, for example, and despite having Clarissa protest against her brother's assumption of paternal power, Richardson never unequivocally states that a son's duties are as strict as a daughter's. Mulso evidently felt the need to argue against gender differentiation in this case. Although she had to admit that Richardson was right in so far that a daughter's rebellion is "more fatal in its consequences" than that of a son, she insisted that their duty was not inherently different (237). Following and improving on Locke's arguments in *Two Treatises of Government*, which she has

35 For these purposes, it is convenient most of the time to ignore the epistolary genre of Richardson's novels, despite Keymer's convincing evidence that all narrators of *Clarissa* are partisan to some degree (and, indeed, despite more general studies of epistolarity, or critics who distrust some of Richardson's characters without discussing epistolarity). In some cases, as in the above, it does not matter much whether Clarissa's attempt to "appear" virtuous is entirely sincere or not; in others, trying to incorporate all possible interpretations in my argument would be impossible, or would at least obfuscate other important aspects of the novels.

36 *Pamela* rarely describes such issues. In at least one case, however, it indirectly touches on the problem of managing one's consciousness in order to feel as one should. Thus, the heroine, on hearing that Mr. B. has almost drowned, is astonished at what she perceives in herself as Christian charity and which is really concealed love – a triumph both of "natural passion" (expressed in her concern) and self-control (expressed in her misinterpretation of her own feelings). "What is the Matter, with all his ill Usage of me, that I cannot hate him? To be sure, I am not like other People!" (179; the term "natural passion" appears several times in *Grandison*, e. g. 1:303)

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earlier quoted at some length, she insists that in relationships between parents and children, sex makes no difference:

> Now the laws of God and nature are the same with regard to all conditions and ranks of people. Therefore this is a proof that nature makes no such difference between sons and daughters; and I have never heard of any divine law which imposes on daughters any duty to parents which is not equally imposed on sons. It is moreover observable, that the duty is equal to *both* parents; so that the mother, though a female, has as much right to the obedience of her son as the father; and this shews, that the duty arises not from any natural superiority of the parents over the children, but from those benefits they have conferred on them. (238)

The gendering of agency appears not only in resistance to power, but also in its exercise. The clearest case is that of Clarissa's parents, where the father rules by command and authority while the mother tries to influence through persuasion and example – a division which will be taken up again, with some variation, in the parents of Sir Charles Grandison. In the conflict over her marriage to Mr. Solmes, Mr. Harlowe's command to Clarissa: "I will be obeyed, I tell you!—and cheerfully too!—or you are no child of mine!" briefly acknowledges her interiority (65). Yet this acknowledgment takes the form of a command for suppression. Either what is demanded is merely the persuasive *display* of cheerfulness, and Clarissa's real feelings are irrelevant. Or, on the other hand, the "cheerful" obedience must be real, and what has to be repressed is the process of internal struggle which precedes it.[37] For Clarissa, such self-command is not possible in the case of Mr. Solmes, and although she will struggle to command her feelings, she will not fake them.

In contrast to Mr. Harlowe's demands for "cheerful" obedience, Mrs. Harlowe offers a mediation between Clarissa's frankness and her father's absoluteness. She fully acknowledges Clarissa's interiority and permits its expression – provided this remains limited to a time and space which ensures it will have no further consequences: "she was willing [...] to give a child whom she had so *much reason to love* [...] liberty to say all that was in her heart to say, that her compliance might be the freer" (94). Dwelling on the "reason" she has to love Clarissa, Mrs. Harlowe conveys a covert threat; if her daughter's rebellious feelings find their vent in public action as well as private speech, the mother's love may well become 'unreasonable'. What Mrs. Harlowe offers is not support

37 Such repression is shown to a perfect degree by Sir Charles, but his uniformly good behaviour (shown mostly after he has been orphaned and thus become independent) implies that, in his case, suppression of unruly feelings is due to the hero's own resolution, not to outward command.

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against Solmes, but an 'unreal', extended space for her daughter to control her inner feelings; once this self-control is achieved, it will be written out of reality, replaced, as far as regards the rest of the family, with a discussion of wedding clothes and similar matters.[38] The father, demanding absolute obedience, does not need to know what thoughts have preceded it.

For Clarissa, however, this is only a fake solution for her double-bind. If she can subdue her revulsion against Solmes, she ought to have done so before (cf. e. g. 135); if, on the other hand, she cannot, then her mother's offer is useless. As the conflict progresses, her family's repeated threats should she disobey, and their promises should she submit, emphasize another, hidden double-bind. Perfect dutifulness suppresses the struggles it may cost a child to attain it – and thus effectually hides the merit of that child.[39] It is precisely Clarissa's usually cheerful obedience which makes it possible for her family to claim that she had always followed her own inclination before. As Delany notes, writing on the arranging of marriage, parents need to probe their children's feelings carefully in order to ascertain whether they are really content to marry the person approved of by their parents (see 1.1). The Harlowes, of course, find it convenient to take for granted that what looks like compliance on Clarissa's part is actually what Clarissa herself wishes. Thus, Mrs. Harlowe claims that the family "have hitherto rather complied with you than you with us" (95). Arabella makes the same point in a more accusatory manner: "We all, indeed, once thought your temper soft and amiable: but why was it?—You never was contradicted before: you had always your own way" (139–40). The merit of obedience can thus become apparent only

38 A similar discussion earlier on the same day is interrupted by Mr. Harlowe, who pretends to believe that Clarissa must have ceased resisting. Ignoring his daughter, he tells his wife: "Surely you have nothing to do but to declare *your* will, and *my* will!—But, perhaps, you may be talking of the preparations [for the wedding]" (93).

39 Shakespeare's *King Lear*, a play which shares with *Clarissa* the misinterpretation of the dutiful daughter and her tragic death, also touches on the problem of interior and exterior 'duty'. The father-king demands love, and the good daughter offers it "[a]ccording to [her] bond" (I.i.79; I quote from the Quarto version). Far too late does the father realize that Cordelia's "[o]bey you, love you, and most honor you" (I.i.84) means just that: her love, respect and obedience correspond to even such high demands as Allestree's. This is true, in Cordelia's case, in a deeply tragic way. Since a child should obey, love, and honour her father to her utmost ability (and yet, as she says, without abrogating the same duties to her husband; I.i.85), words are (in her sister's words) too "poor" (I.i.52) to express such love. In Lear's case, unexpressed is un-understood. In *Clarissa*, although love is expressed, authentic feeling cannot be easily distinguished from false representations of it. (Michael Suarez also draws attention to this play in passing, comparing Clarissa to other heroines of literature who say "no"; 76.)

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after it has broken down into resistance – but this very resistance constitutes a breach of duty.

Both perfect obedience and rebellion, then, tend to make recognition of a child's merit impossible. *Grandison* contains a similar double-bind. Relying on Clementina's "characteristic duty" (3:314), her family try to pressure and cajole her into marrying the Count of Belvedere. When she flees to England in order to escape this marriage, the "least reparation the dear creature can make [them], the Bishop [her brother] says, is, chearfully to give her vows to" that same man (3:328). If Clementina is 'good', her obedience is a matter of course; if she is not 'good', then she must make up for this by *more* obedience. Eventually, the hero finds a solution for this double-bind; Clementina is granted the exertion of her free choice (cf. 3.6). However, for Clarissa, the conflict will ultimately be solved by taking on herself the sin of leaving her "father's house". By actually becoming and taking on the role of a sinful daughter (both of Mr. Harlowe and of God), her guilt as well as her merit become visible and meaningful. Clarissa becomes both Eve-like and Christ-like; a sinner as well as an innocent sufferer who takes on herself the guilt of others.

The contradictory demands for openness and cheerful submission are replayed in Clarissa's relationship to Lovelace. Like Mr. Harlowe, Lovelace desires Clarissa's submission,[40] and like her mother, he desires that this should be an expression of her interiority: "The heart, Clary, is what I want", Mrs. Harlowe insists (103). The demand is perhaps an echo of such passages as this one from *The Whole Duty of Man*: God "requires the heart, and not the lips only" of those who pray (126; Sunday V). Uttered by mere human beings, however, it takes on different connotations. Significantly, Mrs. Harlowe's word "want", unlike the term chosen by Allestree, can be interpreted as both 'desire' and 'lack'; both are equally true for the Harlowes and for Lovelace (cf. R. Erickson 188, 205). Demanding the heart is, in effect, a demand for the whole being of a person: "The heart, physiologically as well as in the sense of mind, emotion, sincerity, courage, commitment, integrity, inner religious conviction, and above all—by the mid-eighteenth century—compassion, comes to stand for the essential core of humanity" (R. Erickson 186).

Despite these similarities between Lovelace and the Harlowes, however, there is a crucial difference. The demands of Clarissa's family are ultimately

40 Juliet McMaster has noted another, less obvious, parallel: both Mr. Harlowe and Lovelace instrumentalise illness to exert power over Clarissa. Her father "wields the threat that anyone who crosses him will bring about the dread catastrophe of throwing the gout upon his stomach" (*Reading the Body* 20), while Lovelace induces sickness to test the heroine's love for him.

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reconcilable with social norms. If she could control herself so entirely as to marry Solmes and become a respectful wife, the Harlowes (at least the older generation) would be satisfied. This is not so with Lovelace, whose attitude to the system of duty, as we have seen above, is selfishly ambivalent if not hostile. The idea that Clarissa might be influenced by other motives than her feelings for him "mortifies [his] pride": "this exalted creature, if I were to marry her, would not be governed in her behaviour to me by love, but by generosity merely, or by blind duty; and had rather live single, than be mine" (669). Lovelace counters this mortifying vision by an alternative of his own. His ideal Clarissa is not only "governed" by true love, but is even oblivious to everything except Lovelace's desires:

> I would have the woman whom I honour with my name, if ever I confer this honour upon any, forgo even her superior duties for me. I would have her look after me when I go out, as far as she can see me [...]; and meet me at my return with rapture. I would be the subject of her dreams, as well as of her waking thoughts. I would have her look upon every moment lost, that is not passed with me: sing to me, read to me, play to me when I pleased; no joy so great as in obeying me. [...] Be a *Lady Easy* to all my pleasures, and valuing those most, who most contributed to them; only sighing in private, that it was not *herself* at the time [...]. (669–70)

And when his obsessive[41] analysis and manipulation of Clarissa ends in her utter rejection of him and in her death, he demands, now literally, what he could not attain in her life: "her heart, to which I have such unquestionable pretensions [...]. I will keep it in spirits" (1384). In their absolute demands on Clarissa, the Harlowes and Lovelace arrogate to themselves God's place. Lovelace goes even further in this than the heroine's family; while they see her duty as culminating in obedience to her family, Lovelace's wishes in the above quote go directly against the system of duty. Their desire to keep Clarissa to themselves succeeds, indeed, in partly severing her bonds to other human beings. However, as, in David Graham's words, she "steadily [...] keep[s her] Eye on [God]" (cf. 1.2), this merely results in her turning from them and to God: "*God will have no rivals in the hearts of those he sanctifies*" (1338).

Like the Harlowes and Lovelace, Anna Howe desires Clarissa's heart. In contrast to them, however, she neither expects to fill *all* Clarissa's heart, nor does she arrogate to herself a right to control. Instead, knowledge of her friend's feelings – due, as they both agree, to their friendship – will enable her to give

41 For a reading of Lovelace's obsession in terms of the Oedipus complex, see Eagleton 57–63.

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the best possible advice. However, both Anna and Lovelace frequently find that the feelings they impute to Clarissa cannot be ascertained to be either real or not. What is at issue is not only the question of which feelings Clarissa may actually hide, but also what the quality of those feelings is. Clarissa's "heart" is controllable and yet unmanageable, an open book and yet opaque. When Belford for the first time tries to persuade Lovelace to marry her, he notes Lovelace's inconsistency in pleading *both* that Clarissa has been led into error by him, and so may be seduced by others, and that Clarissa does not love him enough: "are not the pretences thou makest for further trial most ungratefully, as well as contradictorily, founded upon the supposition of error in her, occasioned by her *favour* to thee?" For Belford, "there is no reason to doubt" that Clarissa is in love, although she has such "a command [...] over herself, that such a penetrating self-flatterer as [Lovelace is] sometimes ready to doubt it" (502). However, although Belford's is an accurate summary of Lovelace's wavering, it also emphasizes difficulties of interpretation, for if self-control can hide love, how can love be ascertained?

To the extent that Lovelace's wavering is caused by his difficulties of reading Clarissa – as opposed to his general unwillingness to marry – it has as much to do with a struggle with the system of duty as with his struggle with a specific woman. Lovelace feels uncomfortable with this system, which is based on individual roles rather than on the equal return of actions. Legally and financially independent, the system of duty would still press him into obligations which he shuns. As we have seen, he usually acknowledges duties based on status only to press it into his own service: his uncle is "undutiful" and therefore undeserving of respect; Anna breaks a maternal command, and therefore should be punished by him. His wilful misreading of the system shows to what extent the system of duty puts high demands even onto those most seemingly powerful. For although this code may criminalize opposition to a man like Lovelace, directly subordinate only to political authority, he is still bound by it to his duty, a state he finds intolerable: "Everything I do that is good is but as I *ought!*—Everything of a contrary nature is brought into the most glaring light against me!—Is this fair?" (420).

Mr. B., the rake who reforms and who marries the woman he has pursued, *does* think it fair. When Pamela suffers from anxiety before the wedding, he comforts her by reminding her that he "joyfully subscribe[s]" to every part of the marriage service (340). Because the duties of spouses are reciprocal, and because both he and Pamela want to fulfil their obligations to each other, everything will turn out well. Lovelace, in contrast, desires a position where he is under no obligations, so that all his good deeds are voluntary favours. In matters where

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he is just or generous – good manners, generosity to tenants or to "his Rosebud" – he tries to draw on a system of gift giving where, having the power to oblige others, he can then control them through their duty to reciprocate. However, according to the system of duty, these same acts are merely the fulfilled duties of justice and charity. As Clarissa stresses more than once (sometimes too severely, but in general justly), he has no right to be proud of doing merely what he should: "TRUE GENEROSITY is not confined to pecuniary instances: it is *more* than politeness: it is *more* than good faith: it is *more* than honour: it is *more* than *justice*: since all these are but duties, and what a worthy mind cannot dispense with" (594).

However, Lovelace does not 'merely' wilfully abuse the system of duty; rather, he seems genuinely puzzled by it. When he ponders Clarissa's feelings for him or admires her virtue, he is disturbed by the ways in which her emotions may be due to her sense of moral duty rather than to his influence over her. Unlimited agency – not only inward, but outward – is paramount for Lovelace. Indeed, Taylor diagnoses "a 'god-complex'" (*Reason and Religion* 120): to describe his actions, Lovelace uses the language of divine power, and like God, he combines omnipotence with the claim that he is not responsible for his creatures' misdeeds (121). There seems to be an appropriateness to this combination of puzzlement and abuse of divinely instituted systems: both aspects of Lovelace's thinking/self-representation reject the possibility of a power greater than himself, "whose Plot not even [he] can escape" (123). As Taylor argues persuasively, however, Lovelace is unable to genuinely reject the system which he perverts; "he is a believer who will not accept the logical ramifications of his belief, or, put another way, a believer who will not believe" (139). In his relations to God, this may put him beyond the reach of mercy. In his relations to Clarissa, it means that he can never attain his desires, or fully reach the "heart" he wants.

Lovelace desires Clarissa's virtue, but that virtue, he thinks, will stand between him and her. Although she will make a good wife to him, he speculates, she "would not be governed in her behaviour to me by love, but [...] by blind duty" (669).[42] However, for Clarissa herself, the love achieved out of a sense of duty is almost indistinguishable from 'spontaneous' love; her affection for her father certainly feels natural enough to Lovelace to make him jealous (cf. 489).[43]

42 This prospect, which is disturbing to Lovelace, is encouraging to characters in *Grandison*: Sir Charles assures Harriet that, although she and Clementina are "sister-excellences", the one he marries will always be preferred by him (3:126). Incidentally, his wording may also imply his belief that "the *duties* of that most intimate of all connexions" lead to love because of the bodily intimacy they legitimate. If so, the sexual allusion is subtle enough not to disturb Harriet.

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Thus, Lovelace's puzzlement is to some extent a misreading: if Clarissa is going to love him at all, it will be the joint, and un-severable, result of both duty and attraction. As he himself observes, virtue in her is either "native" or rooted as deep as life:

> Then her LOVE OF VIRTUE seems to be *principle*, native, or if *not* native, so deeply rooted that its fibres have struck into her heart, and, as she grew up, so blended and twisted themselves with the strings of life that I doubt there is no separating of the one, without cutting the others asunder.
> What then can be done to make such a matchless creature as this get over the first tests, in order to put her to the grand proof, whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome? (657)

Seemingly unconscious of the implication of his own words, Lovelace ponders how he can distinguish Clarissa's "love of virtue" from the rest of her heart. He acknowledges that they are inseparable, only to express all the more determination to disentangle the (as far as he is concerned) two driving forces of her actions, virtue and love for him. However, according to his own words, he is thus occupied in a task which he cannot achieve except by her death. Ironically, it is Lovelace – the one who flouts his pleasure in word-play and twists of meaning (cf. e.g. Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers* 84) – who is far more preoccupied in penetrating the true core of Clarissa's being than Clarissa is in fully understanding his.

Interestingly, Lovelace seems to achieve a deeper understanding, or at least acceptance, of the system of duty towards the end of the novel, when

43 In the case of fathers, 'true' love sprung from 'duty' or 'nature' survives in literature at least to the end of the century, and the emotion with which good daughters regard neglecting or harsh fathers not seldom puzzles critics as much as it disturbs Lovelace. Thus, one critic of Frances Burney's *Evelina* notes how the heroine's tenderness for the father who had ruined her mother's reputation is in contrast to her fear of, and disgust at, her grandmother. He reads this as (perhaps unconscious) policy in Evelina, who aligns herself with male protection rather than female powerlessness (Graham 407). Without necessarily rejecting this reading, one should note that Evelina also fulfils her filial duties according to the standards of moral writers, suitably privileging the father before more distant (and female) relations. Similarly, in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, the heroine responds with immediate tenderness to the (mistaken) discovery that her abductor is her father, and immediately uses her intelligence to obscure the all-too-obvious conclusion that he had come to murder her. Indeed, in his introduction to the Penguin edition, Robert Miles speculates that her naïve thoughts may be free indirect discourse. Unwilling to assume that the heroine could be distorting the truth to herself, he suggests that Ellena "tak[es] a half-knowing revenge on" her 'father' by reminding him through loving speeches that he was on the point of killing his own child (xxix).

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Clarissa is dying. After he has been persuaded to stay away from her, but still has hopes of her recovery, he imagines her marrying him and being a good wife out of duty (1234–5) – no longer impatiently, but eagerly. This belated acceptance of her moral values implies a hidden potential for reform on the villain's part, and perhaps a parallel of the heroine's own religious development. In one episode, Lovelace even shows a deeper understanding of Clarissa than his supposedly reforming friend Belford. Once he hears of Mr. Brand's calumnious letter, he presses Belford to show it to Clarissa, predicting that it will comfort her to know that her family believe they have good reasons for their severity (1291). Belford at first fears that she will suffer from the slur on her reputation rather than be comforted, but he does as Lovelace requires him – and indeed, Clarissa finds more comfort than grief in this letter. These hopeful appearances, however, are put into question by Lovelace's inability to transfer his veneration of Clarissa into a new conception of women – or, indeed, mankind – in general.

This is exemplified, among other things, in a strange scene of impersonation which takes place as Lovelace comes to London in order to force a visit to the dying heroine. He is staying at Mrs. Sinclair's (for reasons of practicality which are not entirely convincing). To "pacify" Lovelace's reproaches, the bawd offers to show him "a new face that would please [him]", and Lovelace accepts with some curiosity – only to encounter Sally, who greets him with caresses and then impersonates Clarissa: "I'll be virtuous for a quarter of an hour and mimic your Clarissa to the life" (1217). The entire scene is surprising, although hardly detailed enough to be shocking at this stage. There is a gratuitous quality to it. As a last bid by the prostitutes to win round Lovelace, it seems a hopeless scheme, and as mockery, too audacious for women who had been made to cry even by the less threatening Belford for their behaviour to Clarissa (1067). Nor is the scene detailed enough to move the reader in a similar way as Mowbray's callous letter does after Clarissa's death. For that, there is too little detail; Lovelace sums up Sally's performance in a single sentence. Despite his curses for her insults to Clarissa, "the little devil was not to be balked; but fell a crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, fainting, so that I never saw my lovely girl so well aped; and I was almost taken in; for I could have fancied I had her before me once more" (1217). This description can hardly persuade the reader who has gone through pages of the heroine's moving "crying, sobbing, praying" that Sally's performance is similar; it can neither highlight Clarissa's authenticity through her enemies' affectation, nor can it question it by showing the reader that exclaiming and fainting of the virtuous and the wicked are

actually indistinguishable. What, if any, effect does this little scene have, then?[44] And what does it mean to "ape" Clarissa?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word can mean imitation both in an absurd and in a good or neutral way; Lovelace seems to use the word in the latter sense (*OED*, "ape, *v.*"). Yet mere imitation of Clarissa's general manners is not at stake here; indeed, at Colonel Ambrose's ball and elsewhere, Lovelace had rejected as insipid and soulless the beauty and behaviour of other women, and throughout the novel, he had been eager to find explanations for virtuous women's behaviour as different from Clarissa's as possible. When he describes the women at Hampstead, for example, he interprets Miss Rawlins as curious rather than concerned for the heroine, and he speculates that Anna cautions Clarissa against him out of jealously rather than out of concern for her friend's welfare (cf. 2.5). This despite repeated reports that Clarissa's skill and virtue have a tangible influence on her environment – thus demonstrating both the force of virtue and women's potential to recognise and imitate good things. Anna Howe mentions, for instance, that Clarissa's example has made it habitual for women to do needlework while visiting (1471), and Brand reports that she "gave the fashion to the fashionable" (1190). While these are minor improvements, they still indicate that Clarissa has an impact both on the inside and the outside of her acquaintances.[45] Yet when faced with a "little devil's" personification of his "angel", Lovelace shows peculiarly little resistance, and although he at first claims that he "could not bear such an insult upon the dear creature" (1217), he ends up fancying the absent "angel" embodied in the "devil" before him.

Revealingly, Lovelace continues his summary of Sally's "aping" not with his own immediate reaction to it (we in fact never learn whether he continued cursing her or whether the performance really "pacified" him), but with pondering the nature of women:

> Oh this sex! this artful sex! There's no minding them. At first, indeed, their grief and their concern may be real: but give way to the hurricane, and it will soon die away in soft murmurs, trilling upon your ears like the notes of a well-tuned viol. And, by Sally, one sees that art will generally so well supply the place of nature, that you shall not

44 In the film version of *Clarissa*, this scene is included. Sally's "aping" of Clarissa is there clearly not meant to be a thorough imitation; rather, it is a mockery of the heroine and of Lovelace by his paid associates, who, in contrast to the novel, are uniformly without remorse (cf. *Samuel Richardson's Clarissa*).

45 Perhaps the most important instance of Clarissa's influence is that, before Lovelace's courtship of her, her advice helped Anna overcome her own love for an unworthy man (cf. 174).

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> easily know the difference. Miss Harlowe, indeed, is the only woman in the world, I believe, that can say, in the words of her favourite Job (for I can quote a text as well as she), *But it is not so with me.* (1217)

Instead of spurning Sally's performance as meaningless mockery, then, Lovelace accepts it as authentic – if not of Clarissa's, then at least of 'woman's' nature.[46] He thus implicitly subscribes to the prostitutes' earlier claims that Clarissa's virtue is essentially of the same quality as their own was, that it is a habit which can be broken once and for all. He acknowledges Clarissa's special status only to separate her from other women. Despite his earlier claims that "the sex" in general are concerned in Clarissa's trials, he still subscribes to the dichotomy of 'woman' and 'angel', and a woman who cannot be turned into a 'devil' must be an angel, rather than simply virtuous. What an indifferent or virtuous observer would have seen in Sally's performance, then, does not matter – the point is that Lovelace still recognises 'art' as the essence of femininity. He has come to acknowledge Clarissa's virtue, but this has not changed his essential view of the world: "Seeing Clarissa as angelic—a saint, not a woman—allows Lovelace to avoid altering his perception of women" (Gwilliam 82). This becomes apparent in his reaction to her allegorical letter as well, where he enthusiastically states that he will agree to any conditions that are set him before he may unite with her (1233–4). Lovelace is perfectly serious, thinking mainly of Clarissa's disputed estate and other worldly matters. Yet when it becomes clear that his repentance and reformation, rather than economic generosity, are demanded for a reunion in heaven, Lovelace does not even momentarily consider this condition – his repentance is confined to Clarissa herself, and to worldly punishments or rewards.

1.4 Masquerade, truth and hypocrisy

The complex relationship between authentic feelings and feelings as performance can be exemplified with the topos of the masquerade. At a masquerade, anything bad can happen. Pamela's Mr. B. starts an affair there – although he claims it never really passes the limits of "*Platonick* Nonsense" (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 457) –, Harriet Byron is abducted from one, and even Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, who can find trouble anywhere, is entangled worse than ever when he follows Lady Bellaston home from a masquerade. "[F]oolish, irrational, and corrupt" (Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization* 2), a masquerade

46 Cf. also Gwilliam 88 f. for a discussion of this scene.

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in early eighteenth-century fiction constitutes a gathering of the weak and the wicked. The best which a virtuous person can hope for if she (rarely he) attends one inadvertently is to escape with a sense of disgust and boredom. Curiously, the frequent denunciation of masquerades as a diversion that can offer no real pleasure seems to fit ill with the danger they are assumed to pose to virtue. Harriet's assurance that the masquerade which proved so nearly fatal to her never gave her pleasure (1:426) is psychologically plausible. However, such accounts raise the question as to what the attraction of masquerades is in the first place, and why they can exist at all so as to entice innocent people to their own ruin. More sympathetic accounts emphasise the unusual freedom a masked ball provides, especially for women:

> It is delightful to me to be able to wander about in a crowd, making my observations, and conversing with whomsoever I please, without being liable to be stared at or remarked upon, and to speak to whom I please, and run away from them the moment I have discovered their stupidity. (Harriette Wilson, qtd. in Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization* 44)

Pamela in her Exalted Condition illustrates this freedom (and the risks it entails) in more detail – not in the person of the heroine, but in that of the Countess Dowager who all but initiates the ensuing flirtation with Mr. B., a married man (366–8, 441–3).

The liberty to move and speak freely comes attended with dangers. Sir Charles's somewhat awkward statement that "[m]asquerades [...] are not creditable places for young ladies to be known to be *insulted* at them" (*Grandison* 1:143) expresses them, in its carefully objective tone, rather more convincingly than the more hysterical accounts of rapes such as the one described in Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator* (24–9; vol. I, bk. I). Much more is at stake at the masquerade than the danger that libertines can commit crimes anonymously. The trope that everyone "'wears a Habit which speaks him the Reverse of what he is'" comes closer to the threat that is constituted by the masquerade (*Universal Spectator*, qtd. in Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization* 5). If the quintessential costume represents "an inversion of one's nature" (5), it simultaneously rejects and exposes the roles assumed by respectable people in everyday life. The uncertain relation between 'truth' and 'deceit', the imperceptible transition from 'masquerade' to hypocrisy to virtue, can be illustrated with another episode from Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator* (110–15; vol. III, bk. XIII). The virtuous Eudosia suffers the neglect and contempt of her husband Severus, whose disrespect for her goes so far that he introduces his mistress into the household, and "tho' Eudosia kept her Place at the Head of the Table, yet nothing was served

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up to it but what was ordered by Laconia" (111). Instead of quarrelling with her husband, however, Eudosia makes a friend of Laconia until she can think of a plan to get rid of her. Finally, she feigns a dangerous illness and tricks Severus into reading her supposed last will – which is that he should marry his mistress. Severus is reclaimed by his wife's generosity, and Laconia is sent away.

Eudosia's story is one of several illustrations of exemplary wives who manage to reclaim unworthy husbands through patience and virtue. However, in contrast to many other depictions of long-suffering wives, her behaviour is described as active scheming, rather than simple patience. Indeed, Haywood feels called on to stress this point for her readers:

> Some Women will look on this tame enduring in Eudosia as wholly unworthy of a Wife, and too great an Encouragement for other guilty Husbands to treat their Wives in the same Manner; but this Pattern of Prudence and Good-nature knew very well the Temper of the Person she had to deal with, and that nothing was to be gain'd by the Pursuit of any rough Measures. (111)

Eudosia complies with the common advice to wives to return patience for abuse, but the equation 'good wife = reclaimed husband' is questioned through the imagined reader response. The familiar story of the virtuous wife, it is suggested, is liable to misreading; by implication, the example of goodness may well fail in reality as it sometimes does in fiction. Pamela, after all, attempts a similar strategy when she suspects her husband of adultery, but the situation initially gets only worse. Mr. B. senses that something is wrong and is almost estranged from her; the two are reconciled when Pamela finally admits to her suspicions (cf. Doody, *A Natural Passion* 92–6). If Eudosia is, nevertheless, justified in her behaviour, it is because she knows "very well the Temper of the Person she had to deal with". She is not, that is, simply following the script every wife ought to follow. Rather than keeping to the code of conduct books, she follows her own "Schemes", tailored to an individual husband (112).

At the same time, however, Haywood does not allow her reader to perceive Eudosia's behaviour as a mere masquerade. Eudosia is a "Pattern of Prudence and Good-nature" (the latter point is proven when she begs her husband to provide for his mistress before sending her away). Her scheme, then, of conquering through a display of generosity, is natural to her. Moreover, she "still retained the most tender Affection for her Husband" (112) despite his cruelty. Her love further naturalises her patience, elevating it from a simple ploy to noble loyalty. This insistence on the wife's love appears to be a universal element of the trope of the neglected wife. It appears, for example, in Sarah Fielding's novel *David Simple*. Early in the story, the eponymous hero boards with different

people in order to "seek out one capable of being a real Friend" (27). The wife of one of his landlords proceeds to tell him the details of her married life and the abuse her husband heaps on her. Yet she concludes her story with the following words:

> Thus even my Tenderness for him is turn'd against me, and I can do nothing that he does not dislike; yet my Fondness still continues for him, and there are no pains I would not take, if he would return it; but he imputes it to a Warmth in my Inclination, which *Accident* might as well have given to another Man. (56)

Like Eudosia, this virtuous wife continues to feel affection for her tormentor. Yet although the narrative asks us to take her words at face value, tensions are perceptible between her laying open, however hesitantly, her husband's faults, and her assertion that she still loves him. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the problem raised by the last part of the sentence quoted: what does the wife's obligatory love stem from? If it is 'natural', might there be some justice in the husband's assertion that she would have felt it for any other man? And if it is the effect of a conscious effort to control her emotions, can it still be 'true'? These are the questions which torment Lovelace, and which he uses to justify his repeated 'trials' of Clarissa's love and virtue.

Sarah Fielding's narrative, in contrast, does not problematize this uncertainty. Her world, although recognizable for contemporary southern England – most of the novel is set in London, Bath and their surroundings –, is organized largely according to the logic of allegory. Duplicity and lies exist, of course, but they are inherently knowable. The same is true, I would argue, for her brother's more complex novels. Henry Fielding plays with the concept of the 'reporter-narrator'. He repeats, for example, "the Observation of some antient Sage, whose Name I have forgot", or records details about his hero Joseph's diet: "He accordingly eat either a Rabbit or a Fowl, I never could with any tolerable Certainty discover which" (*Joseph Andrews* 29, 59). The narrator's very uncertainty, however, testifies to the knowability of the world depicted. The "Sage's" teachings could be looked up in another book, if the reader happened to have a better memory than the narrator, and the details of Joseph's meal might be found out by a more diligent enquirer. Similarly, there is little *inherent* mystery about characters' motivations. In many cases, a character's main traits are given away by their very name, as in the case of Allworthy or Shamela. Such characters have been said to "belong to […] a moment […] that we might call *allegorical*, a moment, possibly fictitious, when social role and inner persona were indistinguishable" (Rosen & Santesso 1046). In some cases, of course, Fielding chooses to obscure or hide a character's motivations – as he does

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when withholding the knowledge that Bridget Allworthy is in fact Tom Jones's mother –, but they are comprehensible when outlined by the narrator. Duplicity, hypocrisy and lack of frankness are thus contained within Fielding's narrative; the narrator is able to state clearly their cause and limits.

The same is not true for Richardson's novels. The cause is less that his protagonists have unconscious motivations while Fielding's have not; rather, it is that there is no agent within the story that can safely set the limits of allowable equivocation and 'prudent' scheming. In epistolary fiction – if not "in all writing", as William Warner has suggested – "there is nothing within a text to distinguish a true narrative from its false simulation" (*Licensing Entertainment* 210). In a novel where each event and every thought are filtered through characters driven by half-conscious desires as well as conscious values, the establishment of an absolute 'truth' appears oxymoronic. I am not especially concerned with the 'real reader' here, who knows that s/he is safely outside the fiction and can choose, for example, to trust the 'editor'-author's preferences for certain characters, or to read the novel against the grain by assuming, say, that Pamela is really Shamela. Instead, I ask what happens to the fictional reader-characters when they acknowledge that 'truth' can look like a masquerade, and vice versa.

As Richardson's characters recognise, events are shaped by their telling. Pamela's ordeal at the hands of Mr. B. becomes a "pretty Novel" (232) with a power of its own – it is through reading her version of events that the would-be seducer decides to marry her. Even then, however, he fails to understand her whole mind – although he recognises her virtue, he is unable to 'read' her love (which Pamela, in turn, only recognises once he sends her away). It is, perhaps, no coincidence that the married Pamela finds the need to conceal her jealousy almost unbearable. Her pain, as well as the negative effect her behaviour has on Mr. B., proves that she is not and never has been a "finish'd hypocrite" (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 402). In contrast, the kind of behaviour which Eudosia assumes is presented as praiseworthy and wise in *Grandison*, where hypocrisy is a less pressing issue. Significantly, however, the woman who practises it – Lady Grandison, the hero's mother – is dead by the time the narrative starts; her story is told only in retrospect, almost as an exemplum. Indeed, as Margaret Doody has observed, "as soon as [Richardson] examines a situation closely he begins to query abstract theoretical statement" (*A Natural Passion* 96). Lady Grandison's behaviour works because she is not really a 'character' at all.

Pamela, the novel which divided the world into "*Pamelists* and *Antipamelists*" (qtd. in Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 23), is an extreme case. As hinted above, hypocrisy is a less problematic issue in *Grandison*, which does not entail such

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a direct challenge to hierarchies of class and gender. Even where less is at stake, however, narration remains self-representation; the writer's essence – her thoughts, words, and actions rendered in detail – inescapably is also 'performance'. David Rosen and Aaron Santesso quote the sociologist Erving Goffman to express the complex interplay of "observation, interiority and behavior": "[As] performers, individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realizing these standards [by which they are judged], but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized" (1043; first square bracket in the original). The problem of Richardson the novelist – and of his characters – is that virtuous characters should be most concerned with realizing the standards, rather than with performance. However, when the pursuit of moral standards looks identical to the mere "engineering a convincing impression", how can true virtue be expressed and recognized? Early in *Grandison*, Harriet's uncle Selby comments on the heroine's claim that she has always tried "'to keep down any foolish pride'": "Then you own that pride you have?—Another point gained! Conscience, honest conscience, *will* now-and-then make you women speak out. But now I think of it, here is vanity in the very humility" (1:28). As Mr. Selby makes clear, Harriet's seeming attempt to control her emotions may be read equally as an expression of true humility or as uncommonly subtle boasting. Sincerity and masquerade, propriety and hypocrisy, threaten to collapse into each other.[47]

There is, however, another and even graver danger: that masquerade is only a guise for what is, in fact, one's reprehensible essence. When Harriet is drawn into a description of masquerades some time after her abduction, she seems at first preoccupied with the folly of the 'diversion'. Masquerade is likened to "Bedlam" (1:426), and her own "tinsel dress" is "ridiculous". Ashamed of herself, Harriet considers what her

> good grandfather [would] have thought, could he have seen his Harriet, the girl whose mind he took pains to form and enlarge, mingling in a habit so preposterously rich and gaudy, with a croud of Satyrs, Harlequins, Scaramouches, Fauns, and Dryads; nay, of Witches and Devils; the graver habits striving which should most disgrace

47 As they did indeed in some readers' responses to the two main heroines of *Grandison*: William Hazlitt admired the "divine Clementina" while condemning "the little, selfish, affected, insignificant" Harriet (qtd. in Doody, *A Natural Passion* 315). It is noteworthy that the heroine whose inner life the reader knows least of is preferred to the one whose struggles with herself offer far more insight into her character. Although it could be argued that Clementina's 'essence' is displayed in her madness, this would not solve the general problem of the 'knowability' of virtue, especially as Clementina's insanity causes actions which, in an entirely sane woman, would be condemned.

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> the characters they assumed, and every one endeavouring to be thought the direct contrary of what they appeared to be. (1:427)

At the beginning of Harriet's account, outside and inside are out of tune; the problem is that the dress belies the well-regulated mind. As she goes on, the correspondence between habit and "habits" becomes increasingly blurred. If "every one" endeavours "to be thought the direct contrary of what they appeared to be", how comes it that "the Devils, at least", were not "charming creatures", as Charlotte Grandison jokingly suggests (1:427)? The reason is that masquerade is not a simple reversal of truth. Rather, it offers scope for a variety of relations between truth and false appearance – for the (in Harriet's account) grotesque spectacle of an "enlarged mind" in a "tinsel dress" and "graver habits striving to disgrace the characters they assumed", as well as for appearances that display the mind. Harlequins openly declare their folly, and devils display their want of principles. The fact that their behaviour is so unpredictable only makes it the more sinister: do they endeavour to be thought the contrary of what their character in the real world is, or, rather, of what their masquerade habit would seem to demand? And if they appear "charming", does this belie the 'truth' of their dress or rather confirm them as seductive Satans?

Masquerade, then, highlights the deceitfulness of appearance even while giving scope to its exploitation. It is the emblem in negative of Harriet's own behaviour; she strives to attain that absolute frankness which she will not acknowledge to be unattainable. Something of this indeterminacy is shown also in Mr. B.'s flirtation at the masquerade, where both he and the Countess Dowager dangerously play with a variety of relations to 'truth'. As Pamela angrily notes, they do not act up to their costume; as a Spanish Don, "the dear Gentleman no more kept to his *Spanish* Gravity, than she to the Requisites of the [Nun's] Habit she wore: When I had imagin'd, that all that was tolerable in a Masquerade, was the acting up to the Characters each Person assum'd" (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 365). He should act more proudly and seriously, she more modestly, than they do. On another level, however, their "habits" do indeed express their characters: Mr. B. does have pride, and the Countess is more virtuous than Pamela fears. In consequence of their imprudent behaviour, rumours of adultery arise; these are wildly exaggerated and yet partly justified, since the behaviour of B. and the Countess affronts propriety. The masquerade is so horrible precisely because it allows essentially virtuous people to play with fire, instead of restricting all behaviour to that which is proper.

Nevertheless, some Richardsonian characters can envisage ways to counteract the negative effects of masquerade by fixing its relation to truth. One such proposition is Caroline L.'s suggestion that masquerade could be "a rational

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and almost instructive entertainment" if only decent characters were assumed and then "support[ed] with wit and spirit" (1:427; cf. also *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 368). Sir Charles rejects her proposal by arguing not only that few people are able to fulfil the prerequisites of "wit" and "decorum", but that the example of the select few would reach down to those who would copy masquerade in a degenerated, riotous form. In other words, innocuous versions of the play with truth and appearance may indeed be imagined, but to act on this is to encourage deceit.

However, role play is not condemned so thoroughly in all of Richardson's fiction. Indeed, *Pamela* – despite its condemnation of masquerade – includes and endorses various kinds of 'masquerade'. Both the original novel and its continuation include various scenes of disguise which can be either beneficial or problematic; indeed, it is often a matter of interpretation as to what functions as 'disguise' and what does not – Pamela's appearance in rustic dress is presented by her as acting up to her true identity, while Mr. B. interprets it as a ploy to catch his attention (*Pamela* 57).[48] In *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*, the heroine condemns the disguises employed in the stage comedy *The Tender Husband*. In the play, almost all the characters cheat each other, using lies and cross-dressing to achieve their purposes, which are utterly selfish (355–61). However, both Pamela and her husband also employ disguise for justifiable ends. Thus, Pamela – at the behest of her friends – acts the part of "Lady Jenny" in front of her husband's uncle, Sir Jacob Swynford, who has come to rebuke his nephew for marrying beneath him. By pretending to be the well-born Lady Jenny, daughter of the Countess of C., low-born Pamela has the chance to demonstrate her worth. The trick succeeds, and Sir Jacob is reconciled: "Who can chuse but bless you?" (217). What distinguishes the 'masquerade' staged for Sir Jacob from the deceits practiced in *The Tender Husband* is the different motivation of the actors. Mr. B.'s uncle is deceived so that he can see the truth.[49]

Role-play, albeit not actual masquerade, is discussed in even more light-hearted terms in Richardson's *Familiar Letters on Important Occasions*. In letter LXXXV, a gentleman rebukes a lady for her "supposed Coquetry" (108) only to be reprimanded in turn:

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48 For discussions of disguise in *Pamela*, see, for example, Doody, "Identity and Character" 110; Latimer, *Making Gender* 28–30; and Gwilliam 31–4.

49 Other scenes of 'masquerade' in the sequel include the midwife who is introduced into the B.s' household as a relation of Miss Darnford (Pamela is too frightened of giving birth to bear an 'official' midwife around her) and the reconciliation scene between Mr. B. and Pamela, which is staged by her as a "Trial" (378–9, 424 ff.).

> Perhaps I like to see the young fellows *dying* for me; but since they can do it without impairing their health, don't be so very angry at me. In short, sir, you are your own master; and, Heaven be thank'd, I am, at present, my own mistress; and your well-manner'd letter will make me resolve to be so longer than perhaps I had otherwise resolved. (109)

The lady's answer reminds suitor and reader alike that her own coquetry, like "the young fellows *dying*", are part of an elaborate code of behaviour known to all parties, who are able to support their parts with the wit and decorum stipulated by Caroline. Clearly, decorum – specifically with regard to courtship – involves its own kind of masquerade; indeed, Clarissa's friend Miss Biddulph claims that female "coquetry" is only the natural consequence of men's "false hearts" (44). When Harriet prepares for her masquerade, she tries to echo the attitude of the anonymous lady who "likes to see young fellows dying for her". Though she feels uncomfortable in her dress from the first, she attempts to support her character of "Arcadian Princess" with spirit (1:115). As she ends her letter to her cousin Lucy, she asks her to imagine "how many Pretty-fellows […] in this dress, will be slain by [Harriet]" (1:116). Her playful assumption of coquetry comes back to haunt her when she later remembers that this was the last line she wrote before her abduction (1:150). As she recognises at the masquerade, dress and situation cannot be kept separate from behaviour, and perhaps not even from character: "No prude could come, or if she came, could be a prude, there" (1:427).[50]

Her abduction shakes her confidence that play and truthfulness can coexist. Although she recognises that it could have been organised from any other place of diversion (1:426), her narration repeatedly links the abduction to masquerade. It seems significant, in this context, that her playful impersonation of other characters early during her stay in London has no parallel in the later parts of the book. Before the masquerade, Harriet enjoys a seemingly more harmless manner of impersonation: she imagines her new London acquaintance writing letters which report their impressions of her. Latimer suggests that these letters are an assumption of power: "Harriet […] defines herself by annexing or over-writing, by working on and thus *possessing*, other characters" (*Making Gender* 51). According to her, Harriet's openness about the letters' inauthenticity is, in itself, a mask which gives false authority to her representation. Latimer's analysis of the complexity of her (self-)representation is largely convincing. However, her

50 Nevertheless, Harriet's masquerade habit turns out to imply important truths about her; it foreshadows, for example, the heroine's romantic rescue by the hero, a domestic version of Oroondates, the prototypical romance hero (cf. *Grandison* 3:398).

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reading of Harriet – "she is continually slyly representing others – *inventing* others – praising herself" (54) – also suggests that all shaping of experience is somehow manipulation, a tool to control others. I would argue, instead, that the letters imply her confidence in the disparity between truth and falsehood. Relying on her readers' knowledge of herself, she can repeat the compliments she receives, inviting her correspondents to put them in context.

Similarly, trusting in their confidence in her own sincerity, she can offer a 'real' and a 'fully fictional' portrait of the same men and women, playfully assuming a role without danger that either they or she will be misrepresented through it. She expects the same attitude from her readers: one of Harriet's responses to her uncle's accusations of vanity is to characterise his words as a playful misrepresentation. As long as he says "what *may be* said, [rather] than what he really thinks", and as long as her relatives value her, she will not be hurt (1:66). Her playfulness and her certainty are similarly expressed when she tries to "mak[e] mouths" in the mirror in imitation of the pedant Mr. Walden (1:46). As Latimer (here) suggests, Harriet "appears to be so comfortable with her own identity that she can hazard slipping into Mr Walden's, although she does not finally do so" (*Making Gender* 35). Indeed, her body refuses to partake of the masquerade; Harriet is unable to *perform* the ridiculous, repulsive facial expressions she has described with so much gusto. This confidence in herself and in the transparency of truth is shattered during her abduction. Later letters still include detailed accounts of other characters' behaviour, but the aspect of impersonation is taken over by two of the Grandison siblings – Sir Charles and Charlotte. Their style of 'masquerade' differs, however, from Harriet's and will be discussed in part III. Harriet, in contrast, will come to embody 'frankness', the happy congruence of inner truth and its outward appearance (cf. also McMaster, *Reading the Body* 96). Although the spectre of hypocrisy is briefly raised in *Grandison*, this gives way to an emphasis on the healing powers of 'proper' performance.

1.5 Body and mind

In the face of the difficulty in deciding between the essence and the semblance of virtue, many characters in Richardson's novels try to read the evidence of the body to guess at the mind. The body, however, takes on a double role. On the one hand, it can confirm the sincerity of the mind – as in the tears frequently shed by Lovelace and his associates, who feel some compunction even while trying to trick Clarissa. Interestingly, the heroine is generally correct in recognising the

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tears as involuntary and thus authentic expressions of the inner life of those she deals with, but she is frequently mistaken in the exact cause and amount of the 'affectedness' of those weeping. In these situations, the body is under the sway of the mind, it is its visible manifestation. However, this opens the possibility of the body turning traitor, betraying parts of the mind which reason would have remain hidden – Lovelace acts out this aspect when he describes to Belford his 'murder' of his embodied conscience, which has so frequently 'betrayed' him into tears while confronting Clarissa (848). Moreover, if body and mind are connected, the former can turn traitor in another sense, by infesting the soul with the taint of physical desire.

The idea that the body can attest to the reality of emotion can be found in writers very far from Richardson's outlook. Bernard Mandeville, for example, notoriously argues in his *Fable of the Bees* that women's blushing is a *public* reaction, which will not occur when they are alone: "[L]et them talk as much Bawdy as they please in the Room next to the same Virtuous Young Woman, where she is sure that she is undiscover'd, and she will hear, if not hearken to it, without blushing at all, because then she looks upon herself as no Party concern'd" (65).[51] Blushing is thus not a sign of wounded modesty, but of shame, caused by a fear that the woman's innermost *immodest* thoughts have been guessed at. Mandeville's description of the young woman highlights the treacherousness of physical reaction: the blush, bodily proof of real emotion, can be misread. Moreover, as in a conjuror's trick, it signifies both 'virtue' and 'hypocrisy'. The blush is the public symbol of modesty, but because it vanishes in private, it cannot be 'real'. Mandeville can deny the reality of virgin modesty because he connects it with a sign – the blush – which he already 'knows' to be treacherous.

Paradoxically, the body can testify to hypocrisy only because its reactions are *also* connected to real mental processes. In a passage almost immediately following, Mandeville argues thus on pride and shame:

> That these two Passions, in which the Seeds of most Virtues are contained, are Realities in our Frame, and not imaginary Qualities, is demonstrable from the plain and different Effects, that in spite of our Reason are produced in us as soon as we are affected with either.

51 Lovelace alludes to this text at least twice – once by invoking "my worthy friend Mandeville's rule, *That private vices are public benefits*", and once more covertly by wondering "whether [women] ever blush at those things by themselves, at which they have so charming a knack of blushing in company" (847, 691–2). The casual observation on blushing especially betrays a dangerous familiarity with Mandeville's thought.

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> When a Man is overwhelm'd with Shame, he observes a sinking of the Spirits; the Heart feels cold and condensed, and the Blood flies from it to the Circumference of the Body; the Face glows, the Neck and Part of the Breast partake of the Fire: He is heavy as Lead; the Head is hung down, and the Eyes through a Mist of Confusion are fix'd on the Ground: No Injuries can move him; he is weary of his Being, and heartily wishes he could make himself invisible: But when, gratifying his Vanity, he exults in his Pride, he discovers quite contrary Symptoms; His Spirits swell and fan the Arterial Blood; a more than ordinary Warmth strengthens and dilates the Heart; the Extremities are cool; he feels light to himself, and imagines he could tread on Air; his Head is held up, his Eyes roll'd about with Sprightliness; he rejoices at his Being, is prone to Anger, and would be glad that all the World could take notice of him. (67–7)

Following his statements concerning the blush of modesty, Mandeville's description of the visible effects of shame and pride gains an ambiguous quality. The man overcome with shame "observes" his bodily symptoms; the man feeling pride, however, "discovers" them, a word which can mean both to 'find out' and to 'display' (*OED*, "discover, *v.*" 5 & 6). Mandeville's drift in this passage is to demonstrate that shame and fear are real because each man can feel their effect in his very body, in contrast to virgin modesty, which vanishes when a woman is alone.[52] However, like the virgin's blush, the man's symptoms of pride are displayed, that is, observable, to others than himself, and thus vulnerable to the same kind of public (mis-)reading.[53]

Lovelace's probing of Clarissa's mind *via* her body is subject to the same paradox. If the 'public' testimony of the body is untrustworthy (the virgin blushes when, and because, she is seen), he must penetrate to a deeper level. In one sense, Lovelace can never reach this 'private' body, for while he is with Clarissa, he also constitutes her audience (perhaps another reason why he is shaken with Sally's "aping" of Clarissa – she reminds him of his position as spectator). Indeed, as Tassie Gwilliam has observed, he bases his boasted knowledge of women not only on his direct experience of *them*, but also on his experience of himself (59). Like a woman – like the virgin who blushes in public but not in private – he was once "bashful". Paradoxically, however, this self-knowledge does not help him with Clarissa. If she is like him – like the other women he thinks he understands – then she is not the paragon he took her for,

52 Indeed, Mandeville later states that one can be wicked, but not immodest, while alone, as modesty is merely a form of behaviour (79). The woman's 'modest' blush is, in fact, the consequence of her shame at her secret thoughts and of her fear of others' censure (65).

53 On the problem of female (im)modesty and the difficulty of 'proving' it, see also Ruth Bernard Yeazell (esp. ch. 6, "Pamela's Undesigning").

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but if she is unlike him, then the 'essence' of her being may well be beyond his comprehension.

Furthermore, like Mandeville, Lovelace has defined the set-up of his testing of Clarissa in such a way that he can never prove the existence of that virtue he appears to be looking for. Having associated 'love' with 'conquerability' and 'virtue' with 'coldness', Lovelace has made it impossible for Clarissa to prove herself both truly virtuous and capable of love – though she must do both to satisfy him. If she responds with the least show of desire, then her virtue must be fake, mere masquerade – identical with the hypocrisy which, he thinks, all his previous victims have displayed. If she does not respond, however, the essence or 'heart' of her being (cf. 1.3) must indeed, as Mowbray suggests, "be either iron or marble" (1382), rather than part of a living body. Clarissa's death, which obviates all difference between public display and private motive/emotion, may be the only definite answer to this dilemma. It is only then, too, that her body might be opened – something which she expressly forbids in her will (1413) but which Lovelace desires. In his temporary madness, he demands Clarissa's heart as a physical token that his "charmer's" essence is neither cold marble nor living desire. A final irony of Lovelace's attitude is that this search after an 'essence' – either 'cold' or 'desiring' – locates Clarissa's virtue in the body itself rather than in her mind's control of her impulses. Searching for the 'truth' of sexual desire, he becomes oblivious to the truth of her virtuous intentions.

Lovelace is not alone in his troubled attitude to the relationship between body and mind. Not long after he has tricked Clarissa into living at Mrs. Sinclair's brothel, he invites his four friends, Belford, Belton, Mowbray and Tourville, to see her. The following day, Belford writes a letter to urge Lovelace to marry Clarissa: "I write to tell you that we are all of *one* opinion with regard to *her*; which is, that there is not of her age a finer lady in the world, as to her understanding" (555). His commendation of Clarissa's intelligence is followed by "*poorer* praise" of her beauty. At the centre of the letter comes a strangely disturbing passage which, judging from later letters by Mowbray, is far from anything he could have written:

> You may think what I am going to write too flighty; but, by my faith, I have conceived such a profound reverence for her sense and judgement that, far from thinking the man excusable who should treat her basely, I am ready to regret that such an angel of a lady should even marry. She is, in my eye, all mind: and were she to meet with a man all mind likewise, why should the charming qualities she is mistress of, be endangered? Why should such an angel be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? Were she mine, I should hardly wish to see her a mother unless there

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> were a kind of moral certainty that minds like hers could be propagated. For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to *mere* bodies? (555)

Belford's flight of fancy is indeed strange. In the very letter designed to urge his friend to marriage, he regrets that "such an angel of a lady should even marry". In this paragraph, Clarissa's body seems strangely divided from her mind.[54] At the same time, it is Belford's "eye" that perceives her "mind"; confusingly, Belford mixes up the terms belonging to the body and mind respectively even while trying to keep separate *Clarissa*'s body and mind. For Belford, the metaphor of the "angel" materialises into a 'literal' truth: like the spirits she resembles, Clarissa has no body, or at most one that seems foreign to her essential quality. Insofar as it exists at all, it exists as a threat: the mother's body that reproduces mankind can kill her in childbed. In his first (extant) letter to Lovelace, he had urged him to marry to continue the family line; according to Belford's original argument, "the vulgar offices of domestic life" are precisely what Clarissa is needed for (cf. 501–2). This new letter suddenly problematizes this. The body is attached to "vulgar offices" and connected to the uncertainty of life; it cannot be trusted to reproduce its possessor's qualities. In Belford's vision, the maternal body is powerless and endangered, a striking contrast to the harmonious and harmony-inducing mother's body presented in *Grandison*'s breast-feeding scene (cf. 3.1), or to the repeated claim in *Grandison* that all women who can find a good husband should become wives and mothers, since "a woman out of wedlock is half useless to the end of her being" (1:25).

The paragraph stands in strange contrast, as well, to the preceding passage, where Belford praises Clarissa's "so awful, and yet so sweet, [...] aspect", her "piercing, yet gentle eye" and her "sweet smile darting through the cloud that overspread her fair face; demonstrating that she had more apprehensions and grief at her heart than she cared to express!" (555). In the passage just quoted, Clarissa's body is infused with her mind, so that the latter can indeed be read by Belford's "eye". Her facial expression conceals and expresses simultaneously; even the convoluted grammar of the sentence, which makes it unclear whether it is the "smile" or the "cloud" that demonstrates the "grief at her heart", mirrors Clarissa's inner conflict. The passage implies a connection between body and mind that is directly refuted in the very next paragraph.

54 McMaster interprets the same passage more optimistically as showing that, for Belford, Clarissa's "body completely figures forth her soul, with no residue of the merely physical" (*Reading the Body* 109). However, this reading ignores Belford's expressions of disgust and fear of the body.

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What, then, makes Clarissa's body so threatening that Belford has to deny it? One explanation that springs to mind is the topos of the dichotomy between angel and whore. Indeed, Lovelace equals 'woman' with 'conquerable', and thus with the women he has already conquered. The reader learns that some of these have died in childbed, while others have become prostitutes, like the "little devil" Sally Martin. In these cases, the body has indeed proved murderous or tainting. Belford seems to be trying to distance Clarissa as far as possible from these other women whom Lovelace has seduced: "[I]n the article thou seekest to subdue her for, a mere sensualist of her sex [...] would make a sensualist a thousand times happier than she either will or can" (556). Physical pleasure is best provided by "mere bodies"; Clarissa, "all mind", is hardly worth pursuit on *that* count.[55] Belford's formulations suggest that he is, for the moment, more absorbed in his own impression of Clarissa than focussed on persuading Lovelace. Indeed, he imagines Clarissa as "his own" rather than his friend's (or, indeed, *her* own): an object which can be possessed but, simultaneously, desecrated through use. It is as if there exists no space for a woman above "mere body". Belford's language points to the tragic conclusion of the book; Clarissa indeed never has children.

If Belford tries to establish an incommensurable gap between Clarissa's body and mind,[56] Lovelace tries to bridge it – although the only way to achieve this seems to be to lower the 'angel' into a 'mere' woman. The two rakes, different as they are in their intentions as to Clarissa, seem yet very much in agreement as to the relationship between body and mind. Both, for example, "construe pregnancy as an acknowledgment of the body, even as an acknowledgment of desire" (Gwilliam 83). One fears this acknowledgment as degrading, the other welcomes it as providing his chance for dominion – although that dominion will also destroy some of Clarissa's worth as a conquest. Lovelace's expectation that physical possession will equal possession of the mind connects him to the rakes of amatory fiction of the early eighteenth century. In Delarivier Manley's *New Atalantis*, for example, Charlot, initially virtuous, gives in to her love for her guardian after he rapes her:

> Her first emotions [when she sees him] were all joy but in a minute she recollected her self, thinking he was not come there for nothing. [...] Whilst yet her surprise made her doubtful of his designs, he took advantage of her confusion to accomplish 'em.

55 The villain of one German novel partly modelled on Richardson's finds exactly that – after tricking the innocent heroine into a false marriage, he is disappointed by her lack of sensuality (Sophie von la Roche, *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* 219).

56 The dichotomy which Lovelace and Belford see between Clarissa's body and mind has been echoed by some critics; Reeves speaks of their readings as a "Lovelacean assumption" (603).

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> Neither her prayers, tears, nor strugglings could prevent him, but in her arms he made himself a full amends for all those pains he had suffered for her.
> […] 'Twas very long before he could appease her, but so artful, so amorous, so submissive was his address, so violent his assurances – he told her, that he must have died without the happiness – Charlot espoused his crime by sealing his forgiveness. He passed the whole night in her arms – pleased, transported, and out of himself – whilst the ravished maid was not at all behindhand in ecstasies and guilty transports. (39–40)

Manley plays on the several meanings of "ravish"; Charlot has been raped, but the conquest of her body has also captivated her mind. Similarly, in Eliza Haywood's *The Masqueraders*, part I, Philecta barely manages to resist her love for the rake Dorimenus – but once he subdues her body, in a passage that obscures the boundaries between aggressive seduction and rape, she succumbs to him entirely (41–3). In the second part, it is Dorimenus's wife who, after attending a masquerade, succumbs to something in-between seduction and rape (ironically, it is her own husband who "ravishes" her; because they are both masked, neither recognises the other). In Haywood's delicate phrasing, Dorimenus "satiated his utmost Wish,---but it was in such a manner, that the fair *Nun* [his wife's masquerade habit] could neither accuse herself of a too easy granting, nor him of an absolute Force in taking" (17). Although she initially resists the advances of her masked admirer, she is ready to meet him again once he has gained possession of her body. "*[O]nce subdued, always subdued*" (675), as Lovelace says: this is the pattern of amorous fiction he intends to repeat (cf. also Doody, *A Natural Passion* 137–50).[57]

His first attempt at rape is quite close to this script. In the fire scene, Clarissa is confused and frightened; she is also half undressed (in *New Atalantis*, as in *Fanny Hill*, prolonged seduction or rape scenes tend to take place after at least one of the characters has just bathed and is not fully dressed). Nevertheless, she keeps enough self-control to persuade Lovelace to leave her; as soon as he is out of the room, she locks and bars the door. It is shortly before this aborted attempt at 'seduction' that Lovelace fantasizes about Clarissa nursing his twin children:

57 Even fiction that intends to highlight the importance and strength of virtue tends to follow this pattern. Thus, Penelope Aubin's novel *The Life and Adventures of the Lady Lucy* contrasts the faulty, and eventually vicious, behaviour of Henrietta with "the brave *Lucy*'s Virtue" – yet Henrietta does not yield to her lovers without the application of "a little Force" (58). In the narrator's view, the successful use of force on the man's part easily slides into an implication of sinful acquiescence on the woman's.

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> Let me perish, Belford, if I would not forgo the brightest diadem in the world for the pleasure of seeing a twin Lovelace at each charming breast, drawing from it his first sustenance; the pious task continued for one month, and no more!
> I now, methinks, behold this most charming of women in this sweet office, pressing with her fine fingers the generous flood into the purple mouths of each eager hunter by turns: her conscious eye now dropped on one, now on the other, with a sigh of maternal tenderness; and then raised up to my delighted eye, full of wishes, for the sake of the pretty varlets, and for her own sake, that I would deign to legitimate; that I would condescend to put on the nuptial fetters. (706)

In Lovelace's vision, he holds power over Clarissa's reputation as well as her mind – a power which stems from his conquest of her body. The fantasy gains special significance if read in the light of Thomas Laqueur's study *Making Sex*, where he shows that from antiquity into the eighteenth century, standard medical treatises assumed women could not conceive a child without orgasm (2–3).[58] In this context, Clarissa's imagined conception of children testifies to her pleasure in sexual intercourse. The theme continues to appeal to Lovelace. As Clarissa is dying, he reads one of her "meditations" and, in a typically wilful misreading, claims that it expresses her dismay at being pregnant. If this is true, he thinks, it would "prove, in this charming frost-piece, the triumph of nature over principle [...]: and then, for [her child's] sake, I am confident she will live, and will legitimate it" (1147). The triumph will be two-fold. A child, Lovelace thinks, will force her to marry her rapist after all, but its very existence would also be a "triumph" of her natural sexual desires over her virtue. What Lovelace hopes for is more than simple 'possession'; rather, he hopes to reach a level of Clarissa's being that is all love for him, a kind of 'essence' that is not 'angelic' or 'cold', and thus not resistant.

There are other passages which gain new poignancy – and perhaps clarity – if read with Laqueur's statement in mind. Among other things, it adds a motive for Clarissa's brother to force her to marry Solmes. The proposed marriage settlements state that the Harlowes will inherit Solmes's estate should Clarissa die without children (81). Clarissa traces this to her family's greed, calling it a "chimerical" hope – but, depending on what kind of medical knowledge James may have, this hope would be cynical rather than chimerical (62). Later in the novel, Clarissa's uncle asks her if she has "any reason to think [her]self with child by this villain?" (1192). Given the Harlowes' general suspicions both of Lovelace and Clarissa, it is unlikely that he is merely asking her if she is still a

58 For the implications of this theory for rape trials (and rape jokes), cf. Simon Dickie (esp. 194 and endnotes).

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virgin. Clarissa, in any case, declines a direct answer. Instead, she asserts that "a little, a very little time, will better answer [this cruel question] than I can: for I am not either a hardened or shameless creature: if I were, I should not have been so solicitous to obtain the favour [of forgiveness and a last blessing] I sued for" (1193). Time, of course, does not bring evidence of Clarissa's pregnancy.[59] Nevertheless, it is her dying body which finally answers the implicit accusations of her uncle's letter. Lovelace has dreamed of Clarissa's body testifying against her. After the rape, he regrets having drugged her, both because he at first fears that it has caused lasting insanity and because it empties the sexual act of the meaning he wishes to attach to it. As Clarissa is not fully conscious, the rape is neither a test of her love nor a true act of conquering; his charm or virility have very little to do with consummation. When body and mind cannot react, they cannot yield.

But Clarissa's body *does*, in fact, testify, and with a vengeance. Various reasons for her death have been suggested, including explicit or implicit statements that she commits suicide (e. g. Bronfen 150 and Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers* 126). Margaret Doody counters the claim that she starves herself with the possibility that Clarissa dies from a "galloping consumption", before pointing out that the medical cause of her death is irrelevant (*A Natural Passion* 171). Terry Eagleton has an alternative explanation: "Clinically speaking, Clarissa dies of depression" (90). This interpretation is perhaps as near the mark as the other, or nearer, in locating the heroine's death in her psyche. When Pamela is threatened with rape, she falls into a deathlike swoon; Clarissa is really raped, so she dies. The body, both times, directs attention to and confirms the truthfulness of the mind.[60] Juliet McMaster states that Lovelace's "control over [Clarissa's] body

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59 Linda Kauffman speculates that Clarissa may be pregnant as she dies (150), but most critics who address the issue argue, following Laqueur, that she is not, and that Lovelace's speculation merely expresses the (irrational as well as cynical) hope that Clarissa somehow enjoyed the rape even in her drugged state.

60 Indeed, at least one reader claimed that "we might with Justice have doubted the Reality of her Distress, had she been able to survive it" (S. Carr's judgment, transmitted to Richardson by Jane Collier; qtd. in Keymer, "Jane Collier" 149). Clarissa's death also provides a solution to divergent expectations in real rape trials as opposed to fictional representations of rape. In the latter, fainting is a sign of modesty and helps to avoid immodest details, but in the former, 'fainting' could be interpreted as consent, and victims of rape had to provide "a convincing account of a major struggle and usually some horrible injuries to prove it" (Dickie 246).
Another instance of the testifying body occurs in *Grandison*. Lady Grandison dies from the effects of fear, grief and exhaustion after her rakish husband has been dangerously wounded in a duel (1:262). As her story is told by her son and daughters after her death, little of her interiority can be grasped, and she is closer to Haywood's example

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still leaves him powerless over her mind" (*Reading the Body* 21); I would argue that even his control over the body – extending to his drugging and raping her – is comparatively superficial. He had hoped to control her mind *through* her body, but ultimately, it is her mind which brings even her body out of his reach.

The body, then, can figure as an extension of, not just as a contrast to, the mind. Where they are under good regulation, they merge into one. Thus, in one of his letters, Richardson describes the development of love in terms of body and mind: "Bodies may be sundered in Youth, may be torne from each other, and other Bodies may supply the Loss: For the Loves of Youth have more in them of *Body*, than of Mind, let Lovers fancy what they will. But in Age a Seperation [*sic*] may be called a Seperation of Souls" (Sabor, *Correspondence* 40; 15 Dec. 1748, to Lady Bradshaigh). While this statement clearly subscribes to a difference in value between body and soul, it describes "body" rather as an inevitability than as an evil, as a human frailty which may turn to good rather than as something which has to be eschewed altogether. Thus, while the love of body must be subordinate to the love of mind – as Mr. B. finally comes to value Pamela's mind above her beauty –, Richardson's characters nevertheless express it openly – for example, in the caresses shared between Pamela and Mr. B. even before he marries her.

Body becomes problematic mainly in *Clarissa*, and there, mainly for the two rakes Lovelace and Belford and for the dying heroine. However, for the latter, her "clinging body" (cf. 1265) seems a nuisance rather than an evil, an obstacle to be overcome as she leaves the material, imperfect world for heaven. For Lovelace and Belford, in contrast, the body is problematic already in this life: for them, it stands in almost binary opposition to the soul. Thus, Lovelace can envisage only Clarissa the frail woman (body) or the unconquerable angel (mind); neither of them, however, can he marry. Similarly, Belford's admiration of Clarissa culminates in repeated statements that she is too much soul to be married. Indeed, both rakes – the one who will reform and the one who will not – seem to require a saint rather than a woman. John Mullan has claimed that "Richardson mythologizes femininity—and, like many male writers before and since, he isolates virginity as its essential representation" (67). This is an accurate description of the rakes' initial attitudes, but it hardly accounts for Clarissa's courageous confrontation of Lovelace after the rape (noted, for example, in Sarah Fielding's *Remarks on* Clarissa 33–4), or for the celebration of

of the good wife than to the complexity of the married Pamela. The manner of her death, however, provides evidence of her true love for her husband. He, in contrast, gives no similar evidence of affection; his own death occurs years later, in the midst of arrangements for the seduction of a teenage girl (1:353–5).

bodily pleasures in *Pamela* and *Grandison* (cf. Doody, *A Natural Passion*, and 3.1). Ironically, the rakes' insistence that Clarissa is an angel rather than a woman signalises their own lack of a well-regulated mind; they need Clarissa to be saintly so that she can connect them to the divine.

Clarissa's relationship to God is direct and unmediated, although she relies on the guidance and example of admired friends to strengthen her faith. Lovelace, in contrast, "can see heaven only through [Clarissa]" (Doody, *A Natural Passion* 181). Similarly, Belford relies on "the divine Socrates, and the divine Clarissa" (884) to prove the existence of a rewarding heaven, and envisages her as a saving angel who carries him to heaven (1275).[61] This idea complements Lovelace's dream, where Clarissa, in a scene reminiscent of Catholic images of Mary and of Christ rising from the tomb, is exalted into heaven, while he falls into the abyss (1218; cf. also Doody, *A Natural Passion* 235–8). Indeed, Lovelace (and his family) builds all his hopes of salvation on Clarissa's *direct* agency: she must forgive him as a precondition for God's forgiveness, she must guide and reward him – and yet all this without any shadow of 'womanly' weakness. His continued distrust of female virtue highlights that, as he admires Clarissa more and more, he does so as a saint rather than as a human being.

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61 Belford, who is rather worse at quoting the Bible than is Lovelace, apparently knows no *Christian* martyrs with whom to compare Clarissa, and his idea of the "divine" has its origin in an atheist living in pagan antiquity. This fits perfectly the fact that he is, like Lovelace, unable to recognise Clarissa's allegorical letter for what it is, although Lovelace's virtuous and intelligent cousin Charlotte Montague must be "laughed […] out" of recognising the truth (1270). "The implication is that anyone with a religious background would have understood such a letter" (How 178), unless, of course, they are misled by a Lovelace.
However, the fact that Belford chooses Socrates as his pagan hero is also a hopeful sign. Taylor has shown that Socrates was singled out for praise by many contemporaries of Richardson, including Elizabeth Carter (above any suspicion of libertine leanings). He suggests that Socrates, the moral heathen, provides a contrast to Lovelace, the immoral believer. He also quotes a letter by Richardson in which the author quotes (and emends) Belford's remarks, adding "the primitive Martyrs" to those who, like Socrates, suffer on earth. For Taylor, this addition "puts Socrates in the company of the earliest Christian martyrs" (*Reason and Religion* 145). I would add, however, that it is also a correction to Belford. While the libertine in the process of reformation shows his potential worth by singling out a 'good' heathen, he still forgets the more obvious, Christian, candidates for unjust suffering.
If Belford's route to Christian piety involves a heathen detour, Lovelace's boasted knowledge of the Bible is less solid than he thinks, as Richardson takes care to emphasize. When he supports one of his favourite misogynist statements by a quotation – "*no wickedness is comparable to the wickedness of a woman*" (441), he is unsure whether to attribute it to Socrates or Solomon, but the passage is in fact from Ecclesiasticus, as the 'editor' points out (cf. R. Erickson 197).

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Clarissa's religious journey – her steady preparation for death, in which she throws off not only her "clinging" body but even "weans" herself from the people she loves – might seem to confirm the rakes' belief that body and soul co-exist at best in an uneasy truce. Yet the heroine's holy death, where she relinquishes everything in this world that has been dear to her, is succeeded by an affirmation of these same worldly concerns. Clarissa's will, for example, re-affirms all her earlier responsibilities and joys – including duty to her family, friends and servants, but also the disposition of her clothes, jewellery, and musical instruments. The renunciation of the dying, clearly, is not to be imitated by the survivors. Similarly, Clarissa's almost single-minded preparation for death is contrasted by Anna's outline of Clarissa's daily and weekly schedule while living, where "closet-duties" (which seem to include prayers, her toilet, and her correspondence) take up only three hours of each day, albeit the first three. Renunciation of her body, and of the world as a whole, then, is not a general necessity but the result of Lovelace's efforts to distinguish between body and soul.

This chapter seems to have led us a far way from the system of duty – appropriately, perhaps, because Lovelace's testing of Clarissa is, likewise, incompatible with it. Allestree assumes that human beings are by their nature fallible, but must strive to be as free from faults as possible; seducing another to sin is one of the gravest crimes. Lovelace, in contrast, sets up temptations to Clarissa in order to prove her in-fallible – or to make her "[his] upon [his] own terms" (886). For most of the novel, moreover, it seems that he can locate true virtue only in some kind of 'essence' of the soul. This is why Clarissa's behaviour, however 'cold' and virtuous, cannot convince him of her sincerity. It is as if Allestree's father-king tried to torment his subjects in order to discover the point at which they will turn from obedience to rebellion – a test which can only end in the ruin of at least one of the parties involved.

Lovelace's probing of Clarissa's soul is, of course, doomed in another way as well, since he needs her to desire him even more strongly than he needs her to be virtuous. However, because he has defined desire as the opposite of virtue, he can never accept her as a woman who embodies both.[62] Indeed, at one point, Belford warns him that he should not test Clarissa for too long because no woman can hold out against *all* temptations: "if I preferred a lady as I know thou dost this to all the women in the world, I should dread to make further trial, knowing what *we* know of the sex, for *fear* of succeeding" (501). Belford, like Lovelace, is proved wrong in this point. However, his caution is true in another

62 For a similar assessment, cf. Zias 115.

sense. Passion and virtue can coexist in a woman, but only if this possibility is accepted by the men around her. Lovelace, who will not accept the system of duty, thereby *produces* the need for a binary opposition between body and mind. In contrast, the good men of *Grandison* (and the reforming Mr. B.) – who acknowledge and celebrate the union of desiring/desirable body and virtuous mind – enable and enjoy its existence.

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2. Alternative structures of relationship: gift, contract, friendship

As has been seen in part I, the apparently neatly and densely structured system of duty is full of pitfalls. At the same time, distinguishing between true virtue and its political performance is both difficult and problematic. Before I turn to the solution to this problem as it is depicted in *Grandison*, I will, in this second part, analyze alternative ways of conceptualizing relationships. As we shall see, these alternative patterns sometimes obstruct the system of duty, while at other times they function as a "second-order defence of stability" (Gouldner 64). In both cases, an overlay of such structures can prove either destructive or beneficial to the individual affected by them. The first is more apparent in *Clarissa*, while the second is demonstrated in *Grandison* (cf. part III).

There is one area where the need for alternative structures is particularly obvious. The system of duty is preoccupied with existing relationships – parent-child, master-servant, neighbours or friends – but it does not specify how most of these come to exist. While it is easy to pin-point when filial duty begins – it is "a duty anterior [...] to [a child's] very birth" (*Clarissa* 479) –, servants and masters, as well as friends, clearly enter these relationships consciously and by their own volition. There must, therefore, be some "starting mechanism" (Gouldner 65) which is not accounted for in the system of duty. When an individual enters into another's service, there is at least an implicit contract involved. The starting mechanisms for friendship are less obvious. However, there are patterns of behaviour which can help to initiate and develop such a relationship, notably the exchange of non-material and material gifts such as sympathy, advice, or financial support. A further complication arises with regard to friendship: it is defined not in terms of an immutable connection between the parties – such as blood ties – but in terms of the feelings of the friends, and of the actions they take with regard to each other. The system of duty as outlined in part I, therefore, is reductive. Its strict rules of behaviour ignore more dynamic elements of relationships. In the following, I will outline how these dynamic elements interact with the system of duty, and to what extent they either challenge or support it.

Different structures of relationship cannot always be neatly separated; indeed, as we shall see, they are often connected strategically. Nevertheless, in order to analyze the way in which they operate in Richardson's novels, a tentative definition which highlights their differences is necessary. The most

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crucial of these concerns is the role of reciprocity. Within the system of duty, reciprocity of obligation is presumed, but the (non-)performance of it has no power to change either party's responsibility. As Gouldner explains, "[t]here may […] be cultural prohibitions banning the examination of certain interchanges from the standpoint of their concrete reciprocity" (52). We have seen, in part I, that such prohibitions are an important aspect of *The Whole Duty of Man* and other moral writings concerned with the system of duty. A parent owes sustenance to his or her child and, in return, the child owes love. However, if either party does not fulfill her or his obligations, this does not change the other party's responsibilities. Status duties are constrained by the relationship existing between two or more individuals; they are largely independent of the concrete actions of one's role partner. The freedom of the individual is thus limited to an act of interpretation – to determining what is one's duty, and subsequently to either accepting or rejecting it. There is no in-built mechanism for a change in those duties, except in so far as one obligation may lead to another, for example when a father commands a daughter to marry. This, in turn, will entail future duties as a wife – a fate which the Harlowes envisage for Clarissa.

Within the system of gift exchange, in contrast, the rules are reversed. No donor has a right to expect a return, nor is there an absolute duty to be the first to give (such an obligation would amount to a status duty).[63] Gifts are benefits (or supposed benefits) conferred by one individual or group on another without clear specifications for the expected return. Although there are traditions which may demand gifts of a certain form and amount at specific times (e.g. Christmas or weddings), there are no legal sanctions for enforcing such gifts and no accurate measures for determining their value, even though individuals and groups tend to perceive acutely their (in-)adequacy. When gifts are given outside such ritualized times (e.g. a 'thank you' present for a service rendered, or a spontaneous present), the time, amount and form of the return (e.g. verbal or written thanks, or gifts such as flowers) are unspecified, and while it is generally felt that some return is due, this can take innumerably variable forms (cf. also Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 33). There is – in contrast to contracts – no mechanism for enforcing a recompense. At the same time – and in contrast to status duties – the return one receives to one's gift may legitimately affect one's future behavior. Finally, when gifts are given within the framework of a

63 As will become clear from chapter 2.1, I am speaking here of gifts as conceptualised in (early) modern Western society, although the term 'gift' is sometimes used for actions which could, perhaps, be explained more accurately in terms of contract or of the system of duty.

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well-established friendship, their value and timing tends to be handled more flexibly than when they are given as part of starting mechanisms or in a more formalized relationship.

Contractual duties, lastly, are negotiated for specific situations and can thus be adapted to individual circumstances, although the ways in which a contract can be formulated are also subject to legal constraints and/or custom. The obligations of the contracting parties are interdependent; if one party fails to observe his or her obligations, the other party's obligations will be either void, or there will be mechanisms by which he or she can seek redress. In practice, of course, some contracts may fall partly outside this definition. Although William Blackstone explains that "the law treats [the marriage contract] as it does all other contracts" (421; bk. I ch. XV), it leads to the wife's legal identity being subsumed under the husband's. Therefore, spouses are unable to enter into any further contract with each other: for the husband "to covenant with [his wife], would be only to covenant with himself" (430). While contracts concerning property would often be made before marriage, a wife's ability to enforce them was thus severely limited. Indeed, Blackstone notes that "it is also generally true, that all compacts made between husband and wife, when single, are voided by the intermarriage" (430). The legal situation led the author of *The Hardships of the English Laws in Relation to Wives* – presumed to be Sarah Chapone, Hester Mulso's future mother-in-law (cf. Keymer, "Chapone") – to complain that English wives were worse off than Roman slaves.[64]

The marriage contract, then, is a special instance of 'cooperating' structures. At least until a few decades ago, it was not "'a contract in the ordinary acceptation of the term'", but could be conceptualized instead as "'an agreement to enter into a solemn *relation* which imposes its own terms'" (James Schouler, *A Treatise on the Law of the Domestic Relations*, qtd. in Pateman 155; my emphasis). Marriage, therefore, has its origin in contract but then becomes a stable relationship which brings with it specific status duties which cannot be negotiated (165–6). The voluntary nature of the contract in this case helps to obscure any injustice which may be involved in marriage's "own terms": "that

64 She discusses the case of a widow who made a will before her remarriage, but did not renew it when she became a widow for the second time; at her death, it was therefore declared void. "The Council for the Will [...] shewed, that among the *Romans*, if a Man had made his Will, and was afterwards taken *Captive*, such Will *revived* and became again in Force, by the Testator's repossessing his *Liberty* [...]. / But the Court finding one Distinction, *viz.* that Marriage was a *voluntary* Act, and Captivity the Effect of *Compulsion*, the Judges determined the Will to be void. / *Observation*, The Arguments of the Council make the Estate of Wives *equal* to, the Distinction of the Court *worse* than, Slavery itself" (6).

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which is the effect of our own choice or consent, we can have no great right to complain of" (Mulso 237). At the same time, these terms, imposed by the "solemn relation", make it impossible for the parties to negotiate a contract according to their individual desires. Within patriarchal marriage, "even if a husband renounces his power, his wife's freedom is always contingent on his willingness to continue the renunciation" (Pateman 158; paraphrasing William Thompson, *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women*).

Thus, despite the crucial differences between them, obligations based on status, gifts, or contract frequently spill into each other. Often, it is possible to interpret a commonly acknowledged obligation either as part of the system of duty or as a responsibility arising from gifts received, or from a contract entered into voluntarily. Once more, Allestree provides a clear example. Although *The Whole Duty of Man* is best understood within the framework of the system of duty, its author frequently evokes other patterns. Thus, he states that there are different grounds for "dues, which belong to particular persons" (278; Sunday XIII) rather than to all men in general. Among them are not only status duties (e. g. in the father-child relationship), but also the "relation of a Debtor to a Creditor" (285) and the "relation of an obliged Person to his Benefactor" (285) – roughly corresponding to contract and gift as bases for obligation. The very word "obligation" is highly ambiguous. It can mean, among other things, "a written contract or bond", "the condition of being morally or legally bound", "what one is bound to do", "a benefit or service for which gratitude is due", or "a debt of gratitude" (*OED*, "obligation, *n.*"). The term, therefore, fits all structures which I have discussed above equally well.

Such muddled boundaries between different structures of relationship can fulfil clear social functions, as Gouldner explains:

> In sum, the norm of reciprocity requires that if others have been fulfilling their status duties to you, you in turn have an additional or second-order obligation (repayment) to fulfil your status duties to them. In this manner, the sentiment of gratitude joins forces with the sentiment of rectitude […].
> […] All status obligations are vulnerable to challenge and, at times, may have to be justified. If, for any reason, people refuse to do their duty, those demanding compliance may be required to justify their claims. (64)

As we have seen, the Harlowes strategically represent all their earlier actions toward Clarissa as gifts. This allows them to see Clarissa as 'obliged' to them in a double sense: she *must* obey because she is their daughter, and she *ought* to obey out of gratitude. Allestree justifies their claim on a general level: "[T]hough the gratitude due to a kind Parent, be a very forcible motive to make the child pay his

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duty, yet that is not the only nor chiefest ground of it; that is laid in the Command of God" (304; Sunday XIV). It would appear, then, that the system of duty agrees peculiarly well with structures of gift giving. If all human relationships involve specified duties, there is little room for contract, except as a process of *entering* into some relationships, such as that between master and servant – or husband and wife.[65] Gratitude, in contrast, is written into the very basis of the system of duty as outlined by Allestree, for it is God's gift to man which is the origin of this system. As long as it is possible for some participants in the system of duty to do more than they are required, the system of the gift has a place within it.

It should be noted that not all parties have an equal chance of such acts of "Supererogation" (*Grandison* 1:392). To take the most obvious example, it is difficult to envisage a child doing more than obeying a father's every command with unfeigned cheerfulness. Conversely, a father can easily confer 'extra' obligation simply by using his right of command sparingly. Mr. B.'s vision of marital harmony is an illuminating example:

> [My wife] should not have given Cause for any Part of my Conduct to her, to wear the least Aspect of Compulsion or Force. The Word *Command*, on my Side, or *Obedience*, on hers, I would have blotted from my Vocabulary. For this Reason I should have thought it my Duty to have desired nothing of her, that was not significant, reasonable, or just; and that then she should, on hers, have shewn no Reluctance, Uneasiness, or Doubt, to oblige me, even at half a Word. (*Pamela* 446)

Mr. B. clearly thinks that a husband's avoiding the word "command" is meritorious in itself, even when it is the consequence of the wife's unquestioning obedience (expressed by the more agreeable word "oblige"). Pamela expresses some misgivings about this point (450), but through a considerable part of her (mostly happy) marriage, both she and Mr. B. follow the pattern he outlines here. As long as all parties subscribe to the system of duty, therefore, those who already hold a high status can also more easily occupy the god-like position of donor. This will tend to reinforce the system of duty, unless it is done in order to prepare an unlawful command; in such a case, it can disturb the system instead.

Within Richardson's novels, characters frequently remark on the good or bad effects which "obligation" – benefits received, as well as the state of having received them – has on relationships. When Lovelace complains that Clarissa

65 Carole Pateman, who approaches structures of relationships with a focus on the "sexual contract", has made the opposite argument: "Contract theory is primarily about a way of creating social relationships constituted by subordination, not about exchange" (58). In other words, the marriage contract is the quintessential contract, and rather than clashing with status duties, contract is a method of initiating and justifying them.

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refuses “money and raiment” from him, he likewise explains to Belford what side effects he hopes for if she finally accepts them: “Nothing sooner brings down a proud spirit, than a sense of lying under pecuniary obligations” (449). His concern, it emerges, is not so much with Clarissa’s pride as with her self-respect. In the following paragraph, he complains that “the pretty fool [does not know] that there is nothing nobler, nothing more delightful, than for lovers to be conferring and receiving obligations from one another” (449). Lovelace wants to confer obligations not only to “oblige” Clarissa, but in order to receive a return, something which the “pretty fool” evidently senses. The recompense which he envisages is sexual, as his metaphor of the cock – “a Grand Signor of a bird!” (449) – and hens in the farmyard makes clear: the cock feeds a hen “so that he may tread her” (Doody, *A Natural Passion* 341). Such a return, however, flouts Clarissa’s “obligations” in terms of the system of duty. If she confers on Lovelace her hand in marriage, she does so in defiance of her duty to her parents. If, on the other hand, she returns sexual for financial favours outside of marriage, she adds the sin of unchastity to that of disobedience.

Lovelace tries to use gifts to involve Clarissa in obligations which rival those to her parents and to God. Mr. B. does the same in the first part of *Pamela*; however, due to the social difference between him and the woman he desires, his intentions are even clearer. Already Pamela’s first letter, recounting her employer’s generosity, arouses her parents’ fear that she “should be *too* grateful,—and reward him with that Jewel, [her] Virtue, which no Riches, nor Favour, nor any thing in this Life, can make up to [her]” (14). Mr. B.’s first strategy is to invite Pamela’s gratitude, so that she will reward his financial gifts with the gift of her body; later, he offers her a contract whereby she signs over to him her services as a mistress in return for ready money and a farm in Kent (cf. 188–92). Pamela, of course, rejects both gift and contract with scorn, for both are in conflict with her adherence to the system of duty. It is worth noting, however, that all parties in this struggle over Pamela’s chastity evoke several grounds for structuring behaviour. The heroine’s parents insist that no “worldly Conveniencies” (14) justify the loss of chastity; to this extent, their point of reference is the system of duty. However, they also make clear that Mr. B.’s advances deserve rejection even if viewed as a gift or payment, for nothing he can give can “make up” to Pamela the worth of her virginity. On the other hand, Mr. B. and his agent Mrs. Jewkes evoke her position as a servant to condemn her resistance, knowing that servants should obey their masters according to the system of duty.

Within this system, Lovelace occupies a similar position to that of Clarissa, while Mr. B. is above Pamela. In both cases, the disruptive potential of gift

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giving stems from the dishonourable motives of the donors. If, conversely, someone manages to become a donor from a low position, this has disruptive potential even if no 'unlawful' intentions are involved. For example, when a man marries "a woman of higher social status or of greater wealth", this may result "in domination by the wife", as Karen Newman has observed in a discussion of *The Merchant of Venice.* "Some writers and Puritan divines even claimed that women purposely married younger men, men of lower rank or of less wealth, so as to rule them" (261). Moral writers emphasized that even in such a situation, the husband was still the wife's 'head' and should hold authority over her. However, the very fact that this needed to be emphasized illustrates the disruptive potential of gift giving, in Shakespeare's time and after. If the poor bridegroom of a rich woman models his behaviour on gratitude rather than on the system of duty, this will result in the violation of marital roles. As Mr. B. remarks to his sister, "when a Lady descends to marry a Groom, is not that Groom her Head, as her Husband?" (*Pamela* 422). Such a prospect is shocking because it violates either class or gender hierarchy; in contrast, his own marriage to his servant preserves hierarchies – Pamela continues to obey him – and is therefore justifiable.

In order to function well, therefore, the system of duty entails a tacit demand upon the individual to perceive benefits received in different ways according to the relative status of donor and recipient. How well this principle was entrenched in eighteenth-century society can be illustrated by an example cited by Carole Pateman in the course of discussing parallels between the status of wives and of slaves. Lord Mansfield, the judge who outlawed "the forced export of slaves from Britain" in the 1772 Somerset case, also "declared that he hoped the question of human property would never 'be finally discussed. For I wou'd have all Masters think they [the slaves] were Free and all negroes think they were not because then they wo'd [*sic*] both behave better'" (145). Apparently, truth and clarity matter less than didactic effect. In the best case, as we will see in part III, such a strategic representation of reality can indeed be mutually beneficent even while reinforcing the *status quo*. If, however, those involved in a relationship mis-represent the situation in a different way – if, for example, slaves think themselves free while masters believe they have a right to do what they please with their "human property" – the system will break down.

The different conceptions of human relationships outlined just now appear bleak and determined mostly by hierarchy and (potential) exploitation. Only the relationship of friendship, as hinted above, has the potential to exist outside structures of coercion and submission. In the following sections, I will look in more detail into the way gift giving and contract shape relationships, and into

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the impact this has on the system of duty. In the final two chapters of this part, I will discuss two patterns of relationship which, each in their own way, tend to illustrate potential problems of the system of duty, as well as the abuse of authority in general. In 2.4, I describe bonds of friendship in *Clarissa*, which provide a precarious alternative to the patterns of abuse that characterize most of this novel. In the last section of this part, finally, I will demonstrate how structures of selfish male domination disrupt even relationships which should be protected by the system of duty, notably the ties between mother and child or between siblings. The power of authority – especially of destructive authority – is organized not so much along a specific *structure* of relationship as along gender lines.

2.1 The giving of gifts

Of the structures discussed above, gift giving (after the system of duty) is the most important one for understanding Richardson's novels. Conceptualizing the 'gift' is not unproblematic. Indeed, due to the inherent flexibility of gift giving, it is not always easy to describe it in terms of a 'structure' at all. Moreover, while 'gift exchange' is often juxtaposed to other patterns, these contrasting structures are sometimes status duties, sometimes "the workings of the market and the exercise of power" (Zionkowski and Klekar 2). For example, Zionkowski writes in her study *Women and Gift Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*:[66]

> Eighteenth-century discourse came to categorize market and gift exchanges as distinct spheres of human activity: the commercial economy assumes a scarcity of resources, entails a rational assessment of costs and benefits, and requires a profitable return on investments; by contrast, the gift economy assumes a surplus of resources, entails a disregard for profit, and privileges consumption, sacrifice, and expenditure of wealth without the expectation of return. (18)

Even the use of terminology is always in danger of collapsing different structures into each other. Thus, Zionkowski speaks of "the gift economy, or economy of obligation" (*Women and Gift Exchange* 3). However, the second term, which seems to explain the first, is actually far more ambiguous (see above). To

66 In her book, Zionkowski provides an instructive analysis of gift giving in *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, which parallels and complements my own argument in many ways. However, she does not take into account the importance of the system of duty within Richardson's novels.

complicate matters more, some of the best-known scholarship on the gift discusses a system which is not really concerned with 'free gifts' but with formalized structures of exchange (Mauss), or which uses a concept of the gift which is based on our modern, quotidian conception of presents, but does so in an extreme form which finally excludes the possibility of a 'true' gift (Derrida). However, if the gift is an illusion, it is a frequent one which must serve some purpose. My argument is, indeed, that it fulfils clear functions in *Pamela, Clarissa* and *Grandison*, and that these functions *differ* according to the intention and skill of the characters involved in such donations.

That gifts are not what they seem runs as a common thread through accounts of the gift such as Marcel Mauss's *The Gift* or Jacques Derrida's *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, as well as scholarship based on these and similar studies. 'Everyday' notions of what a gift is or should be are, as a rule, evoked only to be rejected. For example, Linda Zionkowski and Cynthia Klekar observe early in their introduction to the essay collection *The Culture of the Gift in Eighteenth-Century England*: "Like our modern perception of giving, receiving the gift is seemingly an apolitical act involving no acceptance of authority or dominance, and gratitude is a response beneficial to those lucky enough to feel it" (1). Such a concept of the gift, according to them, entails a naïve disregard of the less pleasant aspects of gift-giving, and it seriously distorts our perception of its functions in different and/or earlier cultures:

> Enforcing this dichotomy [of the 'pure' gift and the workings of the market] may appear to protect and isolate the gift from market-based norms, keeping it relatively untainted by practices such as the exertion of influence on the part of donors and the obligation to make a return on the part of recipients. What is lost, however, is an understanding of the gift's function at the very heart of a society, or its central role in distributing and aggrandizing power and creating and dismantling relationships in all aspects of social life. (2)

Other writers reject the idea of 'pure gifts' outright. Thus, Mary Douglas states in her foreword to Mauss's classic that "the whole idea of a free gift is based on a misunderstanding. There should not be any free gifts. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor's intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient. Refusing requital puts the act of giving outside any mutual ties" (vii). The "free gift", which fails to create bonds between giver and receiver, "is a contradiction", not really a gift at all (vii). At the same time, being "exempt from return gifts" appears to be the ultimate act of power. Gifts, then, require a return and are therefore not 'free', and if they do not require a return, they are, paradoxically, all the more part of a power structure. Indeed, the idea

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that the gift shapes social structures is the common thread which runs through different accounts of gift giving:

> Whether defined as exercises of charity to the less fortunate, expressions of familial solidarity, or signs of regard, gifts are not merely objects whose exchange requires specific conventions, articulations, and gestures, but "material expressions of social relations" that also establish and shape these relations. (Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 2, quoting Sarah Lloyd)

Frequently, descriptions of gift giving agree with the last part of the above quotation, but emphasize that relationships shaped by gifts put the beneficiary at a disadvantage. Thus, Douglas – writing of our own times, but agreeing with many characters of eighteenth-century fiction – states that "[t]hough we laud charity as a Christian virtue we know that it wounds" (vii).

In contrast, the idea, equally prevalent in eighteenth-century literature, that the *right kind* of charity may heal, tends to go unmentioned – perhaps on the implicit assumption that this is the modern reader's expectation and therefore needs not to be openly stated. Perhaps, however, "the secret life of the gift, embedded as it is in networks of dominance and subordination" (Zionkowski and Klekar 11) is seen as the 'true' essence of the gift by modern critics. Although granting that "[t]he gift promises to unify individuals, nations, and ideologies" (12), the emphasis appears to be on "promising", not on "unifying". I would suggest, however, that positive concepts of the gift as free, pure and unifying are not simply naïve (although they may be that, too), but as true – even crucial – as its role in power-play. As Zionkowski and Klekar observe, the gift "must remain distinct from commodities and wages in order to effect such domination" (3). This distinctness is not wholly illusory; indeed, given the frequent perception of 'false' gifts (to which literature, as well as daily life, testify), it seems inconceivable that the power of the gift could reside in entirely illusory qualities. As I suggest in my reading of Richardson's novels, especially of *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, gifts must precisely be 'true' in order to have an impact on power relationships. The former novel is full of 'false' gifts and of 'true' gifts rejected, but these tend to have few and short-term consequences. The 'true gifts' in the latter novel, in contrast, have the power to extend the hero's sphere of influence at the same time as benefitting their recipients.

I want to focus, therefore, on some aspects of the gift which tend to be emphasized less than its role as a tool to keep the powerful in power. First, the donor, as well as the recipient, is under some constraints – not just the obligation to give (which must be met, as Mauss suggests, under penalty of loss

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of status), but also to give in the right way. This will appear, for example, in the juxtaposition of the two donors Sir Charles and Lord G., both of whom can afford and are willing to give, but only one of whom regularly succeeds in giving in the 'right' way (cf. 3.4). Secondly, giving a gift is putting oneself at risk, for a gift may be rejected or received ungratefully. Claude Lévi-Strauss connects this initial risk with the power which can be gained from 'proper' giving. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, he uses chance meetings between strangers in small restaurants as an example of how relationships can begin (58–60). The one who first offers his wine to the stranger – and makes himself vulnerable to a rebuff – is also the one to win status if a relationship is successfully established (even if only for an hour). Since each person involved has the same theoretical capacity to give, it is clear that the 'power' gained is not so much connected to the material value of the gift as to the manner of giving. If, on the other hand, the gift is rejected, this can lead to a loss for either party. The refuser may well appear unpolished and ungracious, and the rest of their stay in the restaurant may be uncomfortable for both.

Mauss notes that some societies have known mechanisms for taking back gifts from ungrateful recipients, for example in "late Roman law" (51). However, in our culture, which tries to distinguish strictly between gift and payment, there is no clear-cut way of doing this. And in Richardson's novels, we see that such attempts – for example, the Harlowes' endeavour to retroactively define Clarissa's inheritance as a 'gift' on their own part which she has now forfeited – are the mark of selfish, 'false', donors. If power can be established through gifts, then, this depends as much on giving in the right way as on having something to give. In a society which distinguishes 'free gifts', or the exchange of gifts, from trade, taking back a gift retroactively transforms it. While it may appear just to deprive a thankless recipient of an undeserved benefit, this same act puts the original donor under suspicion of having given a bribe rather than a 'true' gift, or of being improperly greedy. If the 'innocent' party inflicts punishment on the 'guilty', this can reflect badly on the former, as we saw with regard to Adam Smith's example of the promise extorted by a highwayman (cf. 1.1).

Just as the donor is liable to risks and constraints, the recipient is freer with regard to her (or his) range of actions than might appear at first. Her options are not just to either observe the rules – by accepting the gift with thanks – or not. She is also – due to the unspecified return to gifts – at liberty to vary what she returns (a lesser or a greater gift, warm or cool thanks), and, as will be shown with regard to Lady G., she has considerable power in *defining* the nature and

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value of the gift.[67] This power of interpretation figures both in the exchange of 'pure' gifts – as the ability, for example, of giving without wounding the recipient's feelings – and in the use of 'gifts' for the purpose of manipulation. In the latter case, a donor's power depends on his or her skill in preventing the recipient from interpreting a gift as the bribe or blackmail that it really is. And although this power of interpretation may rest more strongly with the donor, especially where there is a clear imbalance of financial or legal resources, it is by no means inherent in the gift itself. Indeed, it is the indeterminacy of gifts which is at the root of their emotional power, and it is his talent for definition, more than the difference of generosity or means, which distinguishes Sir Charles from Richardson's other male protagonists.

Defining what one has received may be all the more necessary the less power one has. Thus, Pamela's parents put aside Mr. B.'s gift to their daughter, which she has sent on to them, until they can decide whether it is a combination of wages and free gift or whether it is, in fact, a bribe meant to tempt her to become his mistress: "We accept kindly of your dutiful Present; but 'till we are out of our

67 An instructive example appears in Elizabeth Gaskell's 1853 novel *Ruth*. The heroine, a penniless girl who has been seduced and left pregnant, but has been taken in by a Dissenting minister and his family, now appears as a respectable widow. Mr. Bradshaw, a patronising, rich member of the congregation, has given her a valuable present "as a mark of high favour". Ruth, however, immediately wishes to reject this gift: "What right had he to send it me?" She instinctively recognises that the gift is meant to elevate the donor, whatever additional intentions may be behind it. She explicitly does not object to obligation or gratitude as such, but to being *forced* to feel it. Mr. Benson, the minister, puts her feeling into these words: "It is a delight to have gifts made to you by those whom you esteem and love, because then such gifts are merely to be considered as fringes to the garment" (131). For him, gifts are "a delight" rather than wounding when they proceed from an already good relationship and are mere externalisations of love and goodwill (and thus a far cry from the institutionalised gift giving of rivals mainly discussed by Mauss). However, Mr. Benson then gives another turn to Mr. Bradshaw's gift. Although "he may have been self-seeking", returning the gift would hurt him more than his behaviour deserves. Ruth should therefore keep it, but thank him only "as [her] feelings prompt [her]" (132) – that is, without much warmth. This, he suggests, will probably lead to fewer presents and more respect on the part of Mr. Bradshaw.
As this example has shown, the recipient of a gift is by no means condemned to either rejecting the gift (and causing open conflict) or accepting it and, with it, a lower status or the obligation to give a more precious gift in return. Instead, Ruth may accept the gift with reserved thanks, which will show her to be properly grateful, but also independent. As Mr. Benson shows, she has the power to define Mr. Bradshaw's gift differently than he did. Moreover, rejecting the gift would mean inflicting a wound – thus, her accepting it instead puts her in the position of the good Christian. (Another example of a loan which turns into a gift, then a bribe, then blackmail, and finally back into a loan occurs in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*).

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Pain, cannot make use of it, for fear we should partake of the Price of our poor Daughter's Shame" (14). Mr. B. means his gift to *appear* as a gift and *therefore* work as a bribe; as soon as his ultimate aim is suspected, the power of definition is wrested from him, and the impact of the gift/bribe is diminished. An analysis which translates the manipulative potential of gifts into an inherent quality of *all* gift giving therefore obscures crucial aspects of the gift.

Derrida takes a different route to analysing gift giving, one which effectively empties the notion of 'gift' by consistently treating all possible returns, even a donor's inward satisfaction or the donee's gratitude, as an equivalent, that is, as the return of the same. "If he [the donee] recognizes it *as* gift, if the gift *appears to him as such*, if the present is present to him *as present*, this simple recognition suffices to annul the gift. Why? Because it gives back, in the place, let us say, of the thing itself, a symbolic equivalent" (13). Similarly, "the one who gives [the present] must not see it or know it either; otherwise he begins, at the threshold, as soon as he intends to give, to pay himself with a symbolic recognition" (14). The gift ceases to exist at the very moment when it is given and received.[68] Derrida's analysis leaves us with a term without a meaning and, I would argue, a meaning without a name. It starts, in fact, from a notion of the 'pure gift' which is not identical with what is, in a non-academic context, usually perceived as such. A 'pure' gift, in common discourse, can range from a gift for which one does not expect a specified or equal return, to anonymous gifts which, by their very nature, cannot be returned – but a gift does not cease to exist *qua* gift simply because some return has been made. A donor's pleasure in doing good is rarely seen as a blemish. Only interested, 'false' gifts, for which the donor expects either a higher or an improperly specific return, change their meaning and become bribes. For the 17th century, Allestree formulated a theory concerning the proper circumstances and motives of alms-giving – one kind of gift – which are slightly different to our modern perceptions, but also familiar. He holds out for approval the following motives: Firstly,

> whatever we should by way of thankfulness give back again unto God, our alms is the way of doing it. 2*ly*, In respect of our Neighbour, the motive must be a true love and compassion to him […]. 3*ly*, In respect of our selves, the motive is to be the hope of that eternal reward promised to this performance. (374; Sunday XVII)

An improper motive, in contrast, is the desire for "the praise of men" (375).

68 There is a parallel here to Allestree's demand that a child must control his feelings for a parent in such a way that he truly venerates him even if he is not really venerable. Just as a child must 'forget' his inner struggle, so donor and donee must eliminate their consciousness of giving and receiving – or the gift as such will disappear.

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This wide spectrum of gift giving, then, needs a separate name not only because to denigrate or deny the possibility of 'pure' gifts is an ingenious way of arguing for the inevitability of the most mercenary aspects of human nature. Rather, it obscures the fact that the very power play which theorists posit depends on the possibility of giving gifts distinguishable from bribes. Mr. B.'s gifts of clothes initially impress Pamela precisely because she does not expect him to demand more in return than gratitude; his gift of money fails of its effect because her parents reasonably interpret it as a bribe. Similarly, Sir Charles's influence on the minds of others depends on his donations being interpreted as gifts rather than bribes – and, surprisingly, on his habit of presenting his gifts to others as something else. As will be shown in part III, Derrida's study of the mechanisms which turn a gift into something different helps in analysing the complex processes by which relationships in *Grandison* are shaped through the use of gifts.

The giving of gifts is thus a complex process in Richardson's novels. Things are given away out of generosity, pride, contrition or as pawns in a bid for power. They are accepted as undeserved bounties or refused as dangerous, generous yet ill-advised, or immoral. Gift giving highlights the generosity and disinterestedness of the virtuous characters, but it equally marks the thoughtlessness, manipulation and callousness of the less perfect. Only the best characters know how to give a gift in a 'healing' way, and can distinguish between what is and what is not theirs to give. The latter can be illustrated with an overview over the last wills in all three novels.[69] In *Pamela*, two wills are mentioned. In the first part, Mr. B. shows his responsible behaviour and consideration of his wife by making his will shortly after their wedding (493). In the continuation, their steward Mr. Longman bequeaths almost his entire fortune to Mr. and Mrs. B. This is due both to his love for them and to his anger at the unworthy behaviour of his relations. It is the first of many wills in Richardson's works to be disregarded – the B.s inherit only to return the property to their steward's family, accompanied, of course, with admonitions for their future behaviour (602).

In *Clarissa*, the heroine's hateful suitor Solmes intends to settle all his fortune on Clarissa in such a way that it will revert to her family, rather than to his, should she die childless. For Clarissa, as we have seen, this is an additional reason to refuse him, since Solmes's relations are in need of money and, according to her, have a right to expect some support from him. Far more prominent than

69 On the subject of wills in Richardson's novels see also Price 42–8, and Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 68.

Solmes's marriage settlements are, of course, the two wills which open and end the novel – the one of Clarissa's grandfather and the one of the heroine herself. Clarissa's troubles in her family start with her inheritance of the so-called dairy-house – property which could make her independent and which the family had expected to go to Mr. Harlowe senior. When Clarissa writes her own will, her first bequest transfers the contested dairy-house to her father.

Clarissa illustrates the pitfalls of gift giving in an especially complex way. When her grandfather bequeaths such substantial property to Clarissa, he rewards her love and care and proves his insight in her character. His appreciation of her gives evidence of his own worth. When he wills the family pictures and plates to her, he leaves them to that descendant who has the fullest respect for filial and other family duties. As Arabella's spiteful taunts testify, Clarissa has moreover demonstrated an interest in the objects symbolising the family history (she dusted "the family pictures" with her own "dainty hands", 194). On the other hand, the persons whom her grandfather disappointed – mainly the Harlowe men – prove their inferiority to Clarissa by thinking of contesting the will. At the same time that they demand unconditional obedience from Clarissa, they contest their own father's and grandfather's right to act similarly with regard to *his* descendants. In the preamble to his will, he had not only given his reasons for the bequest, but added:

> Wherefore it is my express will and commandment, and I enjoin my three sons John, James and Antony, and my grandson James, and my grand-daughter Arabella, as they value my blessing, and my memory, and would wish their own last wills and desires to be fulfilled by *their* survivors, that they will not impugn or contest the following bequests and dispositions in favour of my said grand-daughter Clarissa, although they should not be strictly conformable to law […]. (53)

Clarissa's grandfather here evokes the same system of duty which the Harlowes use as a justification to control her. Even if the will should fail as a contract ("not be strictly conformable to law"), the system of duty should ensure that it is not contested. When the Harlowes try to force Clarissa to marry Solmes, however, they attempt to use the legacy as a reinforcing mechanism for their own familial power. Anticipating resistance, Uncle Antony threatens already before Clarissa knows the identity of her suitor that, if she refuses to conform to her family's wishes, they will punish her by contesting the will. As Clarissa writes to Anna, he hopes "that I would not give them reason to apprehend that I thought my grandfather's favour to me had made me independent of them all—If I did, he could tell me, the will *could* be set aside, and *should*" (60).

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However, while this willingness to disobey their (grand)father's paternal injunctions to strengthen their own paternal authority reflects badly on the Harlowes, this patriarch's right to will away his property as he judges right is effectually defeated by Clarissa herself. She does so first by letting her father manage her new income for her and then by bequeathing the dairy-house to him. "In leaving her estate to her father in her will", Liz Bellamy comments, "Clarissa indicates her acceptance of the patriarchal system of property, even as she denies the right to exert the tyranny of gender within the private affective sphere" (75). Indeed, Clarissa proves her right to be a gift-giver – to will away her savings, her books and pictures – by putting right her grandfather's 'error'. Clarissa can be a gift-giver because she knows what is and what is not hers to bestow freely.[70]

Within an imperfect family, then, gift-givers find themselves in a double-bind. Clarissa's grandfather's decision to regard merit above primogeniture comes to be one of the catalysts of the tragedy. Todd even calls the legacy "the 'original cause' and sin of the novel" and claims that Belford "envisions the dead Clarissa trying through her own will to repair the injustice of her grandfather's" (9). His right to dispose of his possessions as he thinks fit – a right which his sons and grandsons arrogate to themselves – does not correspond to a daughter's right to demand the independence bestowed on her. However, if Clarissa's inheritance has a "distorting effect" on the traditional order (Bellamy 75), so does her family's refusal to let her reap the rewards of her virtue. As a youngest daughter, she may not be entitled to financial independence, but as a paragon of virtue, she clearly is. A perfect distribution of goods, which would honour both blood relationship and virtue, cannot be achieved here. Clarissa turns out to be her grandfather's 'natural heir' in more senses than one. Although her own last will is honoured, this is possible only because it considers both the merits of those to whom she leaves legacies and their relationship to her. However, in the hands of one who knows how to give, legacies can be used both 'creatively' and 'justly' in order to produce a better society, as will be shown with regard to Sir Charles Grandison's role as an executor of wills (see 3.4).

The tragedy of *Clarissa*, Zionkowski argues, stems from the heroine's inability to "return[…] an equivalent of [her parents'] initial gift [of life] to her" ("Clarissa" 474). Indebted from her birth, she must continually give 'in return', but has nothing that is rightfully her own. As Richardson wrote to Frances

70 It should be noted that Clarissa is not *entirely* free to bequeath her property to whom she pleases. In a letter to Lovelace, Belford specifies that "[h]er grandfather […] has enabled her at eighteen years of age to make her will, and to devise great part of his estate to whom she pleases of the family, and the rest out of it (if she die single) at her own discretion; and this to create respect to her; as he apprehended that she would be envied" (1191).

Grainger, "a child never can make its Parent Amends for her Pains in Childbirth, in Dentition, and for the Anxiousness and Sleepless Nights throughout every stage of her Infantile Life—on to Adolescency, &c. &c." (*Selected Letters* 145–6; 22 Jan. 1749/50; cf. also Zionkowski, "Clarissa" 475). As a daughter, Clarissa cannot escape indebtedness and the resulting duty of obedience. Moreover, as an individual subscribing both to the system of duty and to the norm of reciprocity, she is doubly entangled: her 'duty' prevents her from questioning the value of her family's earlier 'gifts' as compared to the returns she has already made, and her gratitude further prevents her from perceiving her family as uniformly selfish or cruel. Her problem is not so much that she is 'indebted' to her parents, as Zionkowski suggests, but that she is bound to *perceive* herself as indebted.

In all these ways, gift giving acts as a 'cover' for the system of duty. The presentation of benefits conferred by parents on their children can, in fact, forward the system of duty even where parents flagrantly neglect their own responsibilities, for Richardson's good characters tend to reinterpret other people's duties towards them as free gifts. In this regard, Gouldner notes that

> there are at least two ways, not merely one, in which complementarity as such can break down. In the one case, Alter can refuse to acknowledge Ego's rights as his own duties. In the other case, however, Ego may not regard as rights that which Alter acknowledges as duties. (61)

This second case amounts to an (implicitly stated) status duty of children to parents. It is this mechanism which allows Sir Charles to represent his father as generous. When Sir Thomas wastes his son's inheritance, Sir Charles can avoid seeing this as a breach of duty on his father's part because he has, from the beginning, interpreted all financial support as a free gift, even while seeing his own obedience as a duty.

Besides supporting existing relationships, exchanges of benefits have the potential to *initiate* relationships which then lead to appropriate status duties. In its most striking and optimistic form, this can be seen in *Grandison*, whose hero tends to initiate new relationships by conferring benefits. This is clearest in the example of Harriet, whom he meets as he rescues her from Sir Hargrave. In other cases, his help strengthens (Mr. Danby) or renews relationships (Jeronymo della Porretta). The power in these relationships tends to be one-sided, with Sir Charles continuing to confer benefits while receiving gratitude, although this imbalance is softened as he quickly integrates the relationships into the system of duty – in the case of Harriet, for example, he calls her his sister within a few days, thus obviating some of the dangers of obligation which we have already seen in the example of Mr. B.'s gifts to Pamela. The gifts of a 'brother'

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demand a return of 'sisterly' love only and are therefore apparently innocuous. At the same time, all 'gifts' he confers on his 'sister' can be seen as merely the effect of fraternal duty and therefore her due. Other relationships function entirely without such a power imbalance. Harriet, for example, initially extends to Charlotte Grandison the boundless gratitude she feels for her rescue; with time (helped by the discovery that Charlotte is by no means faultless), this subsides into a more equal friendship, where the benefits exchanged (praise, trust, advice and criticism) are in balance.

Sir Charles's free gifts are generally in harmony with status duties; he occupies a high position, and the recipients of his favours are therefore usually his equals or his inferiors. This is in accordance with Allestree's example cited above, where parents' authority is supported by the unreturnable obligation the gift of life lays on a child. What Allestree leaves out of his account is the potentially disturbing fact that life can be given by people other than parents. This, too, is exemplified in the figure of Sir Charles – a giver (that is, a preserver) of lives as well as of protection, advice, and financial security. He thus becomes not only "[a] father and a brother in one", but also "more than a father to his *uncle*" (1:138, 2:38). Such power and will to give, then, has the potential to confuse, rather than confirm, existing status duties. Sir Charles, of course, chooses to use this power in ways which will either support the system of duty or soften its effects by turning duty into pleasure. However, gifts can be used for very different purposes. Lovelace, we have seen, tries to urge Clarissa to accept his gifts in order to gain more influence over her, and her reluctance to accept benefits from him helps her resist this influence. Indeed, gifts given outside the frame of the system of duty can be threatening, since the norm of reciprocity demands a return. Where such a return is not structured by status duties, and where it cannot be returned in equal terms, it can involve the party obliged in a double-bind: namely, either to fail in gratitude or to fail by not giving a return. This is the case with 'amatory gifts', given by a lover to the woman he courts; as Charles Hinnant has noted, this is a special category of gifts which, in general, must not be reciprocated.

Within a patriarchal society, the power to give tends to be gendered in several ways. On the one hand, it is so in practical and legal terms, as women in the eighteenth century were disadvantaged with regard to inheritance as well as barred from many occupations and from control of their own property during marriage. This last, in fact, restricts their power of giving even during the state of *feme sole*. Thus, when Clarissa offers to "resign" her estate and "make it over to [her] sister", the Harlowes (as reported by the servant Betty) explain that her resignation will not be valid if she marries Lovelace: "*I* to resolve to live single, when Lovelace was so *sure* of me!—[…]and could, whenever he pleased,

if my husband, claim [the estate] under the will!" (255, 256). At present, Clarissa is a minor and therefore "not at liberty to alienate her lands" – and once she is married, her husband will gain control of all her belongings (Zomchick 65). After the rape, Clarissa justifies her refusal of Lovelace by explaining, among other things, that marriage to him would lead to him possessing not only her, but "the estate on which my relations had set their hearts" (1161–2). However, even where *legal* control of assets is secured to women, *moral* authority may be lacking, as can be seen in Sir Charles's reaction to Olivia's gift to him (see 3.4).

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2.2 Women, gifts, and property

Exchange of gifts and services, then – if structured in the right way – serves to initiate and preserve good relationships between individuals and groups. However, human beings can be not only givers and receivers, but also, themselves, the gifts which are given. Lévi-Strauss's study *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* famously explains the incest taboo as the obligation to exchange with other groups "that most precious category of goods, women" (61). Such structures knit groups together in a twofold way – firstly, by an exchange of gifts, and secondly, by intermingling individuals of diverse groups in such a way that some group members belong to both groups (if, possibly, only precariously – an example both of the group mobility of women and of its precariousness is Jessica in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*). Women as gifts, then, have a special status. As Lévi-Strauss explains, they may themselves be involved in marriage negotiations, although this does not change their status as gifts. The assumption behind this seems to be that the centre of the group is always male, so that it is the women who form the links between groups, and the men who are linked. Regardless of any reservations about the universality of the system outlined by Lévi-Strauss, its applicability to some historical and geographical areas is salient.[71]

71 Gayle Rubin finds Lévi-Strauss's concept both useful and problematic. As she notes, he "argues that the incest taboo and the results of its application constitute the origin of culture", so that the oppression of women "is a prerequisite of culture. [...] However, it would be a dubious proposition at best to argue that if there were no exchange of women there would be no culture" (176).
For an application of the theories of Mauss and Lévi-Strauss to gender relationships and power in *The Merchant of Venice*, see Newman. These concepts have also been used for Richardson studies by, among others, Zionkowski (*Women and Gift Exchange*) and, indirectly, Eagleton, who has evoked women as "the fundamental unit of exchange" (56; drawing on Luce Irigaray).

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Women's position to give is compromised by the fact that they can be conceptualised as gifts in themselves. As Gayle Rubin puts it, "[t]o enter into a gift exchange as a partner, one must have something to give. If women are for men to dispose of, they are in no position to give themselves away" (175). Marriage, the exchange of property, and the forging of relationships are undoubtedly often connected. Within a patriarchal, strongly hierarchical society, daughters constitute a potential gift which can cement relationships among men. Lévi-Strauss's system of exchange would seem to agree peculiarly well with the system of duty outlined in the first chapter. As Jerry Beasley describes it, "[a]n eighteenth-century marriage was […] a transfer of filial obligation for the young woman" (40); at the same time, as we have seen in *The Whole Duty of Man*, paternal authority is invested with far stronger associations with the sacred than is the husband's authority. Wifely duty, therefore, cannot be allowed to supersede filial duty entirely. In an exchange of daughters, the secondary duty of a wife is based on the primary duty of daughter; the danger of a conflict of duties for the daughter/wife is therefore minimised and obedience to his commands secured for the father/husband. In this regard, Clarissa is urged to accept Solmes for her family's sake. She herself highlights the connection between this suitor and her family when she apologises to her uncle Antony for criticising a man whom he "rank[s …] amongst [his] select friends" (150). Antony responds with outrage: "Because I value Mr Solmes as my friend, you treat him the worse—That's the plain Dunstable of the matter, miss!" (154). Similiarly, her brother's taunt that she should think more of the filial and less of matrimonial duty – which I have read earlier as an example of downplaying the network of duties as opposed to one supreme duty – can also be read as implying succession of duties: the woman, being given in marriage, passes from one duty to the next; the need for agency on her part is obviated by her father's command whom she ought to obey.

Richardson's novels, as well as moral writers referenced in them, contain ample material which fits into Lévi-Strauss's theory, even while complicating it. Thus, for Allestree, "Children are so much the goods, the possessions of their Parent, that they cannot without a kind of Theft, give away themselves without the allowance of those that have the right in them" (302; Sunday XIV). Marriage – the act which radically changes the network of duties in which an individual finds him- or herself – amounts to "theft" unless sanctioned by the parent (the singular is surely no coincidence) – and when sanctioned, one may imply, it constitutes a 'gift' conferred by the parents of the bride and groom, either to each other, or to their children. Although Allestree's formulation is gender-neutral, issues of gender are linked to any concrete case, if only because in a patriarchal system, men are closer to the top of the hierarchy than women

are. When an orphaned couple marries, it will be the husband, not the wife, who is head of their household. However, even with both parents still alive, it is the daughter who bears the heaviest burden of obedience. It is she, for example, who can be prevented by her husband from doing her duty to her parents. Clarissa is painfully aware of this. In a letter to Lovelace on the subject of marriage settlements, she writes:

> When a woman is married, that supreme earthly obligation requires her, in all instances of natural justice, and where her husband's honour may be concerned, to yield her own will to his—But, beforehand, I could be glad, conformably to what I have always signified, to have the most explicit assurances, that every possible way should be tried to avoid litigation with my father [about her estate]. (653)

It is only "beforehand" that she can urge this with any force; if Lovelace later changes his mind, he can still claim a right to the estate. Her disobedient marriage will then involve her family in a lawsuit, and she will become complicit in her husband's actions against her will. The strength of the assumption that daughters must show stricter obedience than sons – not necessarily based on explicit theories – is shown in Mulso's correspondence with Richardson. It is made more explicit in Richardson's favourite quotation from Numbers, where a clear distinction is made between the vows of men and widows, on the one hand, and those of 'maids' and wives, on the other.[72]

72 Richardson quotes this passage, or parts of it, twice: in *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*, it is invoked by Mr. B. in the conflict about nursing (313–4), and the 'editor' of *Clarissa* adds it in a footnote, commenting on the heroine's behaviour (361): "[2]'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond: he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. [3]If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; [4]and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. [5]But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. [6]And if she had at all a husband, when she vowed, or uttered aught out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, [7]and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. [8]But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of no effect, and the Lord shall forgive her. [9]But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.'" (Numbers 30.2–9)
This passage is likewise invoked by Allestree to prove the absoluteness of filial duty (302; Sunday XIV).

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Literary evidence of the conceptualization of women as gifts abounds, and, in several examples, the giving of women establishes a stronger connection between two men than between the woman and the man who receives her. The following examples, from Shakespeare and from a late-19th-century novel, show the availability, as well as mutability, of the pattern – in the last example, even at a time when the explicit formulation of it would have been rejected because of ideals of romantic love. Such references can be outspoken, as in the case of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where the faithful friend rescues his beloved Silvia from rape only to offer her to his treacherous, but now repentant, friend and would-be rapist as a token of his forgiveness. The woman in question, who has up to this point demonstrated a strong will of her own, is not assigned a single line of text during and after this transaction. In many cases, references to women as gifts are casual, as when Juliet's father pressures his daughter to marry: "An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend" (*Romeo and Juliet* III.v.192). An example with reversed gender roles occurs in *All's Well that Ends Well*, where the heroine demands the hero as a reward for curing the king's illness. It is significant that Bertram, in contrast to Silvia in *Two Gentlemen*, actively resists being 'given'. Although Helen finally manages to win his acceptance, he has considerable room for resistance, including (attempted) adultery.

The persistence of such patterns is visible in much later works, including Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*. Perhaps this example is the more remarkable because the reference is inserted casually, seemingly mainly as a plot device for a rags-to-riches story (set, incidentally, in the mid-eighteenth century). The hero, David Balfour, finds out that he is heir to an estate. As the lawyer, Mr. Rankeillor, explains to him, his father and his uncle had both loved the same woman, and his father had offered to give her up to his rival brother. The woman, in this case, indignantly rejects being 'given away'; as the lawyer explains to David, "it's from her you must inherit your excellent good sense; and she refused to be bandied from one to another". Yet although she can thus choose her own husband, the final solution – "a sort of bargain" (192) – is almost equally problematic. In order to comfort his brother, the successful lover gives up his estate to him – effectively turning his wife into a gift or merchandise whose approximate equivalent can be measured in money.

As Mrs. Balfour's case shows – and as Lévi-Strauss states (cf. 496) –, agency does not necessarily preclude a woman's status as gift. Accordingly, Richardson's heroines tend to take on a precarious double identity. In the early parts of *Pamela*, the heroine is both an object (in every sense) of Mr. B.'s lust/love and, as he sees it, a potential contract partner, who may sign over to him her

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sexual favours in return for money.[73] Clarissa is, to Lovelace, a prize as well as a saint-like figure, and to her family, she is both an object to be bartered away and a prized individual. Even the English heroine of *Grandison*, who is beloved and supported by all her family, cannot entirely escape objectification. As Lynn Shepherd has noted, even her "benevolent […] Uncle Selby" imagines her putting herself to market in London (208), a description reminiscent of Sir Thomas's brutal annunciation that he will take measures to marry his daughters profitably: "I intend to make as good a bargain for them, and with them, as I can" (1:329). Harriet, therefore, remains a commodity, despite her freedom. She is in the rare position of being both 'merchant' and commodity, or giver and gift (see 3.6).

However, Lévi-Strauss's theory may prove more useful in highlighting how much Richardson's novels differ from it. Far from depicting a daughter's passage from her father's into her husband's power, there is not a single Richardsonian heroine who is actually given in marriage to forge a relationship between men. Even among the minor characters, possible examples fulfil an ambiguous function at the most. In *Clarissa*, marriage as gift exchange proves disastrous; precisely because Clarissa is treated as a mere medium of alliance, the family supposed to be unified falls apart. Moreover, while the heroine is sometimes imagined to be able to link different males – Lovelace with his relations, particularly Lord M., or the Harlowes with Lovelace's family and thus the peerage – such efforts are shown to be futile if the more important links of virtue or love fail. In *Pamela* and *Grandison*, it is hard even to pinpoint the two male figures who might be connected by means of a woman. Mr. B. is so far above Pamela's family that the connection between her husband and father, although indeed brought about solely through her means, remains insignificant. Indeed, Terry Castle has argued that the marriage has an opposite effect; the Andrewses, according to her, appear disconnected from the heroine in the sequel (*Masquerade* 141). And Mr. B. is able to claim, as we have seen, that little has changed in his relationship to Pamela, as he was her 'head' as a master and is now her 'head' as a husband. In *Grandison*, the English heroine's father and grandfather are dead, while most of her admittedly good male relations are far from awe-inspiring and clearly in no position of authority over her.

73 For Nancy Armstrong, Mr. B.'s offered contract and Pamela's rejection of it is an important step towards new gender relations: Richardson "modifies the presupposition of all previous contracts, namely, that the male defined and valorized the female as a form of currency in an exchange among men. This is to say that Richardson's version of consensual exchange empowers the female to give herself in exchange with the male" (112).

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The secondary, Italian, heroine Clementina, meanwhile, will be protected by agreement from her father's authority over her marriage.[74] Moreover, although she is briefly considered a potential reward for Charles Grandison, who has saved her brother's life (cf. Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 74), this is in part a rationalisation, an excuse for the Porretta family to marry their daughter to a foreigner.

Indeed, *Grandison* occasionally evokes the exchange of women only to reject such transactions. Thus, Sir Hargrave offers the hero peace and friendship on the condition that the latter bring about his marriage to Harriet – a situation which is reminiscent of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* Sir Charles, however, refuses: "The Lady is, must be, her own mistress", and thus no-one's to give – or take (1:253; cf. also 1:267).[75] Similarly, although he tries to persuade Clementina that she should marry, he rejects all attempts at compulsion, and even cautions against too much persuasion. Although it seems probable that his intervention will eventually lead to her marriage with the Count, this happens precisely because the match is left entirely to her own decision (see 3.6). Even in cases where the hero acts in a more authoritarian manner, or as a helpful matchmaker, his very authority works against a systematic exchange of women for the sake of male relationships. His superiority over other men means that he frequently stands in a similar relationship to his male as to his female connections. When he arranges a match for his uncle Lord W., for example, this is precisely not an exchange among equals. Rather, Sir Charles appears as the sole gift-giver. He obliges both the bride, whom he rescues from genteel poverty, and his uncle, for whom he provides a wife and, potentially, heirs; there is no obvious trading partner. Incidentally, Sir Charles will be Lord W.'s heir if the latter has no children; the hero thus 'disinherits' himself. The main effects of the match are, therefore, not family alliances in Lévi-Strauss's sense, but the exchange between husband and wife (protection for service) and the common obligation to Sir Charles, who has negotiated for both sides.

Gift giving does not become unimportant once a relationship is established through marriage. On the contrary, the question of who has control over property within marriage recurs both in Richardson's novels and in other

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74 Clementina's position was not, however, secondary in the view of many readers. William Hazlitt and Sir Walter Scott, for example, preferred her to Harriet (Doody, *A Natural Passion* 315).

75 Latimer, in contrast, argues that "Sir Charles is not *saving Harriet*, but contesting *Sir Hargrave's right* in a woman" (*Making Gender* 168). I agree that, had she been Sir Hargrave's wife, he would not have felt justified to interfere; this does not change the fact that he takes the trouble to inform himself whether she is entitled to be rescued.

eighteenth-century literature. And although the property of a married couple is not always conceptualised as something which can be 'given' from one to the other, we will see that such gifts can actually figure in depictions of idealised marriage. Legally, the marriage contract ensured the husband's control of his own and his wife's property. Although he could not sell land owned by her unless she consented, he had control over any profits from it, over any wages she earned, and over moveable property she possessed (A. Erickson 24–5). The husband's control over his wife could be limited somewhat, and the property she brought him protected, by specifying in a marriage settlement "the amount of the wife's jointure" in case of widowhood, or by "allowing her to make a will under coverture; obliging her husband to leave her worth so much money at his death; or binding him to pay portions to her children by a previous husband" (Amy Erickson 104). The woman herself could arrange such a settlement only prior to her marriage and only through trustees, although others could set up a trust for her during her marriage (103–4). Moreover, wives were debarred from suing alone at common law, so their ability to protect their legal rights against an abusive husband were severely hampered (115).[76] This unequal distribution of power in marriage was criticized by some proto-feminists. Sarah Chapone, for example, was especially indignant that a husband who did not provide for his wife and family could still "*Plunder* her at *Discretion*" if she managed to earn some money on her own (10). On the other hand, the husband's power to give was seen as an important support of his position as head of the household. Indeed, the wife's residual power to have an impact on the family property could be perceived as threatening to male authority.

A few days after their marriage, Mr. B. tells his bride of a disagreeable phenomenon which he has "frequently observed, at the Houses of other Gentlemen" when he and his friends have arrived for an unexpected visit (370). In these cases, "especially if any of us have lain under the Suspicion of having occasionally seduced our marry'd Companion into bad Hours, or given indifferent Examples", the wife tends to behave "with an Indifference, and Slight, that has often made me wish myself out of *her* House; for too plainly have I seen, that it was not *his*" (371). The story is ostensibly told to caution Pamela concerning the treatment of her husband's acquaintance, as Mr. B., quite reasonably, wishes to carry on his relationships with old friends after marriage, and to welcome them to his house. Implicit in his caution is, perhaps, his awareness that his friends will hardly do him honour; a virtuous wife such as Pamela has some reason to disapprove of

76 For a detailed account of married women's property, see also Susan Staves; for women's position with regard to common law and other legal systems in England, see Amy Erickson, esp. 21–45.

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them, although she is not to show it (this, of course, constitutes one of many cases where a wife's regard for virtue may clash with her duties as a good, and properly subordinate, spouse). There is another element, however, which creeps into a story meant to illustrate Mr. B.'s largely legitimate desire. In this tale, the house shared by husband and wife becomes contested property. It is either *his*, or, if not at his command in all senses of the word, it is *hers*. Although Mr. B. frequently assures his bride that his property is now "not more mine than yours" (458), his anecdote reveals this to be a polite fiction. Notoriously, married women's property was not, in fact, theirs. Coverture – the legal fiction which largely subsumed a woman's legal rights under her husband's – insured that a woman's home was, in fact, her husband's, not vice versa. Mr. B.'s anxiety, then, is double: it shows fear of a wife's potential for seizing power despite the laws of society, and, given these norms, her 'usurpation' constitutes not just private 'hen-pecking', but a violation of the rules established by society.

Mr. B.'s anxiety is far from unique. Surprisingly often in 18th-century fiction (particularly, it seems, by male authors), an inversion of power within marriage is depicted. This ranges from poor Mr. Partridge's wife beating him and then accusing him of abuse, to Matthew Bramble's friend Baynard, who submits his will to his wife's almost to the irretrievable ruin of the family fortune, to beau Jackson, who wakes up after his wedding night only to learn that he is now liable to imprisonment for debts which his bride had contracted (Fielding, *Tom Jones* 77–8; Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* 325–333; Smollett, *Roderick Random* 373–4).[77] "So great a favourite is the female sex of the laws of England", as Blackstone put it (433; bk. I, ch. XV). The last example is particularly pertinent, since it describes one of the few cases where there is indeed a kind of transition of 'property' – that of a debt – between the spouses which may endanger the husband. Nevertheless, in view of the imbalance of power relations within marriage, male anxiety about women's abuse of power is quite striking.

77 The last situation in fact occurs twice in *Roderick Random*; the hero himself is almost tricked by Miss Williams, who tries to marry him in order to shield herself from debt and to exact revenge on all men (134–5).
As for Baynard in *Humphry Clinker*, it should be noted that the victimized husband had married his irresponsible, manipulative wife in order to "discharge [a debt] by means of a prudent marriage" (325); from Bramble's account of things, it appears that he never acquaints her with his sensible plans for managing his family estate until after the wedding. Behind the unhappy marriage, then, is not just the bad wife, but also the patriarchal husband who, conscious of his good intentions, has no 'need' to ask his future wife's advice or agreement. The situation becomes reminiscent of the marriage of the G.s in *Grandison* – although Charlotte, of course, while quite capable of tormenting her husband, is far too prudent ever to endanger the good management of their household.

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As Sarah Chapone argued, "there are more Instances in which Men can impose upon Women" than vice versa (39). Therefore, it is absurd to claim that the "Laws obliging Men to pay their Wives Debts contracted before Marriage is as hard upon them" as many aspects of marital law are for women (36).

If a wife's control of the family property is suspect, however, many writers, both male and female, still agreed that a wife should be more than an "upper servant" (cf. *Tom Jones* 294 and *Grandison* 2:95).[78] What, then, is the 'appropriate' condition of married people's property, and in what sense can a married woman 'possess' anything? Richardson's *Rambler* essay gives a hint as to what could be the answer to the first question. For him, a husband's control of all money (except possibly what is immediately needed for the running of the household) enables him to "oblige" his wife. It is therefore deplorable that, in modern marriages, "pin-money is stipulated for, which makes a wife independent, and destroys love, by putting it out of a man's power to lay any obligation upon her, that might engage gratitude, and kindle affection" (158; No. 97).[79] Conversely, if all power remains with the male head of the household, everything that he gives can be seen as a 'gift'. Thus, the system of gifts upholds the authority which is due to the husband according to the system of duty (cf. also Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 16, 30). This idea is also endorsed by Sir Charles, who stipulates against too much pin-money for his sister Charlotte (2:511) – even though he makes generous arrangements for pin-money in the cases of Mrs. O'Hara and Miss Mansfield. The apparent contradiction can perhaps be resolved if one remembers that the point is not to make life hard for the wife, but to force her to be properly grateful. Mrs. O'Hara is greedy, and Miss Mansfield agrees to marry an aging rake. A generous allowance may therefore be necessary to

78 Pateman cites examples of the complaint that wives are treated as upper servants reaching from Mary Astell, Lady Chudleigh and Daniel Defoe to Mary Wollstonecraft and even to "the end of the nineteenth century, [when] Thorstein Veblen called a wife 'the chief menial of the household'" (125).

79 Elizabeth Carter, one of Richardson's most critical correspondents, found the overall effect of this essay distasteful enough to write to her friend Catherine Talbot: "One whould [*sic*] think the man was, in this respect, a Mahometan" (qtd. in Clery 147). E.J. Clery suggests that Carter's response to Richardson's text was especially harsh because she was just then angry with Talbot, who admired Richardson immensely.
For another literary comment on pin-money and control, see also the comedy *The Provoked Husband*, begun by Sir John Vanbrugh and completed by Richardson's friend Colley Cibber. The "provoking" wife, Lady Townly, begins by complaining that, because her father refused to arrange for pin-money in her marriage contract, her "whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of an husband's odd humors". At the end of the play, however, a reformed Lady Townly explains the moral: "Let husbands govern, gentle wives obey" (III.454–6; V.ii.389).

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engage their gratitude; moreover, Miss Mansfield's prospective husband has shown himself to be a niggard in the past. Charlotte, in contrast, has married a good and generous man, who can be trusted to treat her well – and a somewhat weak man, who may need such a reinforcing mechanism in order to engage his wife's respect. Still, this method of bolstering the husband's power to "oblige" his wife by gifts requires that *his own* duty is momentarily forgotten. As Susan Staves argues, "[t]he contemporary complaint that modern women demanded pin money payments as matters of right [...] manages to ignore the husband's common law duty to maintain his wife and to provide her with necessaries appropriate to their rank" (159). It seems that the hierarchy between spouses must be maintained at any cost.

The potentially disastrous consequences of giving a wife too much power over the family property are exemplified in the marriage of Sir Harry, father of the hero's friend Edward Beauchamp. In this case, the marriage contract guarantees the wife "such terms as in a great measure put both father and [step]son in her power" (1:463). Through the mediation of Sir Charles, the situation is later solved (see 3.4). Despite the happy solution, however, there is clearly something inherently wrong in the arrangement – and, indeed, Sir Harry, the weak husband, remains the most shadowy character of the Beauchamp family. A different kind of alternative is exemplified in the marriage of Lord and Lady L. Presented as the ideal couple, they "have but one purse". Each takes what he or she needs out "of the private drawer, where his money and money-bills lie" and then writes down what they use. This egalitarian model is attractive; however, the power still remains with the husband. It is clearly Lord L. who re-fills the money box, as Lady L. takes more or less depending on how much money is left (2:349). The equality of this happy marriage, then, is exemplary – but it is also in the husband's gift.

Despite this clear endorsement of the husband's authority – supported also by the law – it is nevertheless possible for a wife to gain 'moral' property, as is shown in *Pamela* and its sequel. At the end of the original novel, it is indicated that there will be no question of prerogative in her marriage and that she will have authority in Mr. B.'s household. Soon, however, the first conflicts force Pamela to accept that it is her husband who holds power, while she has to obey whenever their wills clash. Nevertheless, Pamela's continued, prudent discharge of her role finally gains her far-reaching influence both over her household and her husband. She has to win authority a *second* time, now not over her own body/chastity but over the B. family and over her husband's mind. Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* provide a useful metaphor to describe the process

by which she gains such authority – through her virtuous labour, which she pursues despite the danger of being interrupted in it by her husband.

Locke's *Two Treatises* are often taken as the starting point for general discussions of property in the eighteenth century (cf. e.g. Moltchanova & Ottaway; London) – despite the fact that his text centres on the *origins* of private property in a world which is not yet owned by anyone. His examples are the newly-created world, open to colonization by Adam and his descendants, and the American wilds (for him, unowned by the natives). Its applicability to issues of eighteenth-century England might therefore seem limited, or at least only possible in indirect ways. In fact, Locke's focus is not so much the transmission of property as the question of the origin of legitimate political power. Nevertheless, his theory has proved inspiring for discussions of property and gender. For the purposes of this paper, it becomes a surprisingly apposite metaphor for the process by which a wife may achieve a measure of authority. In marriage, two people's private property becomes shared, or rather the husband's, property. For Locke, property is, in turn, the basis for political authority. This ties in with the system of gratitude; indeed, the distinction can become almost invisible. As we have seen, Richardson criticized pin-money because it puts it out of the husband's power to 'oblige' his wife without too much expense. The husband's authority is in part based on his power to give gifts; at the same time, his authority is also seen as natural – that is why he *should* have the power to oblige. A wife's authority thus becomes secondary by definition.

Yet while a wife is acknowledged to be a rational, and hopefully virtuous, individual – as well as the mistress of a family who must control children and servants – ways must be devised to create and/or legitimize such authority. This process is shown in some detail in *Pamela* and its sequel, and it seems surprisingly close to Locke's vision of the origin of property and, by extension, government. Property, for Locke, begins with the body, the 'possession' which Pamela has defended so fiercely:

> […] every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this *labour* something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other Men. (305–6; II § 27).

Once the increase in population "had made Land scarce", Locke continues his argument, people "*by Compact* and Agreement, *settled the Property* which

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Labour and Industry began" (317; II § 45). Such a compact changes the rules which applied to the state of nature – just as the marriage contract changes the relationship between the man and woman who enter into it, defining the shared property as the husband's.

In the case of *Pamela*, however, the reader witnesses indeed how the wife gains authority by her "labour" – for there is, in fact, a 'wilderness' still left. Mr. B. is shown to be a popular master and landlord and a fairly responsible father to his illegitimate daughter. Nevertheless, he leaves uncultivated parts of his estate and family (in the extended sense, including servants) which are shown to be crucial. Thus, as Mr. B. and Pamela settle the details of their wedding, it emerges that he is fashionably negligent of some aspects of religion. In order to keep the ceremony "very private", he suggests that it shall be conducted within the house (276). Pamela, however, disagrees: "It is a *Holy Rite*, Sir, […] and would be better, methinks, in a *Holy Place*" (276). Although he immediately gives in to her wish, his answer betrays further negligence: "I will order my own little Chapel, which has not been us'd for two Generations, for any thing but a Lumber-room, because our Family seldom resided here long together, to be clear'd and clean'd" (276). Pamela's response implies a subtle rebuke: "I hope it will never be lumber'd again, but kept to the Use, for which, as I *presume*, it has been consecrated" (277). Although the neglect of the chapel may be understandable enough, it yet falls short of that respect for all aspects of religion shown by a perfect head of household.

Not surprisingly, neglect of a holy space goes hand in hand with other failings. Mr. B. has, after all, encouraged his servants to sin when he employed them for Pamela's abduction. Moreover, he fails to uphold the custom of family worship which Allestree finds so important:

> A second sort of publick Prayer is that in a Family, where all that are members of it joyn in their common supplications; and this also ought to be very carefully attended to, first by the Master of the Family, who is to look that there be such Prayers, it being as much his part thus to provide for the Souls of his Children and Servants, as to provide food for their Bodies. (Allestree 118; Sunday V)

It is Pamela, the *mistress* of the family, who re-instates this custom, arranging for family prayers on Sunday mornings and evenings – although Mr. B. does not join them (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 171–2). As Latimer expresses it, "Mr B, functionally illiterate in a moral sense, has not grasped that in allowing his wife to instruct his dependants, he is permitting her to assume power which would otherwise be his" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 144). Pamela cultivates those areas – both literal and metaphorical – neglected by him, and thus gains

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authority in the household as well as the power to complete her husband's reformation.[80] After the crisis over B.'s flirtation with the Countess Dowager, he finally acknowledges the importance of religious, as well as 'mere' moral, considerations. Although Pamela never ceases to respect her husband, the power balance has shifted in her favour, and Mr. B. makes this explicit: "You shall [...] from this Instant, be my Guide" (551). Now thoroughly reformed, he is so convinced of the importance of virtue that authority ceases to be a priority. Yet there is a sinister implication to this – the wife of a truly good husband, it seems, cannot earn any additional power (cf. 3.7).

In the above, I have used a passage from Locke's *Two Treatises* as a metaphor which illustrates Pamela's gradual gaining of influence. In the following chapter, I will discuss the direct use of Locke's writing which can be made – and which was made by Hester Mulso – to defend the rights of women and to challenge or reform the system of duty.

2.3 "Puzzling Locke", Mulso and the system of duty

The system of duty which I have outlined in part I was well established in Richardson's time, and though many of its tenets came under pressure soon (cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 97), aspects of the system tended to survive at least until the turn of the eighteenth century. The association of parental with any (private) authority was still available to Anthony Heasel, author of the 1773 tract *The Servants Book of Knowledge*. Heasel draws a parallel between masters and parents to enforce the dutifulness of servants: "'as we are commanded to honour our parents, so it is necessarily implied that we also honour and respect all those who have authority over us'" (qtd. in Spacks, *Privacy* 198). Moreover, the model daughter devoted to her father lives on in 19th-century fiction, although the pressure on children to ignore their parents' faults seems to lessen. Even rebellious, twenty-three-year-old Jemima Bradshaw in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, for example, feels it is "right to obey" her father when he forbids her to visit the 'fallen' heroine, although she reserves to herself the option to disobey "if [she] could do any good" (299).

80 April London describes a similar process in *Clarissa*. The house which the heroine inherits from her grandfather and which was originally called *The Grove* has been renamed *The Dairy-house* in acknowledgment of her labour; the change of name suggests both the value of her efforts and her entitlement to power and inheritance which follows from it (17–9).

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Nevertheless, even in Richardson's time, powerful counter-discourses to the system of duty existed. Such discourses were proposed not only by proto-feminists; indeed, women like Astell, who protested against misogyny, largely accepted the system of duty. In the preface to the third edition of *Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell acidly remarks that many authoritarian husbands selfishly demand for *themselves* the freedom they deny women: "Far be it from her [the author] to stir up Sedition of any sort, none can abhor it more; and she heartily wishes that our Masters wou'd pay their Civil and Ecclesiastical Governors the same Submisson, which they themselves extract from their Domestic Subjects" (70). Women's "masters" (*read* 'husbands'), Astell implies, cherish the (Lovelacean) assumption that they do not owe absolute submission to *any* authority (including the monarch's), even while demanding total obedience from their wives. Although I have heretofore stressed the special burden which the system of duty imposes on *women*, the inflexibility of this system in fact limited the freedom of any person not at the top of the hierarchy. The need to challenge it, therefore, arose not so much in the private sphere but rather from the political context of the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution.

The most famous systematic attack on the system of duty as described in part I was launched by John Locke in his *Two Treatises*. This author has often been invoked in connection to Richardson, who knew at least some of his writings – including *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, which Pamela reads and comments on when she becomes a mother. Richardson evidently respected the author and endorsed some of his views, but was skeptical concerning others.[81] Locke's *Treatises* aimed to prove the natural liberty of the (male) individual and to formulate, among other things, "a justification for active resistance to the illegitimate authority of the king" (Ashcraft 227). As a side effect, they provided a blueprint for women's proto-feminist arguments as well.[82] In what follows, I will discuss some of these aspects in Locke's text and then show how Mulso used them for her argument with Richardson. From this dispute, it will become

81 For Richardson's complex views on Locke, see Taylor, *Reason and Religion* (esp. the chapter "Un-Locke-ing Samuel Richardson").

82 Locke does not, however, make these arguments himself. Pateman, like Taylor, counters the claim that Locke is "a true anti-patriarchalist", claiming instead that for him, "only men naturally have the characteristics of free and equal beings" (52). Whether or not Locke's emphasis on *male* liberty is the result of his own gender-bias, the aim of his treatises was to prove, against Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, that father-right could not be a basis for kingship. Accordingly, he is especially concerned with limiting *paternal*, rather than *parental*, authority, and with proving the rights of the son (i. e. the male individual, potential holder of political rights) rather than of the daughter.

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clear how Locke's invocation of contract and reciprocity challenges ideas about status duties within the family.

Locke's attack on kingship based on fatherhood derives its power from drawing a distinction between different bases of authority – contract, benefits received, and divinely instituted duty. The last of these corresponds, more or less, to what I have called status duty. Through this rigorous distinction, he can break through the reinforcing mechanisms and limit the impact which, according to him, each system ought to have. It is worthwhile to consider several passages from the *Two Treatises* in some detail, beginning with Locke's definition of the "honour" which children owe their parents and which Mulso invoked in the passage quoted in the introduction. In return for parents' duty to "bring up their Off-spring", Locke explains, God

> has laid on the Children a perpetual Obligation of *honouring their Parents*, which containing in it an inward esteem and reverence to be shewn by all outward Expressions, ties up the Child from any thing that may ever injure or affront, disturb, or endanger the Happiness or Life of those, from whom he received his; and engages him in all actions of defence, relief, assistance and comfort of those, by whose means he entred into being, and has been made capable of any enjoyments of life. From this Obligation no State, no Freedom, can absolve Children. But this is very far from giving Parents a power of command over their Children […]. (329–30; II § 66)

At first sight, this definition seems close enough to that offered by Allestree, if a little less forceful – except for the last sentence. However, Locke continues:

> The subjection of a Minor places in the Father a temporary Government, which terminates with the minority of the Child: and the *honour due from a Child*, places in the Parents a perpetual right to respect, reverence, support and compliance too, more or less, as the Father's care, cost and kindness in his Education, has been more or less. This ends not with minority, but holds in all parts and conditions of a Man's Life. The want of distinguishing these two powers; viz. that which the Father hath in the right of *Tuition*, during Minority, and the right of *Honour* all his Life, may perhaps have caused a great part of the mistakes about this matter. For to speak properly of them, the first of these is rather the Priviledge of Children, and Duty of Parents, than any Prerogative of Paternal Power. (330; II § 67)

It is clear why Locke appealed to Mulso and appalled Richardson: he deliberately replaces a discourse of duty with a discourse of right. The children's duty to honour their father corresponds to the latter's *right* to be honoured, and the "right of tuition" is not so much a "prerogative of paternal power" as it is the "*priviledge*" of children, ensuring their present and future good. Rights, however,

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suggest that the one entitled to them may try to claim them even against opposition. Furthermore, Locke insists on a connection between actual benefits conferred and duty owed: the father's "right to respect, reverence, support and compliance too" can be "more or less" according to the degree of "care, cost and kindness" he has bestowed on his children.[83] Although Locke does not negate the authority of the Bible to determine the relationship between parents and children – in fact, he evokes God's command that children should honour both mother and father – he interprets it in such a way as to include issues of *concrete* reciprocity and gift exchange – and to make them the *basis* of filial behaviour, not a mere "second-order defence".

Indeed, the words of divine command become, for Locke, the proof that no human authority can be absolute: the duty to honour parents "is so inseparable from them both, that the Father's Authority cannot dispossess the Mother of this right, nor can any Man discharge his Son from *honouring* her that bore him" (331; II § 69). Locke confirms that some duties are absolute, but uses precisely this fact as an argument against absolute obedience – and he emphasizes that parents comprise both father *and* mother. This has a double effect. First, it puts filial duty in perspective. In a patriarchal society, it is clear that no unlimited obedience can be due to mothers: "And will any one say, that the *Mother* [as opposed to the father] hath a Legislative Power over her Children?" (328; II § 65). A passage which describes the duties due to *both* parents can have nothing to do with issues of "legislative power". Secondly, however, Locke's invocation of the mother makes her visible and emphasizes her separate relationship with her child.

Moreover, Locke writes about the various duties an individual may owe to different people in terms which emphasize his agency:

> A Man may owe *honour* and respect to an ancient, or wise Man; defence to his Child or Friend; relief and support to the Distressed; and gratitude to a Benefactor, to such a degree, that all he has, all he can do, cannot sufficiently pay it: But all these give no authority, no right to any one of making Laws over him from whom they are owing. (332; II § 70)

83 Such a point could also be made, perhaps more easily, with regard to duties initiated by some form of contract. Latimer offers one example: "George Booth, Earl of Warrington, thought that 'Duty' was mutual in a relation instituted by compact, and that the cessation of performance of duty on either side lessened the obligation on the other" (*Making Gender* 165; paraphrased from his *Considerations upon the Institution of Marriage*, 1739).

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Without spelling out the attributes of the system of duty which I have described, Locke clearly writes in response to them. He acknowledges that men owe a variety of duties, and that these may possibly never be “sufficiently paid”. However, instead of concluding that the individual needs to obey blindly so as to fulfil his obligations as much as possible, Locke states that obedience *per se* is entirely beside the point. For him, the individual always remains at the centre, and in charge, of his duties to other people. By setting different kinds of duties on a par, like David Graham – rather than ordering them hierarchically, as Allestree does – Locke implies, furthermore, that the absoluteness of one duty would make all others impracticable. In the following paragraph, he spells out this implication: if the power of the prince were absolute, then all his subjects – including parents – could hold no power at all (332; II § 71).

Such a state would amount to slavery for all but one person, the monarch. Indeed, in her discussion of Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688), Charlotte Sussman identifies the reduction of all valid relationships to a single one as the defining factor of slavery:

> What finally separates slavery from other kinds of servitude is that while a free person is born into a complex network of social ties and responsibilities, a slave is born into a single legal relationship—that of a servant to his master—over which he has no volition. The ordinary bonds that a slave might enter into, such as marriage or parenthood, have no force in the eyes of his master. (246)

Indeed, as Locke explains with gusto, anyone’s absolute authority would lead to the complete destruction of all morality. Those who have adduced historical examples of parents who exposed or sold their children to prove that paternal power is unlimited, he writes, “might have shew’d us in *Peru*, People that begot Children on purpose to Fatten and Eat them. […] Thus far can the busie mind of Man carry him to a Brutality below the level of Beasts” (200; I §57–8). Humanity and social obligations cannot coexist with absolute authority.

In similar fashion, Locke contrives to use the power which parents frequently have – namely, to settle their estate on their descendants – as a mechanism which may well disturb rules of strict patriarchy. All men, he states, usually have “the Power […] to *bestow their Estates* on those, who please them best” (333; II § 72). While he acknowledges that this normally happens within the family, he also claims that this power is connected to property, not descent. Locke’s views provide a justification to Clarissa’s grandfather, who leaves part of his estate to Clarissa, who has “pleased him best”, ignoring both patriarchal rules of transition from father to son, and the rule, endorsed by Sir Charles, that

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property should descend on those who have a reasonable expectation of it.[84] Furthermore, through disassociating different aspects of *actual* paternal power, Locke emphasizes that there are competing systems governing relationships. God's commands (which he interprets in a far more limited way than does Allestree) are one source of obligation, but another one, with no less extensive consequences, is the power of "compact", which every individual is at liberty to make for him- or herself. One of these compacts is matrimony, of which he writes:

> it would give one reason to enquire, why this *Compact*, where [= as long as] Procreation and Education are secured, and Inheritance taken care for, may not be made determinable, either by consent, or at a certain time, or upon certain Conditions, as well as any other voluntary Compacts, there being no necessity in the nature of the thing, nor to the ends of it, that it should always be for Life; I mean, to such as are under no Restraint of any positive Law, which ordains all such Contracts to be perpetual. (339; II § 81)

If marriage is understood as a mere contract, albeit an important one, even considerations of divorce become possible, although Locke is careful to stipulate that "positive Law" – divine law or the law of the country – may prohibit this. Lovelace, who suggests that marriage would be happier if it were limited to no more than a year (albeit with proper provision for possible children), does not mention Locke (872). It is tempting to speculate, however, whether Richardson had this particular passage from the *Two Treatises* in mind when imagining Lovelace's idea. If so, did he forego making the link explicit because he generally approved of Locke's writings, and did not want to taint them by association? Or would the idea of marriage as a *mere* contract have put off Lovelace, after all, since he would then have to acknowledge women as equals who can negotiate contracts with men?

Revisiting the passage cited from Mulso's letters at the beginning of this study, it becomes clear that the three terms which she evokes – honour, duty, and gratitude – are far from innocent variants. Locke grants that children owe their parents "honour" as a duty, but by specifying that this duty *comprises* honour, he limits it – most significantly excluding general obedience. Instead of vaguely gesturing towards ideals of reciprocity, he states that children's returns

84 It emerges that Clarissa's grandfather's will can be justified (but also contested) from various angles: the system of duty gives him immense rights over his descendants; Locke's contract theory grants him unfettered control over his property; Clarissa's good behaviour to him justifies his return gift. On the other hand, as we have seen, the Harlowes find ways to invoke these systems for their own aims.

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to parents’ behaviour should indeed be governed by concrete reciprocity. Thus, he opens the way for Mulso’s stipulation that a child owes “gratitude” – namely, a *proper* return to whatever a child has received. Bad parents, therefore, are easily repaid for what they have given their children.

In contrast, Richardson’s preference for the term ‘duty’ signals his adherence to the idea that a parent’s actions do not essentially affect a child’s obligations. The three terms are used together in Allestree, but, there, they do not signify contrasting conceptions of filial duty, but conflate different commands and motivations. ‘Honour’ is, there, one aspect of a child’s almost unlimited duty to parents, and ‘gratitude’ becomes a reinforcing mechanism – not the actual cause of filial obedience, as Mulso would have it, but simply an additional motivation for those children lucky enough to have actually profited from their parents’ care. It is no coincidence, then, that Richardson focuses on the system of duty and on gift giving in his novels, even on the comparatively rare occasions when his characters have dealings with merchants and professional men (significantly, Sir Charles is seen bestowing money and respect on tradesmen, but not actually trading with them). Richardson also had a clear interest in calling Locke “PUZZLING”, a claim which was contested by Mulso: “I own that the first paragraph I quoted from him is carelessly expressed […]. Strength of thought and clear reasoning, were, I thought, his peculiar excellences; and *ours* is, I believe, the first cause he ever *puzzled*” (233, 234). Locke’s use of contract as the main structuring principle of society directly challenges the system of duty and contradicts many of its tenets.

From this overview of Locke’s writings, I will now return to the use which Mulso makes of him, and to the structure of her epistolary debate with Richardson. In the first, and shortest, of her three letters on filial duty, Mulso outlines her main objections to Richardson’s views, especially as they are expressed in *Clarissa* and by Clarissa. Firstly, she summarises her own opinion concerning the origins of parental authority. Secondly, she emphasizes the importance of reciprocity. Thirdly, she claims that Clarissa was required to sin by her parents, as she knew she would be unable to fulfil her vow to “obey, serve, love and honour” Solmes.[85] Fourthly, she criticizes Clarissa’s own perception of morality: “She is so fettered by prejudice that she does not allow her reason to examine how far her conduct is to be justified or blamed; but implicitly joins with her father to condemn herself, when neither reason nor religion condemn her” (206–7).

85 Cf. “The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony” in *The Book of Common Prayer*; as we have seen, Mulso partly retracted this specific claim in a later letter (Church of England n.p.).

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Although she does not yet mention Locke explicitly, the first two points are clearly influenced by his treatise:

> I suppose that parental authority, like all other authority of one creature over another, is designed to promote the happiness and good of the person who is to submit to it; at least, that this is the principal end of its institution.
> [...] For though gratitude may demand that those who, under God, were the authors of my life, and who provided for its support when I was incapable of doing it myself, should have a proper control over me, and that in all reasonable instances my will should submit to theirs; yet you must allow that to suffer me to live, yet bid me destroy all the peace and happiness of my life, is to exact a much harder obedience, an obedience which no human creature can have a right to exact from another. (206)

Richardson was appalled by this argument, as we can gather from various passages in Mulso's second letter, which begins with her thanking him "for all the trouble you have taken with me" (208) – indicating an especially long letter in response to hers ("13 close pages", 400 n.1). His response, however, failed to convince her: "you know I prepared you to expect to find me very slow in apprehending truths, which I had not been used to receive as such" (208). Mulso apologises for her persistence by claiming that "to give up the argument without being convinced, would be to defeat the good intentions of my kind correspondent", who, despite his dismay at her opinions, "will not *hate* me, even though I should persist in the wrong" (208). Mulso's style, hovering between playfulness, self-confidence and anxiety at her correspondent's judgment of her, indicates how serious the contended issue was for both.

To strengthen and clarify her argument, Mulso now refers directly to Locke:

> You seem so much surprised, nay I fear shocked, at the reason on which I suppose parental authority founded, and at my supposing that there is a time when *that reason* for the child's obedience ceases, that I cannot help fancying that I did not state my opinion in proper terms, or that I have not sufficiently explained it; therefore I beg leave to give it you once more, in the words of Mr. Locke, in that chapter which treats of paternal power in his treatise on government. I do not cite his *authority* to uphold my argument; for no authority less than divine should be urged against reasoning; and if I could have yielded to authority alone, it would have been sufficient for me to know your opinion, without any arguments at all. (209)

Mulso, then, uses Locke as her spokesman, rather than simply echoing his opinions. In her first letter, she had criticized Clarissa for being swayed more by "prejudice" and paternal authority than by "reason and religion". She, in contrast, emphasizes that one should yield only to sound "reason". Mulso then

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cites at length from Locke’s chapter “Of Paternal Power” in the second treatise, including, occasionally, her own comments in brackets.[86] One of her asides emphasizes that Locke’s treatise is compatible with scripture; as she quotes his assertion that a father and his adult son are subject to “the law of nature, or principal law of their country”, she adds “the laws of God” (211–2; the addition is reasonable, since Locke himself draws on the authority of the Bible for his argument). In two other bracketed comments, she mentions places where “some care is taken of the parent’s happiness as well as the child’s” (211). In her longest aside, she extends to daughters Locke’s claim that an adult son is as free as his father, “since the duty of a child is equally imposed on both, and since the natural liberty Mr. Locke speaks of arising from reason, it can never be proved that women have not a right to it, unless it can be proved that they are not capable of knowing the law they are under” (211). As we have seen, Locke himself often pointedly includes women in order to shatter the association of absolute power with fatherhood. In this place, such a strategy might not have served him so well, since the freedom of an adult woman would have been far more questionable than that of an adult man – yet Mulso’s comment is a logical continuation of Locke’s own argument.

One of the aspects which elicited a particularly shocked response on Richardson’s part seems to have been “that ‘parental authority is designed to promote the happiness and good of the person who is to submit to it’” (213). “So,” – Mulso counters –

> give me leave to add, are all laws and restrictions; even those which proceed directly from the Deity himself […]. But does it weaken their authority to say that they are so? Shall I be the less willing to obey, because I know it is my interest, and that obedience is made my duty, *for my own sake*?” (213)

At first sight, Mulso’s argument is identical with one formulated by Harriet in *Grandison*. She comments, writing of Sir Charles’s obedience to his father, that “[p]olicy […] would have justified the young gentleman’s chearful compliance, had he *not* been guided by superior motives” (1:330). In that novel, indeed, it is suggested that patriarchal structures are in the best interest of those submitting to them (cf. part III). Indeed, the assumption that virtue will be rewarded is also part of the writings by Allestree and Delany, if only because eternal rewards may balance any injustice suffered on earth. However, Mulso’s (and Locke’s)

86 The paragraphs which she cites partially or wholly are 55–9, 61, 66–8, and 70. In her third letter, she quotes other authors who express her thoughts on filial duty: Bishop Fleetwood, Algernon Sydney, Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and Robert Dodsley, “the author of the Preceptor” (236).

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use of this idea is subversive because they use it to contest unlimited parental authority. For Richardson, duty is paramount, and it is good policy because it tends to be followed by worldly happiness. For Mulso and Locke, in contrast, the basis of duty is the happiness which may be supposed to flow from it; therefore, there must logically be some provision for cases where dutifulness is abused.

Richardson objects with similar vehemence to basing duty on gratitude. As we have seen above, Locke's argument indicates that a child's duty varies according to benefits received, a dangerous thought, according to Richardson: "You say", Mulso writes, "that you can by no means consent that an indispensable duty should be bartered away for gratitude" (214). If Mulso quotes Richardson correctly, it is interesting to note his association of gratitude with "bartering". His word use links "gratitude" as understood by Mulso to mercenary attitudes. Moreover, his use of the word seems to associate trade and contract – alternatives to the system of duty – with these attitudes as well. If gratitude is exchanged for "indispensable duty", Richardson fears, selfishness will reign. Mulso once more counters this argument. If the daughter of good parents "thinks not herself obliged", then "[n]o duty, no obligation can bind her" – such a "*little Yahoo*" will neglect her duty whatever it is based on (214). Conversely, as Mulso argues in her third letter (the beginning of which I cited in my introduction), if gratitude is not accepted as the basis for duty, children must behave in the same way to bad parents as to good, an evident injustice (228).[87]

As has been seen in the introduction, Mulso later came to believe that she, Richardson and Locke probably agreed on parental and filial obligation. Although Richardson's long second letter (39 pages, cf. 400 n.1) is not extant, he must have made some concessions, including the endorsement of Locke, for Mulso writes that "my dear Mr. Richardson has himself asserted, that Mr.

87 In a letter to Sarah Chapone, Richardson reiterated his reasons for disagreeing with Mulso on this point: "I greatly approve of most of her Sentiments; But when she makes the Duty of the Child absolutely to depend upon the Kindness of the Parent, of which, in general, the Child will suppose herself the Judge, (and we all know the Force of Self-partiality, especially where love, as it is *always called*, but only now-and-then, and perhaps too rarely, *is*) has taken Possession of a young Creature's Heart or Head; I cannot allow her to be right; and was very sollicitous to guard against the Supposition that it is. [… A]s there is a far greater Likelihood that Children will be undutiful than Parents unnatural […] a Relaxation in Duty of the Child's Part is to be as little encouraged as possible" (*Selected Letters* 201; 2 Mar. 1752). This passage is remarkable for two things. First, Richardson seems to reiterate exactly the same arguments he had used before, indicating that his views on filial obedience were quite stable. Secondly, his insistence on this obedience is partly strategic: because he expects that children will more easily flout their duty than parents, he must emphasize filial duty more strongly than he would perhaps do otherwise.

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Locke, even in the very passages I have quoted, is of *his* side” (227). She also writes that “You agree with me in thinking that parents have no right to force a child to marry against inclination; that where this is attempted, children have a right to resist, and to use every method their own prudence can suggest to get out of their parent’s power” (231). Richardson was no domestic tyrant himself, as Mulso also emphasized (239). In his novels, moreover, he consistently condemned abusive parents. Still, however much he may have agreed with Mulso on the ideal relationship between parents and children – the similarity of their attitudes is shown, for example, when she states that she thinks a child is not “at liberty to dispose of herself in marriage, without the consent of her parents” (215) –, he clearly was uncomfortable with the road that both Locke and Mulso suggested to prevent parental tyranny.[88] The deep impression which their argument made on him is evidenced in a letter to Elizabeth Carter, where he comments with approval on Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act. He even notes with evident satisfaction that Mulso’s arguments may have contributed to the act – strengthening the very authority which she attacked:

> Miss Mulso, who you know, has very great Reasoning-Powers, some time ago, set up for such an Advocate for Children, and argued so strennously [*sic*] against the Parental Authority (Herself one of the most dutiful of Children; Her Father one of the most indulgent of Parents) that I the less Wonder, that (ingenious and excellent as she is) if the Debate got Wind, that it obtained the Notice of those, who brought in, and carried thro’ a Bill, which should by a National Law establish the Parental Authority, so violently attacked by a young Lady who is admired by all that know her (Schellenberg 134–5; Fri. 17 Aug. 1753; cf. also Keymer, *Richardson’s* Clarissa 103).

Perhaps Locke was “puzzling” to Richardson precisely because he offered an (unacceptable) solution to a dilemma which the latter felt keenly: the good child must obey whether or not the father does his duty; therefore, the better the child, the more incentive there is for a parent to neglect his own duty. It is therefore hardly a coincidence that, in his third novel, Richardson de-emphasizes issues

88 Mulso writes of “a common friend of ours”, himself a father, who “carries his notions of the liberty of children farther than I think reasonable; and against whom I have argued on the side of parents” (234). She cites a “passage, translated from Grotius”, which he has given her, and which states that adult children who do not live in their parents’ home no longer have any obligation to obey their parents, although “[t]hey ought indeed to study to please their parents, but this is not required of them by any moral obligation, but by the common principles of *duty* and *gratitude*”. This is not too far away from modern, Western ideas of the parent-child relationship, although Mulso argues that it is unclear “what distinction is meant between *moral obligation* and the *principles of duty and gratitude*” (235).

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of contract, perhaps the fullest opposite of status duties, and emphasizes gift giving and bonds of friendship instead. Indeed, Sir Charles's mode of improving the world around him is an implicit rejection, or at least modification, of the challenges posed to the system of duty by arguments such as Mulso's and Locke's. This need not always work against individual women's interest. Despite the feminist potential of the *Two Treatises*, Locke's contractarian ideals do not necessarily lead to liberty. Moreover, Mulso fights so hard for the rights of daughters precisely because she admits a husband's authority based on the marriage vows. And Sarah Chapone directs her attack not against the system of duty, but against English common law (which Locke accepts, in contrast to divine-right monarchy), which was less favourable to women than "the noble Principles of Christianity" (2).

Those who must obey in the system of duty also have little bargaining power in an exchange of gifts. As we have seen, women's legal ability to make contracts was limited, and there was a wide-spread discourse which saw them as objects to be possessed rather than as subjects. As a consequence, "if women are 'property' in a competitive sexual-reproductive economy, they are likely to become prey. Marital limitations are actually their *security*" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 167). Since gift and contract offer little safety, women should embrace reciprocal status duties. This can be seen in some of the discussions preceding weddings in *Pamela* and *Grandison*. For Pamela, Charlotte and Harriet, the imminent loss of autonomy, as well as the immense duties they vow to their husbands, are frightening and oppressive. Yet in a world where women have little but themselves to give, only the system of duty offers a lasting return. The exchange of cohabitation against financial settlements which Mr. B. offers, for example, would soon leave Pamela without any gift of value. If she agrees to the bargain he proposes, she will lose any future bargaining power.

Men are conscious of this. When Pamela shows herself reluctant to name her wedding day, Mr. B. tries to reassure her by asserting that he willingly subscribes to all the duties he will have to vow. Since her husband will be bound to protect her, Pamela should not be afraid of giving herself and incurring status duties of her own (340). The role of marriage as a safe place is even more pronounced in *Grandison*, and, again, it is the religious aspect of this state which makes it beneficial. This is why "chamber-vows" – the performance of the wedding ceremony in a private home – must be discouraged. Lord L. rebukes Charlotte for "insist[ing] upon not going to church", reminding her "that if fine ladies thought so slightly of the office, as that it might be performed anywhere, it would be no wonder, if fine gentlemen thought still more slightly of the obligation it laid them under" (2:327). Women are dependent on the protection which matrimony

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offers them when based on the system of duty. Accordingly, they should take their own (religious) duties seriously, for if they do not, men will follow their bad example.

2.4 Friendship and the system of duty

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In comparison to the other structures of relationship discussed above, bonds of friendship are something of an anomaly.[89] This kind of relationship is compatible with the three structures outlined above – duty, contract, gift – but does not partake fully of any of them. Mutual gifts (in the broadest sense) may be a constituent of friendship, yet it is precisely the mark of friendship that constant balancing of such obligations is unnecessary. The relation of contract seems even more inimical to friendship. Contract partners may become friends, and friends may occasionally make contracts, but unless the relationship goes beyond these, the two parties are, in fact, merely partners. Of all the relationships described by writers on social duty, it is the only one which is entirely constituted by mutual goodwill. Other relationships may entail a moral requirement to love, but the relation of true friendship is the only one which actually *ceases* to exist as soon as the appropriate feelings and actions cease. Once a child is conceived, its mother and father will be parents regardless of their actions; even neighbours remain neighbours (in the narrow as well as the broad, Christian, sense) whether or not they fulfil their obligations to each other. But friends who come to dislike and neglect each other are no longer friends. Although Allestree discusses friendship as something stable, it is potentially far more dynamic than any of the other relationships he describes.

Moreover, these bonds tend to be envisaged as egalitarian rather than hierarchical. In the context of the system of duty, friendship is one of the few relationships which are conceptually equal. A father's duty as a father is to his child, someone who holds a different status and has different needs and obligations, but a friend's duty is to a friend. At the conceptual level, the duties of friendship are reciprocal in their purest form: the same is required of both role partners. Although there are additional circumstances which may make friendship unequal – a richer friend may prove his sympathy by giving money – these are not essential to the relationship *per se*. Moreover, friendship depends both on *being* and *doing*, feeling and action. Finally, in comparison

89 The word "friend" can have a variety of meanings, including "close relation" and "supporter" (*OED*, "friend, *n.* and *adj.*"); I use the word to express a relationship based entirely on strong mutual sympathy.

to all the structures of relationship discussed above, bonds of friendship are more flexible. Benefits, such as advice, financial support, or simply shared time, are received and returned when necessary. This last aspect of the relationship makes it particularly precarious within the system of duty, for it is one of the few relationships which – in contrast to all familial ties – can theoretically be suspended or given up. Friendship, therefore, occupies a liminal position in the system of duty.

While the flexibility of friendship may weaken its claims in comparison to ‘superior’ duties like the filial one, it also admits into the system of duty elements of individuality and personal merit. Friendship is based on the characters and wishes of two (or more) people rather than on exterior circumstances such as blood ties. We have already seen that Allestree and Delany both approve of the friendship between David and Jonathan, although it entailed the latter’s resistance to his father. Friendship offers a morally sound basis for challenging fixed duties, such as familial or state power, as the stories of other famous friends illustrate (e. g. Damon and Pythias; cf. Mangano 9).[90] Through its flexibility and its connection to individuality, it offers a counter model to other relationships. It is the only social bond for which Allestree explicitly envisages an end, albeit only in extreme circumstances:

> ’tis not every light offence of a friend, that should make thee renounce his friendship, there must be some allowance made to the infirmities of men, and if thou hast occasion to pardon him somewhat to day, perhaps thou mayest give him opportunity to requite thee to morrow; therefore nothing but unfaithfulness, or incorrigible vice should break this band. (335; Sunday XV)

Human infirmity is here countenanced with regard to both parties as it is not in the case of filial duty. Moreover, although the good offices of friendship may be deferred, it is explicitly allowable to consider whether a friend usually performs them or not, and, in the latter case, ending the relationship is justified – in contrast to filial or wifely duty.

Real friendship, therefore, can only exist in a ‘good’ form; if it is debased, it may, in fact, cease to be true friendship at all: “The true friendship is […] a concurrence and agreement in vertue, not in vice; in short, a true friend loves his friend so, that he is very zealous of his good, and certainly he that is really so, will never be the instrument of bringing him to the greatest evil

90 However, this disruptive potential of friendship can also prove problematic, since “it is a breach of duty either to fail to do for a friend what one rightly can do, or to do for him what is not right” (Cicero, *De officiis*, qtd. in Anderson 6).

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[i. e., damnation]" (Allestree 331–2; Sunday XV).[91] The love of true friends thus becomes a touchstone to measure other relationships:

> In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a range of theologians, poets, essayists, and novelists turned to biblical, classical, and early modern idealizations of personal (primarily male) friendship as a kind of cultural lineage for defining what modern British relationships of various forms (from kinship to readerships) should aspire toward. (Mangano 9)

Betty Rizzo has made a similar claim concerning the relationship between female companions and their patronesses; the former are frequently termed "toad-eaters", signifying their weak and dependent position.[92] These relationships could serve as

> an appropriately indirect method of displaying and discussing the damage inflicted by patrons and toadies on one another. […] An examination of the moral damage suffered by toadies, who must scheme, cheat, and manipulate, can therefore also be indirectly a defense of the basic, intrinsic, moral equality of women and an indictment of the morality and justice of men. (323)

Toad-eaters and their patronesses are not friends, but like friendship, their relationship is more flexible than that between mistress and paid servant, or between husband and wife. Just as true friendship serves as an idealized image for any kind of relationship, so the situation of the female companion serves as an example of the injustice of inequality and oppression. Freed from the rigidity and the religious associations of other relationships described by moral writers, this particular bond is open to criticism, which can then, by association, be applied to the ties between a tyrannical husband and his suffering wife.

The interaction between patroness and companion can also stand in for the cruelty which the seemingly powerless can inflict on those who are even more disadvantaged. Rich women, themselves subject to their husbands and/or social norms, are still powerful with regard to their penniless companions. Indeed, as the writer Jane Collier notes in her anti-conduct book *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753), the companion is disadvantaged because of

91 The claim that friendship can only exist between virtuous individuals had been made already in antiquity (cf. Anderson 6).

92 In *David Simple*, Cynthia gives the following definition of the term: "It is a Metaphor taken from a Mountebank's Boy who eats Toads, in order to shew his Master's Skill in expelling Poison: It is built on a Supposition, (which I am afraid is too generally true) that People who are so unhappy as to be in a State of Dependance, are forced to do the most nauseous things that can be thought on, to please and humour their Patrons" (113).

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her class and gender: "There are many methods for young men, in the like circumstances [of poverty], to acquire a genteel maintenance; but for a girl, I know not of one way of support, that does not, by the custom of the world, throw her below the rank of a gentlewoman" (38–9). Poor women from a good family are far more vulnerable than poor men. All too often, according to the writings of female authors such as Collier, Sarah Fielding, and Frances Burney, other women react not with solidarity, but instead enjoy the power of victimizing which they do not have over men (or even over female servants). The case of the toad-eaters raises the question as to whether powerful women have the potential for gender solidarity, or even for simple compassion.

Women's ability to transcend patriarchal systems – especially the possibility that they can show solidarity without rejecting male rule altogether – has been frequently questioned. In the context of women's objectification on the marriage market, for example, Luce Irigaray asks: "With respect to other merchandise in the marketplace, how could this commodity maintain a relationship other than one of aggressive jealousy?" (32). The validity of such questions is supported by a tradition of *women's* complaints against women's treachery. Sometimes, these complaints are obviously indirect calls for compassion and solidarity. Collier, who ostensibly addresses sadists, notes that some people actually take in companions in order to relieve their distresses (40–1), and in the fable which concludes her book, she strongly implies that she has been able to describe cruelty so well because she has suffered from it, not because she has inflicted it.

In other cases, however, such a clear framework for understanding apparently misogynist satire as an exhortation for women's solidarity is missing. An example of this is Richardson's younger contemporary Charlotte Lennox, whose authorship he supported (cf. Eaves and Kimpel 461). In her first novel, *The Life of Harriot Stuart* (1750), the heroine experiences adventures in North America and Europe and struggles with the attention of unwanted suitors as well as the disapproving relations of her beloved, until she finds happiness in marriage. Throughout her trials, she experiences both the support and the slights of other women. The former clearly predominate: while Harriot is neglected, for a time, by her mother, and later threatened by the machinations of two hypocritical noblewomen, she is also advised and protected by her governess, comforted by a number of loyal friends, and even 'given' her beloved by his fiancée. Despite this positive balance, however, the heroine's only general comment on women's relationships concerns her friendship with a superficial and jealous, although apparently not evil, woman:

> Is there any thing more frail than female friendships? a conformity of temper, an equal attachment to some darling foible first cements them; a trifle, as invaluable, dissolves

> the brittle tye: pardon me this observation, 'tis but too just, and will admit of very few exceptions. (98)

One of these "few exceptions" is, apparently, the "dear Amanda" to whom Harriot is writing. Nevertheless, it is difficult to assess whether to read this comment ironically or not. The narrator takes some pains to enforce the 'truth' of her observation, and the comment is located early in the novel, before the reader can have gathered much work-internal evidence to rebut it. Even in a novel which presents a diversity of female friendships, the vocabulary for that friendship appears to be missing.

The possibility of women's friendship is questioned, as well, in *Clarissa* and in *Grandison* – but this is done almost exclusively by those men who tend to despise women in general. Lovelace is most vocal in his mockery of women's friendships, although often inclined to make an exception for Clarissa and Anna. Similarly, Colonel Morden shares with Lovelace not only an (undefined) rakish past and a rather low opinion of women in general. He also extols Clarissa's and Anna's friendship, only to continue to question female friendship in general:

> *Friendship*, generally speaking, Mr Belford, is too fervent a flame for female minds to manage: a light that but in few of their hands burns steady, and often hurries the sex into flight and absurdity. Like other extremes, it is hardly ever durable. Marriage, which is the highest state of friendship, generally absorbs the most vehement friendships of female to female; and that whether the wedlock be happy or not.
> What female mind is capable of two fervent friendships at the same time?
> This I mention as a *general observation:* but the friendship that subsisted between these two ladies affords a remarkable exception to it: which I account for from those qualities and attainments in *both*, which, were they more common, would furnish *more exceptions still* [my emphasis] in favour of the sex. (1449)

Colonel Morden's statement hovers strangely between negating and affirming the possibility of female friendship. As Janet Todd argues, his "speech is a hybrid, an effort to do justice to the female scheme from inside a firmly patriarchal context" (67).[93] Indeed, doing "justice to the female scheme from

93 Todd uses the word "patriarchal" as a contrast to "female" values; it thus takes on not only the significance of "male rule", but also of evil and of the oppression of women, while "female" takes on almost exclusively positive connotations. More recently, Liz Bellamy has also used "patriarchalism" in a sense which focuses on the word's association with oppression, rather than simply designating "father-rule". Commenting on "[Lovelace's] persecution of Clarissa", she states that "he represents the patriarchalism that characterises commercial and aristocratic society alike, which is opposed to the Christian virtue with which Clarissa subverts the dominant image of

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inside a firmly patriarchal context" is precisely what Richardson tries to do (cf. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 91). "Generally speaking", women are incapable of several simultaneous friendships – in view of a husband's prerogatives, this is perhaps a convenient assumption: "A deep, intimate friendship between two women, because it encourages women's independence of and separation from men, clearly poses a threat to the established sexual order" (Robinson 167).

Nevertheless, the possibility of "more exceptions still" which Morden envisages turns the case of Anna and Clarissa from the exception which proverbially proves the rule into a challenge. Through the request of Anna and her mother that Clarissa tell her story, and through Belford's collection of the letters in order to do so, this challenge is passed on to the community of readers. Moreover, Morden's alleged basis of such friendship – "qualities" and "attainments" – opens the possibility that any *actual* incapacity of women for friendship may be owing to nurture as much as to nature. And the nurture of women, it is argued, may be less faulty than that of men. Lovelace and Anna both think that women's education tends to render their behaviour more virtuous than that of men, and Harriet Byron early in *Grandison* contemptuously comments on the education and "the taste of the age": "The men, in short, are sunk [...]; and the Women but barely swim" (1:230). It is Harriet, too, who remarks on female friendship in words framed as a direct answer to Morden's: "I hope I have a large heart. I hope there is room in it for half a dozen sweet female friends!—Yes, altho' another love were to intervene. I could not bear, that even the affection due to the man of my choice, were I to marry, should, like Aaron's rod, swallow up all the rest" (1:180).[94] Marriage, Harriet insists, need not and should not put a stop to women's friendships. Her assertion will be tested in her successful struggles to value her rivals as they deserve (cf. 3.5).

An even more interesting 'answer' (which, however, precedes Morden's above-cited comment) occurs in *Clarissa* itself. The heroine, already close to death, reacts to one of Anna's letters by comparing their friendship to the scriptural precedent already mentioned:

masculinity" (76). While I find their work illuminating, this use of terminology makes it difficult to understand the combination of female solidarity and women's endorsement of patriarchy which is so important in Richardson's works.

94 The passage could also be an answer to Mulso, who had argued that even daughters who are in love can still love (and obey) their parents: "is the human heart capable of loving no more than one object at a time?" she asks rhetorically (214). In a letter to Sarah Chapone, Richardson affirms his intention "to combat the Notion of Rakes and Foplings that Womens Minds are incapable of fervent and steady Friendships" (*Selected Letters* 181; 25 Mar. 1751).

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> Well might the sweet singer of Israel, when he was carrying to the utmost extent the praises of the friendship between him and his beloved friend, say that the love of Jonathan to him was wonderful; that it surpassed the *love of women!* What an exalted idea does it give of the soul of Jonathan, sweetly attempered for this sacred band, if we may suppose it but equal to that of my Anna Howe for her fallen Clarissa! (1114)[95]

Anna's friendship surpasses the love of women in several ways. On the one hand, it is stronger than normal women's love for women; at least, much stronger than men think women can feel for a friend. On the other hand, in the biblical context, the "love of women" is of course sexual love, the love between *men* and women. Clarissa knows that kind of love mainly through her experience with Lovelace, and it has ruined her – while Anna's friendship has helped save her. As Todd argues, after the rape, Clarissa "gives herself no name [in her mad letter to Anna] for she is no longer Clarissa Harlowe, but she exists still in her truth to Anna" (53). Despite a temporary estrangement caused by Lovelace's withholding and forging letters between the friends, Anna remains Clarissa's main source of moral support. It is interesting to note that Jonathan's love is measured in terms of Anna's love, not the other way round. *If* Jonathan loved David as much as Anna loves Clarissa, he had a great soul – but perhaps he did not love him just as much. In this novel, it is the women whose love surpasses sexual love and the love between the great male friends of history, so that male friendship comes to be measured in terms of women's – and fails.[96]

As a true friend, Anna becomes a foil to most other central characters. Her relationship with Clarissa demonstrates what friendship in the narrow sense ought to be, but the many parallels between her and Lovelace indicate that she also embodies the 'friendship' which ought to inhere in every kind of relationship, notably married love. Initially, however, Anna appears not so much as a Jonathan to Clarissa's David than as a representative of a *circle* of friends. Her position is special in that she is justified in making direct inquiries, but

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95 Todd notes another biblical echo (48): Anna writes to Clarissa that, if she went abroad, Anna "would accompany [Clarissa] withersoever [she] went" (860). Similarly, in the book of Ruth, Ruth tells her mother-in-law: "'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: [17]where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me'" (Ruth 1.16–7).

96 For a similar discussion of women's solidarity and friendship, as well as of the similarities between Anna Howe and Lovelace, see Todd 9–68. Coincidentally, her analysis, like mine, has apparently been triggered by Virginia Woolf's claim in *A Room of One's Own* that "all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austen's day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex" (qtd. in Todd 1).

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these inquiries are made on behalf of a community which is interested – and justly so – in Clarissa's fate. Anna has already gathered some of the details of the situation from Clarissa's discouraged suitors, and events that concern the heroine may be spread by her to other friends. Those other friendships remain in the background, but they re-emerge at various points of the narrative: in two friends' breathless inquiry after Clarissa's elopement, for example, or at the party at Colonel Ambrose's where Lovelace appears after the rape; most notably, it is through the network of Clarissa's friends that Anna discovers that Mrs. Sinclair's is a brothel (cf. 372, 1134–5, 745–6). Clarissa herself acknowledges the importance of these friendships in her will, but also in an early tribute when she quotes Miss Biddulph's answer to men accusing women of hypocrisy (44; cf. 1.4).

This quotation – like Clarissa's quoting and putting to music of Elizabeth Carter's "Ode to Wisdom" – extends authority and wisdom to women in general. It also demonstrates that Clarissa surrounds herself with intelligent as well as virtuous women, and that she is as ready to acknowledge their wisdom as she is to strengthen her own arguments by presenting them as the words of Dr. Lewin or Mrs. Norton. Moreover, by quoting her friend's poem in defence of Arabella (whose love disappointment Clarissa has before described in mocking terms), Clarissa invokes the ideal of female solidarity which she usually upholds herself.[97] Although she is universally represented as a teacher of wisdom (as well as fashion) within her circle, her 'pupils' are worthy to be teachers themselves.

Lovelace's circle forms a stark contrast to this. After Clarissa has met his chosen friends, she remarks to Anna:

> But 'tis amazing to me, I own, that with so much of the gentleman, such a general knowledge of books and men, such a skill in the learned as well as modern languages, he can take so much delight as he does in the company of such persons as I have described, and in subjects of frothy impertinence, unworthy of his talents and natural and acquired advantages. I can think of but one reason for it, and that must argue a very low mind, his VANITY; which makes him desirous of being considered as the head of the people he consorts with. (545)

Lovelace – with limited rivalry from Belford – is not only the leader of his group, he is so even though he is youngest (544). Clarissa's earlier hope "that he might probably [...] be a *led* man, rather than a *leader*" in vice thus turns out

97 This aspect of the novel was apparently strengthened in the third edition, where Richardson "added a scene narrated by Anna Howe in which Clarissa defends the honour of a young lady who is supposed to have committed a sexual indiscretion" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 32).

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to be mistaken (182). Lovelace, who has little respect for age or authority in any shape, assumes the command over those elders whom he can best manipulate and whom he has overtaken in wickedness. It is telling that after Lovelace's death, his surviving friends can easily be guided by Belford into a kind of half-hearted reform – even the brutish Mowbray apparently has a "rather *ductile* than *dictating* heart[...]". Passive in 'virtue' as in vice, he and Tourville let Belford "manag[e] their concerns for them" (1490). Lovelace is thus a dark caricature of figures like Clarissa (or later, Sir Charles), who gain the right to teach their elders through their own exemplary virtue and wisdom.

Ironically, Lovelace has as much to say on the topic of friendship as any of the other characters, if not more. In a letter to Belford, he elaborates on his ideas of the illusory nature of women's friendships, as well as on the basis of bonds between men. He frames the admission that Anna's and Clarissa's relationship has some reality with a dismissal of female friendship in general:

> But thinkest thou (and yet I think thou dost), that there is anything in these high flights among the sex? Verily, Jack, these vehement friendships are nothing but chaff and stubble, liable to be blown away by the very wind that raises them. Apes! mere apes of *us!* they think the word *friendship* has a pretty sound with it; and it is much talked of; a fashionable word: and so, truly, a single woman who thinks she has a soul, and knows that she wants something, would be thought to have found a fellow-soul for it in her own sex. But I repeat that the word is a *mere* word, the thing a mere name with them; a cork-bottomed shuttlecock, which they are fond of striking to and fro, to make one another glow in the frosty weather of a single state; but which, when a *man* comes in between the pretended *inseparables*, is given up like their music and other maidenly amusements; which, nevertheless, may be necessary to keep the pretty rogues out of more active mischief. [...]
>
> Thus much indeed, as to these two ladies, I will grant thee; that the active spirit of the one, and the meek disposition of the other, may make their friendship more durable than it would otherwise be; for this is certain, that in every friendship, whether male or female, there must be a man and a woman spirit (that is to say, one of them a *forbearing* one) to make it permanent.
>
> But this I pronounce as a truth, which all experience confirms; that friendship between women never holds to the sacrifice of capital gratifications, or to the endangering of life, limb or estate, as it often does in our nobler sex. (863–4)

Friendship, Lovelace suggests, is simply too serious a feeling for women. Their very "maidenly amusements", which can be given up so easily, are not of genuine interest to them; they merely serve to keep girls who have nothing more useful to do "out of more active mischief". Once a man – such as himself – comes

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between them, the friendship must, of course, end. Lovelace, thus, implicitly presents Anna as his rival, but, reassuringly, her strong position must 'naturally' give way to sexual desire. Sooner or later, even these two exemplary friends will again act according to stereotype. Significantly, Lovelace models friendships on cross-gender relationships, just as Morden does. That is why the female friend can so easily be replaced by the man; she is simply an (inadequate) substitute for him. The equation is also comfortable in another sense; if Anna is the 'male', aggressive spirit, then Clarissa must be meek, womanly, and "forbearing", therefore destined to yield to him.

Paradoxically, this model may also preclude the possibility of *real* friendship. A relationship which is "expressed in marriage, a condition so unequal that in it the man legitimately absorbs the woman", can hardly be one of equality (Todd 67). "Unequal marriage and equal friendship remain contradictory and opposing" (68). As will be seen later, however, *Grandison* offers precisely this: a successful combination of unequal marriage and equal friendship. In fact, the most central and positive example of *male* friendship in that novel – the one between the hero and Jeronymo – is "bas[ed ...] on a female model" (and is marked by inequality between the friends; Robinson 176). In *Clarissa*, however, they are opposed: the equal friendship of Anna and Clarissa is a foil to the inequality which most of the other characters take for granted.

Lovelace's model of friendship serves to put himself at the top of a hierarchy even among those closest to him. Although Belford usually shows himself unafraid to oppose Lovelace, there is no question whom the latter would describe as the "female" spirit in the relationship. Todd highlights the irony in the above definition: "To a man he frequently despises and always ignores, Lovelace denounces female friendship, exalting the nobler male variety" (62). The case is not quite so simple, of course. David Robinson usefully reminds us "of the strength of the connection which exists between Lovelace and Belford, a connection which approaches a mutual dependency and compulsion. However angry Lovelace may grow with Belford, he cannot stop corresponding with him" (170).[98] The

98 Warner has argued even more strongly in favour of the friendship between Lovelace and Belford. According to him, "it is Lovelace, not Clarissa, who gives us the novel's most convincing versions of human attachment", and "Lovelace's feeling of attachment, to both Clarissa and Belford, seems more genuine for being largely concealed" (*Reading* Clarissa 37). His reading is useful as a reminder of what he calls "a masculine code" of expression, that is, a language of friendship which implies affection although – or because – it "eschews any effusive display of feeling" (37). However, his argument suffers when he easily writes of Lovelace's "attachment" to Clarissa, interpreting the novel "without allowing a little matter like rape to modify his judgement" (Eagleton 66).

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same is true for Belford, who calls Lovelace a "savage-hearted monster" (883) after the rape, but continues the letter to relate his own affairs to his friend (including some details about money he will inherit). However, although "both men know Belford is not really Lovelace's inferior", it is still significant that Lovelace often describes their relationship in such terms (Robinson 171). His boasts of superiority over his friend parallel his fears of inferiority with regard to Clarissa. Indeed, as Robinson suggests, Lovelace's "relationship with Belford changes and deepens" after he is forced to recognise that he cannot control the nature of the ties between himself and Clarissa:

> What had been an unbalanced, hierarchical arrangement becomes a much more interesting and volatile interaction between equals. Again, what makes this development possible is Lovelace's unprecedented and growing vulnerability, caused by Clarissa's unconquerable resistance. […] One of the first signs of the resultant change in his relationship with Belford is that his friend's good opinion begins to matter to Lovelace. (172)

Had Lovelace attended more closely to the women's friendship, he might have realised that *both* Clarissa *and* Anna must be "forbearing"; if Anna's liveliness gives offence, this is repaid by Clarissa's rebukes. Both women are unafraid to criticise each other when the need arises, and Anna hesitates to give advice only when she is herself doubtful as to what Clarissa ought to do. Moreover, as Lovelace discovers, Clarissa is by no means so meek as he had expected. 'Feminine' gentleness and forbearance are not necessarily a sign of weakness.

Belford, in fact, proves to be not only a 'femininely' sympathising friend, but also an effective helper. He spends time with his dying uncle, the dying Belton, the dying Clarissa and even the dying Mrs. Sinclair. The nursing he provides does indeed tend to be associated with women: it is Clarissa, not her father, who is around Mrs. Harlowe in her sickness. Similarly, Sir Charles considers the character of a male nurse "unnatural" (2:58). However, Sir Charles also attends Harriet when she is ill and (like Mr. B.) visits friends and acquaintances in their last illness. In contrast, Lovelace, although always generous with money, does not provide moral support. Indeed, he prefers to stay away from the dying Belton entirely, so that Belford is the one who gives all practical help – for example, he single-handedly throws out Belton's unfaithful mistress Thomasine and her lover. Lovelace's main contribution, meanwhile, is a suggestion that he could help drown Thomasine and her children (1100).

As in similar suggestions to Belford (and to himself) to murder his sick uncle (611, 973), it is unclear how serious Lovelace is in his proposal: whether it is thoughtless and ineffective boasting or genuine readiness to murder –

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which would contradict his proud claim that his morals are bad only with respect to women. In either case, these suggestions gain additional threatening overtones when it emerges that the dying Belton is burdened with guilt for his uncle's death. The postscript speaks of "an uncle's *hastened* death" (1498), a vague phrase which suggests general unkindness or neglect, yet Belford's purposely vague horror implies more active guilt: "the apparent murder of his own uncle" (Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 147; perhaps the word "hasten" in italics is a Richardsonian euphemism). The three libertines, the two who die and the one who reforms, are thus connected and differentiated on the scale of their behaviour to their uncles. Through Belton, Lovelace is associated with neglect of friends, cruelty or even crime to relatives, and ineffectual repentance – signalled not only in Belton's inability to hope for mercy, but also in his omitting to make some amends even to his neglected sister, to whom he leaves very little money – although she is poor, and although she has nursed him in his last illness (1271).[99] Like Lovelace before his final duel, Belton has failed to make proper preparations for death despite knowing of his danger. The villains of *Grandison* fare somewhat better in this respect: Sir Hargrave, at least, leaves "a very large Legacy" to Harriet, his earlier victim, and to Sir Charles, who has repeatedly rendered him assistance and advice (3:462). This act of generosity, as well as his wish for spiritual support, indicate that he has a real chance for divine mercy.

Lovelace, who neglects his dying friend in order to pursue his own projects and pleasures, not surprisingly is inclined to dismiss Anna's earnestness to endanger "life, limb or estate" for Clarissa – except when he hopes to use it to bring Anna under his power. It is only consequential that Lovelace – sometimes wilfully, sometimes truly – also tends to misread both the "pretty sound" and the essence of friendship. Thus, he at one point re-presents Anna's friendly advice to Clarissa as connected with himself: he makes the women at Hampstead believe that Anna is in love with him and advises Clarissa out of jealousy rather than friendship; as he confides to Belford, he has indeed "often been willing to hope this" (801). As in other cases – and in parallel with the Harlowes – Lovelace tries to position himself at the centre of others' attention, resenting networks of relationship which do not afford him this position.

This rejection goes hand in hand with a limited 'literacy'. Lovelace, in contrast to his companions, is well-read both in secular literature and the Bible – although, significantly, his uncle's fondness for proverbs made him refuse to read that book and thus both his elder's (admittedly ridiculous) example and

99 For the significance of different manners of dying in *Clarissa*, see Doody, *A Natural Passion* 151–87.

the "*wisdom of nations*" (610).[100] That Lord M. is "not intelligent, not wise" (Stuber, "On Fathers and Authority" 564) despite these proverbs is no excuse for Lovelace: as a dutiful nephew, he ought to imitate whatever is worthy about the head of the family (as Sir Charles does). His contempt indicates that, although he is capable of appreciating the aesthetic qualities of the Bible, he is heedless of the moral teaching it provides. Despite his pride as a connoisseur of good literature, his neglect of *content* makes him a bad reader of virtuous people's texts.

He misreads Clarissa's and Anna's letters in two cases; the more obvious of these – the heroine's allegorical letter – has already been mentioned. The other instance is somewhat less obvious and concerns a reference to "Norris" in a letter by Anna which he intercepts. Anna has sent her friend fifty guineas enclosed in her edition of John Norris's *Miscellanies* (512). She (and apparently Clarissa) knows the book well. It contains, for example, the poem "Damon *and* Pythias. Or, *Friendship in Perfection*", from which Anna had quoted to comment on her own friendship with Clarissa: "we love one another *so* well, that in the words of Norris no *third* love can come in between" (131).[101] Strikingly, this passage anticipates (and contradicts) the villain's later assertion that women's friendships cease as soon as a man comes between. The book which Anna uses to cover her present emphasises, moreover, that the money is a gift of friendship, literally 'covering up' the potential inequality of a generous gift to one without financial resources, and simultaneously emphasising the women's friendship. As Taylor notes, Lovelace is "the only character in *Clarissa* who gives direct evidence of being unacquainted with Norris's 'fame'": because he does not understand the reference, he suspects a plot ("Clarissa Harlowe" 26). Belford, in contrast, although not overly well read in religious texts, "quotes a couplet from Norris's poem 'The Meditation'" to the dying Belton as part of a futile attempt at consolation (Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 149; *Clarissa* 1229).

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100 Significantly, Allestree cites *Proverbs* as an antidote to the behaviour of young people who "cannot abide to submit to the counsels and directions of their Elders, and therefore to shake them off, are willing to have them pass for the effects of dotage, when they are indeed the fruits of sobriety and experience" (297; Sunday XIV). The applicability of this to Lovelace is obvious.
Incidentally, Lovelace's suggestion that Belford "put [his uncle] out of his misery" occurs in the same letter in which he complains about his own uncle's love of proverbs; aggression against the one seems to be transferred to the other (611). Lovelace even tries to cite a precedent for such a murder/euthanasia "in the Bible, or some other good book", although he has trouble remembering his source.

101 For a quotation of the entire poem and a (comparatively) detailed discussion of it, see Mangano 68–9.

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Lovelace's misreading, therefore, throws a bad light on his notions of friendship. Since they apparently do not derive from a Christian context, they must be wrong at the core.

Since the libertines' friendship has no firm moral basis, their rules of correspondence – while superficially similar to those between Anna and Clarissa – enable openness, but ignore moral improvement. Allestree argues that true friends – as opposed to mere companions – are benevolent critics of each other's actions:

> And sure we should in this respect [of alerting friends to their faults] account our friends as our own Souls, by having the same jealous tenderness and watchfulness over their Souls, which we ought to have of our own. It will therefore be very fit for all that have entred any strict friendship, to make this one special Article in the agreement, that they shall mutually admonish and reprove each other; by which means it will become such an avowed part of their friendship, that it can never be mistaken by the reproved party for censoriousness or unkindness. (334; Sunday XV)

This is precisely what Anna and Clarissa have agreed to do, and what is, at first, missing in the friendship between Lovelace and Belford. When friendly expostulation occurs nevertheless – or when Lovelace ventriloquizes his friend's expostulation – it is seized on as an opportunity for self-vindication. As Lovelace writes to Belford after 'Captain Tomlinson' has tried to intercede (half-heartedly) for Clarissa:

> To pretend to *convince* a man, who knows in his heart that he is doing a wrong thing!—He must needs think that this would put me upon trying what I could say for myself; and when the excited compunction can be carried from the heart to the lips, it must evaporate in words. (837)

Lovelace often impersonates his friend's voice to pre-empt it of significance. By imagining Belford's questions, arguments and pleadings ('saving' him the trouble of formulating them himself) only to counter them with his arguments, he provides himself with an opportunity of reiterating his own position, while at the same time discouraging further advice. The main rule of their correspondence is thus not mutual improvement, but the forbearance Lovelace sees as the necessary part of the "woman spirit" in any friendship: They have a rule of never taking amiss anything written in the "Roman style" (142, 'editorial' footnote). In contrast, the rule between Anna and Clarissa – formulated by themselves as well as Colonel Morden – is "to be thankful for the freedom taken" (1450) when either friend criticises the other. While both have failings which

they may not "wish[...] to mend" (131), both nevertheless take each other's censure seriously.

Anna is thus a foil for Lovelace in friendship – and as a lover. Her relationship to Clarissa is fervent and occasionally almost eroticised; "[s]o intense is Anna's love that she feels enveloped in her beloved. 'You are me,' she constantly avers" (Todd 49). While the male lover will eventually dominate his beloved – either as husband or seducer – Anna's identification with her friend expresses true equality. Her gifts are unselfish, in contrast to Lovelace's attempts to dominate Clarissa by laying her under obligations. Although the heroine refuses even Anna's pecuniary help, this may in fact be an expression of equality – she accepts her friend's advice and sympathy, which she can return, but not gifts which would disturb the balance of their relationship. Clarissa's refusal of Anna's assistance has been understood to indicate her secret preference for Lovelace. Indeed, Anna herself tries to make Clarissa accept her help by telling her friend that she must choose between Lovelace and herself. When Clarissa plans to escape from Harlowe Place, for example, Anna asks pointedly "'Whether you choose not rather to go off with one of *your own sex*; with your ANNA HOWE—than with one of the *other*; with Mr LOVELACE?'" (356). If Clarissa elopes, she can choose between two helpers – her friend and equal, with little power either to protect or oppress her, or the man who hopes to gain authority over her. Clarissa absolutely refuses Anna's offer, since it will endanger her friend. Moreover, as Clarissa points out, Anna owes obedience and respect to her own mother; she must not make sacrifices for her friend which clash with filial duty (359–60). If Clarissa's wary preference of Lovelace's support to Anna's is to be understood in any other terms than unacknowledged desire, it must probably be in the context of the system of duty. Anna is not morally free to act as she would like. Were she married to Mr. Hickman – who admires Clarissa – she could offer her friend a refuge; in that case, the heroine says, she would gladly profit from her friend's help (335). However, accepting support which should not be offered is out of the question.

In contrast to Anna, Lovelace is a free agent, who owes no special obligations to anyone. His support of Clarissa does not clash with his duty to others – instead, it is dangerous because it may interfere with Clarissa's own obligations to be obedient and chaste, as we have seen above. This is why she refuses his offer to buy her clothes. Clarissa's resistance to accepting Lovelace's money and to his staying in the same house becomes much less pronounced after she has agreed to his proposal of marriage (after her father's curse). His support is now that of a prospective husband, who has a duty to provide for his wife – and

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thus, the general danger of accepting pecuniary obligations from a young man appears lessened, contained in the system of duty rather than of gift or contract.

Still, Clarissa's refusal of Anna's financial support remains disturbing, partly because the latter is herself evidently disturbed by it. Anna continues to remind Clarissa that their friendship legitimates any help she can provide. Rejecting her support is unjust to their relationship: "I beg, my dearest Miss Harlowe, that you will not put your Anna Howe upon a foot with Lovelace, in refusing to accept of my offer" (407). Clarissa promises that she does *not* put them "upon a foot", and, indeed, this is true – even though she continues to refuse Anna's money while tacitly agreeing to let Lovelace pay for the lodgings they share. Anna and Lovelace will never be the same to her, for only the female friend can be an equal. Lovelace is either a seducer who must be shunned or a prospective husband who offers legitimate support. If the former, "[her] soul is above" him (646), if the latter, she must eventually defer to him. Once Clarissa's family reject her and she has to hide from her former acquaintance, Anna is the one friend with whom Clarissa can uphold an equal relationship, to whom she need not defer, who constitutes no threat, and to whose offers she can respond with "free will" – and which, therefore, she can reject.

The ties between Anna and Clarissa are thus the epitome of loving equality, their "friendship [...] the most complete relationship in the novel" (Bueler 121). Shortly before her death, Clarissa affirms this relationship when she takes "from her bosom, where she always wore it", Anna's picture and symbolically takes leave of her friend: "*Sweet and ever-amiable friend—companion—sister—lover*! said she—and kissed it four several times, once at each tender appellation" (1357). Anna shows what Lovelace (and Arabella) should be to Clarissa. Some of her faults, as well as her qualities, are shared by him. Both are plotters – Anna tries to enlist a smuggler's help to hide Clarissa from Lovelace – but Anna's plans are mostly formed with her friend's knowledge and consent and are always meant for her good. Anna's passion, shrewdness, and spirit for intrigue are potentially beneficent; if she is associated with rakishness, this reflects on Lovelace's character more than on her own – she demonstrates that his qualities could be employed for good actions. In that sense, she foreshadows Sir Charles, whose similarity to Lovelace has been remarked on by several critics: "Lovelace, one could say, is Sir Charles's evil twin" (Robinson 176).

Both Anna and Lovelace dislike and despise most members of Clarissa's family; both of them except (occasionally) her mother from their criticism. Anna even calls Clarissa "[her] mamma's girl" – a double-edged term, for it

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implies helpless passivity as well as (praiseworthy) gentleness (67).[102] Both, also, humiliate James Harlowe in ways characteristically feminine and masculine. While Anna has refused his marriage proposal "with a disdain [...] too much of kin to his haughtiness" (55), Lovelace humiliates him with his superior wit and his easy victory in their duel. Similarly, both keep up a secret correspondence with Clarissa against her family's prohibition. However, on Lovelace's side, this is a ploy for power. Almost every letter he writes is sent either against her prohibition and/or contains half-truths and lies. Anna's letters, in contrast, exchange openness for openness, advice for advice. Nor is there a difference in power: while Lovelace threatens to confront Clarissa's family if she ceases to write to him, Anna can make no threat which Clarissa cannot return.

The most direct juxtaposition between Anna and Lovelace occurs after Clarissa's death, when Anna reacts with near-frenzy and Lovelace succumbs temporarily to madness (characteristically, the most destructive grief is reserved for the guilty party). Anna goes to Harlowe Place for a last sight of Clarissa's body. After passionately calling out to the dead Clarissa and kissing her, she turns to Colonel Morden:

> But why, sir, why, Mr Morden, was she sent *hither*? Why not to *me*?—She has no father, no mother, no relations; no, not *one!*—They had all renounced her. I was her sympathizing friend—And had not I the best right to my dear creature's remains?—And must names without nature be preferred to such a love as mine? [...] (1403)
> [... W]e had but one heart, but one soul, between us: and now my better half is torn from me—*what shall I do?* (1404)

Anna's lament is reminiscent of Richardson's description of the love of an old married couple; the parting of these friends is a parting of souls, which leaves the survivor incomplete (cf. 1.5). It is an indictment, as well, of the system of duty, where "names without nature" are preferred to deep, freely-given love. Lovelace had insisted on his right to Clarissa's body in similar terms: "Her cursed parents, whose barbarity to her no doubt was the *true* cause of her death, have long since renounced her. She left *them* for *me*. She chose *me* therefore: and I was her husband" (1383–4). Yet Lovelace's mad demands also echo the Harlowes' claims that they have a right to Clarissa's obedience. Clarissa must be somebody's; her own, she cannot be: "Whose was she living? Whose is she dead, but mine?", Lovelace exclaims (1384). His early promises to regard her

102 As the situation worsens, Anna's assessment of Mrs. Harlowe becomes less sympathetic: "I pity nobody that puts it out of their power to show maternal love and humanity, in order to patch up for themselves a precarious and sorry quiet, which every blast of wind shall disturb!" (583).

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"free will" have always covered his view of her as property to be obtained; now that her soul is out of his reach, he is still trying to gain power over her body. In a dark parody of Anna's claim that she and Clarissa's shared "one heart between us", Lovelace in his madness demands Clarissa's heart to keep. The seemingly parallel claims of Anna and Lovelace thus transpire to stem from opposite longings: in the one, it is a desire for possession, in the other, it is a longing to transcend all social obligations which are not based on mutual love. In Clarissa's last solemn apostrophe to her friend, the heroine confirms and meets that longing.

Within *Clarissa*, such a transcendence remains Utopian. Although true friendship may soften the effects of the abuse of the system of duty – and although it may deviate from it on occasion, as in the prohibited correspondence between the friends – it cannot negate or control that system. Attention to the claims of others makes Clarissa draw back. Indeed, Janet Todd remarks on "her uneasy fear of 'unbridled' friendship" (55). This "coldness" should not be read as distrust of friendship as such. Rather, it indicates that justice to everyone within one's network of duty requires a certain amount of control of each relationship. The value of Anna's friendship is, in part, precisely that it allows Clarissa to exert this control, however much it may cost them to respect these limits of their love.

2.5 Male authority and the disruption of relationships

The obligations of friendship are part of the system of duty, but also provide a radical counter-model to it. Similarly, solidarity between women offers an alternative model of relationship to that between men and women – one based on affection, influence and council rather than on authority, on equality rather than hierarchy (cf. 3.5). Other relationships – notably the one between a mother and her child – are firmly situated within the system of duty, but partake of the more egalitarian, affectionate nature of ties between women. It is the mark of authoritarian men in each novel that they interfere in these relationships, while one of the salient characteristics of Sir Charles – but also of the finally reformed Mr. B. – is that he helps to establish family relationships and friendships between women. Lovelace, as the most Satanic villain, corrupts and distorts such relationships both practically and when he writes of his actions. The prostitutes Sally Martin and Polly Horton are the most salient example of his corruption of women – the clearest sign of which is their desire to drag down Clarissa to their own level: "You owe us such a lady!" (522).

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As several critics have observed, Lovelace is uncomfortable when it appears that women's bonds might be stronger than his own attractions. He "strenuously opposes the friendship of Clarissa and Anna", tampering with their correspondence, threatening to rape both, and casting them in roles of his own making – as when he imagines Anna as a rake manqué, or presents Mrs. Bevis to Anna's messenger as a false Clarissa (Todd 59, 62). With regard to this particular friendship, Lovelace's success is short-lived, however; he can affect their confidence in each other only while he prevents direct communication between them. A number of fantasies make up for this lack of real power. For example, when he imagines their friendship as strong and lasting, it is usually in the context of rape or seduction fantasies concerning Anna (e. g. 637, 922); the relationship thus comes to serve his own 'needs' rather than theirs. In a more extreme, elaborate imagined scene of abduction, rape, and trial which is only hinted at in the first edition (671), he gives himself not only full power over Anna's body, but imagines her as a publicly humiliated victim: the women who attend his fantasized trial, even more than the men, are on his side.[103] And when he describes his plans for raping Clarissa a second time as a dream vision, this includes the staging of a scene of (faked) female confidence and support. The bawd Mother H., he determines, shall lure Clarissa into her 'protection' and her bed, where the latter will tell her story. In the course of the night, Lovelace will change places with the bawd and rape Clarissa once more just after she has imaginatively re-lived his first assault. Not content with mastering her body, Lovelace also "contemplates his mastery of the bonds of female commiseration and solidarity, fictional bonds he has created in order to have the imagined pleasure of destroying" them (Gwilliam 98).

However, Lovelace's tendency to distort as well as disturb women's solidarity is as strong, if less apparent at first sight, when he follows Clarissa to Hampstead. Indeed, his report of events there may be his most subtle and powerful bid to reach out to the *readers* of the novel and affect their view of women. In Lovelace's account, his experiences with women – except Clarissa – reveal their weaknesses: lust thinly veiled by propriety (Mrs. Bevis), greed (Mrs. Moore), officious curiosity (Miss Rawlins). He easily acquires the information he is after, receives help to disguise himself or to intercept Anna's letter to Clarissa, and passes around his own version of their story. His apparent success at Hampstead has led Judith Wilt to observe that this place is simply a respectable version of the

103 For extensive quotations and a discussion of this scene, see Gwilliam 78–81. In the first edition, Richardson merely states that Lovelace, "*to show the wantonness of his invention, in his next gives his friend an account of a scheme he had framed to be revenged on Miss Howe […]. But as he does not intend to carry it into execution, it is omitted*" (671).

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London brothel (25). Beneath Lovelace's account, however, lurks an alternative version in which women respond more strongly to women's distress than to men's attractiveness. In the inn where Clarissa makes her first inquiries in Hampstead, Lovelace is at first able to tell his story of the patient husband suffering from a capricious, albeit virtuous, wife. The proprietors help him disguise himself – yet his obvious skill at impersonation is recognised and correctly interpreted by the land*lady,* who tells her husband: "He's a good one, I warrant him!—I dare say the fault lies not all of one side" (766).

Later on, Lovelace wins Mrs. Bevis's favour easily enough, but his dealings with Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins are fraught with tension. When Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins seem ready to side with Clarissa even after he has told them she is his wife, he notes in frustration: "I imagined that I had made myself a better interest in these women". He comforts himself with the thought, however, that they give her information on possible escape routes only because "the whole sex love plotting; and plot-*ters* too" (792). One moment, he exults in his skill in playing on people's weaknesses, such as Mrs. Moore's desire for money, the next he is disappointed when she hesitates to let him lodge in her house. Similarly, his contempt for Miss Rawlins's 'curiosity' serves to distance her, in his account of events, from other women who are "*so notified* for prudence, that none of her acquaintance undertake anything of consequence without consulting her" (764). If Clarissa confides in Miss Rawlins, he fears, all will be lost. Lovelace's official version highlights male influence on women; his anxiety, however, reveals that female solidarity is the natural response.[104] Thus, I disagree with Judith Wilt's claim that, in *Clarissa*, "the real enemy of woman is woman".[105] I

104 Lest the reader trust too implicitly in Lovelace's version of characters and events, it is instructive to note his behaviour at the Smiths' house, where Clarissa lodges during her final illness. When Lovelace comes to visit Clarissa only to find her gone, he walks through the house and alternately threatens, insults, flatters and tries to amuse the Smiths and Mrs. Lovick. He writes optimistically that "my courteous behaviour to [Mrs. Smith and the widow Lovick] will, on their report of it, procure me the favour" of an interview with Clarissa (1223). Instead, Clarissa is shocked at Lovelace's "astonishing vagaries" (1246). Although the reader is given no direct access to the Smiths' and Mrs. Lovick's report of the villain's behaviour, it is clear that their impression of him must have been unfavourable. Similarly, Belford's positive report of Hickman contradicts the ridiculous impression given by Lovelace.
Morris Golden has suggested that Richardson put much of himself into Lovelace (cf. 162), yet it seems at least as likely that, in Lovelace's encounter with these characters, the author identified with the serious-minded tradespeople and the good, if somewhat inept, Mr. Hickman, allowing the aristocratic rake to ridicule them only in order to show the hollowness of this sort of triumph.

105 Several critics have made similar, albeit more reserved statements, including London, who claims, like Wilt, that a "greater capacity for wickedness [is] assigned women over

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concur, however, with her statement that this is "the *lesson* Lovelace has *insisted upon all along*" (27; my emphasis). It is the mark of the perverted patriarch to be uncomfortable at the solidarity of women, and to desire to be not only the centre, but the *sole* focus of their attention – hence not only Lovelace's denigration of Clarissa's friends, but also his acute discomfort at finding that the "women below" (690) have, in fact, their own plans for Clarissa, which differ from his (cf. Wilt 27).

Clarissa, throughout the novel, expects women to show solidarity with other women, and she is rarely mistaken. Within her family, only Arabella is genuinely against her, and when Clarissa lies dying, her sister shows more readiness than James to take her back. Arabella's cruelty is associated by Clarissa with masculinity:

> […] she has been thought to be masculine in her air, and in her spirit. She has then, perhaps, a soul of the *other* sex in a body of *ours.* And so, for the honour of *our own*, will I judge of every woman for the future who, imitating the rougher manners of men, acts unbeseeming the gentleness of her own sex. (309–10; cf. Todd 32)

Repeatedly Clarissa shows herself more capable of judging other women's characters than Lovelace expects, objecting not only to the "masculine" Mrs. Sinclair, but also to Sally, Polly and the "specious Partington", a woman he has selected specially to impose on the heroine as a bedfellow. Interestingly, she is far more easily imposed on by Lovelace's male helpers, like Captain Tomlinson or Mr. Mennell, than by his female ones. The only exceptions are the false Lady Betty and Charlotte Montague – a deception which Lady Echlin found unbelievable and helped prompt her to write her own version of the ending.[106] It seems plausible, however, that Clarissa would find it easier to believe

men in Richardson's fiction" (41). However, she rightly observes that the evil committed by the prostitutes takes the "place of that *natural* sympathy which consolidates women's friendship as a defense against an alien male world" (43; my emphasis). Although women in Richardson's fiction have a capacity for evil as well as solidarity, the latter tendency is more pronounced. Dussinger cautiously supports the view that "throughout this story women are seen to be locally worse enemies than men", but notes that this attitude – voiced by Belford as well as Lovelace –"conveniently overlooks the male-dominated economic system that prompts such competitive behaviour between women in the first place" ("Truth and storytelling" 49).

106 Lady Echlin thought that "at Hamstead, [Clarissa's] conduct is quite inconsistant with her character, – […] she cou'd not be so unpardonably silly as to accompany [Lovelace] to London, with two flirting strumpets, who, tho' they had assum'd the names of his kindred, their affected airs, & over acted part, wou'd not suffer Clarissa to imagine them, the real, well-Bread Ladies of quality" (Sabor, *Correspondence* 984–5; opening of her alternative ending).

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that Lovelace would try to rape her than that he would hire prostitutes to impersonate his own female relations. Moreover, Clarissa's desire for *female* support – "I submit not [my cause] to men" (827) she tells 'Captain Tomlinson' – helps deceive her.

Interestingly, while Lovelace – and to some extent Belford – emphasize the malice of fallen women as feminine and beyond the vice of vicious men, Clarissa is consistent in holding men in far greater horror than women – her term of contempt to Belford is "MAN" (1066). The only seeming exception, Mrs. Sinclair, has a "masculine air" – which means, incidentally, that she is ugly, like so many bad women in literature (cf. McMaster, *Reading the Body* 65). Her very body, it seems, denies that she is truly a part of the so-called 'fair sex'. She is thus a monstrous hybrid between all that is bad in women *and* men, the only woman to actively further Lovelace's violence without having been corrupted by him first. It is also Mrs. Sinclair who is singled out for the most extended, horrible scene of a sinner's death, where she sinks, in Belford's description, to a beastlike creature. Clarissa, then, refuses to learn the lesson prepared for her – her distrust of men is consistently stronger than that of women.

If the abuse of male power *outside* the home tends to corrupt women, it sows division inside it. Within the family, the opposing tendencies between authority and solidarity, hierarchy and network are most clearly embodied in the presentation of fatherhood and motherhood. The figure of the father has received much and early attention. Keymer, to name a prominent example, carefully traces the links between Clarissa's "father's house" as the house of her progenitor and the house of her maker (*Richardson's* Clarissa 105–20). In contrast, her relationship to her mother has received little in-depth treatment.[107] Mrs. Harlowe's connection to her daughter, of course, 'lacks' the subtle but crucial associations with scriptural texts. Nevertheless, in the light of gender studies, it is interesting how little attention this 'good', but passive woman has received in comparison both to the men in *Clarissa* and to more outspoken women like Anna Howe. Strikingly, Clarissa's relationships to other women are as numerous and as crucial as those she has to men. Within her family, the

107 Dorothy Van Ghent sees "a dramatic vision of family life" as part of the "*Clarissa*-myth" (57–8), with the relationship between the godlike father and the rebellious/obedient child at the core of this family life (59–60). Indeed, Florian Stuber has written an entire article "On Fathers and Authority in *Clarissa*", and Janice Haney-Peritz has contributed an article on *Clarissa* to a volume on daughters and fathers. More recently, Lynda Zwinger has included a study of *Clarissa* in her monograph *Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel*.
Mrs. Harlowe, in contrast, has received little critical attention, although Todd discusses her alongside other female characters in *Clarissa*.

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four despotic males – father, two uncles, James Harlowe junior – are balanced with four women: her mother, aunt, sister and cousin Dolly, three of whom are at least partially sympathetic to Clarissa, while the fourth seems at least less unrelenting than James towards the close of the novel. Clarissa further has two mentor figures, Dr. Lewin and her nurse and maternal friend Mrs. Norton. Shortly before her death, in the house of the Smiths, "she is for finding out something *paternal* and *maternal* in everyone" (1082). Even on her way to her eternal "father's house", then, her desire for human relationships is balanced between that of the father – implying, in its positive aspects, protection – and that of the nurturing mother.

Mrs. Harlowe may at first glance seem like the mother in Locke's *Two Treatises*, present to supplement and comment on the authority of the father in some way, but prone to disappearing in the course of the argument. Yet if Mrs. Harlowe 'supplements' fatherly authority, she does so in a way which highlights the value of femininity. The father, for Clarissa, commands respect. Kneeling to a father constitutes an appeal for mercy, while his kneeling to a child is both a shock to propriety and a last act of constraint (as Clementina argues, cf. 3:59–60). Indeed, Clarissa writes that she "had deserved annihilation had [she] suffered [her] father to kneel in vain" (506).[108] Fatherly authority appears inflexible, leaving room only for binary oppositions: Clarissa is either "in her father's house" or banished from it. For his part, she either is his daughter or is not, is fully obedient or not; for her part, the closest approach to criticising him is to claim that she *cannot* criticise him, or to lay down her pen as she finds herself unable to defend or excuse him. Mrs. Harlowe, in contrast, is closer to the 'heart' on all counts. If the father has an absolute right to demand or forbid action, the mother, as we have seen, works through and asks for interiority, even when she is at her most demanding (cf. 1.3).

When Clarissa has eloped, she is horrified to have fled her "father's house" and to be, like Eve, an outcast from paradise (Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 114); she is still more horrified at her father's curse. However, soon she appears to accept Anna's comfort – it can have no force because it is unjust – and she begins to fear it again only when it seems to have been partly fulfilled. Nevertheless, her mother's attitude, although apparently less important with regard to her eternal welfare, remains important to Clarissa throughout. When, in one of her happier moments, she expects marriage to Lovelace and a reconciliation with her family, she looks forward to being "lightened from the all-sinking weight

108 I am therefore inclined to disagree with Stuber when he suggests that Clarissa is shocked at her father's curse mostly because "it is completely at odds with her idea of a loving father" ("On Fathers and Authority" 566).

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of a father's curse" but goes on to dwell on her mother – "this blessed mamma" – and her love (695). Later, when Lovelace tells her that his aunt and cousin are coming to see her in Hampstead, she replies: "Nobody but Miss Howe, to whom, next to the Almighty, and my own mother, I wish to stand acquitted of wilful error, shall know the whole of what has passed" (853). And on the day before her death, when told that her cousin Morden has arrived but "feared to surprise" her, she replies: "Nothing can surprise me now, except my mamma were to favour me with her last blessing in person. That would be a welcome surprise to me even yet" (1353). Her earthly father seems unimportant now his curse is lifted, but the mother, like her friend, remains close to her heart to the last (cf. also Todd 63). In this context, it is interesting to note that Clarissa uses the metaphor of "weaning" to express her gradual detachment from human affections as she prepares for death. Human affections are thus associated with the mother/nurse-child relationship.[109]

Mrs. Harlowe, on her part, is ready enough to sacrifice Clarissa's interests to peace – as she also sacrifices her own. During one lengthy debate on the subject of Solmes, she embraces her sobbing daughter. While holding her in her arms, she makes a speech which starts with a confession, or rather complaint, of her own difficult situation, continues through not-so-subtle hints that Clarissa's resistance cannot succeed, then, after "loosing her arm", ends with a gentler version of the father's curse:

> You know, my dear, what I every day forgo and undergo, for the sake of peace. Your papa is a very good man and means well; but he will not be controlled, nor yet persuaded. You have seemed to pity *me* sometimes, that I am obliged to give up every point. Poor man! *his* reputation the less for it; *mine* the greater [...]. You would not wilfully break that peace which costs your mamma so much to preserve. Obedience is better than sacrifice. [...] And I charge you, on my blessing, that all this my truly maternal tenderness be not thrown away upon you. (89)

Mrs. Harlowe repeats her covert threat a few lines (and minutes) later: "I charge you *besides*, on my blessing, that you think of being Mrs Solmes" (89). Clarissa understands the implication; to be deprived of a mother's blessing is little better than to be cursed by a father. Her body responds promptly – she faints.

Yet Mrs. Harlowe never casts her daughter off entirely; indeed, as she complains in a secret letter to Mrs. Norton, "A mother [...] cannot forget

109 The metaphor of "weaning" was used also, however, by Thomas Edwards in a letter of 1756 to Richardson, which suggests that this may have been a familiar phrase – although it is also possible that Edwards was echoing Clarissa's words (cf. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 141, n.114).

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her child, though that child could abandon her mother; and in so doing run away with all her mother's comforts!" (1158). Self-pityingly meek, she suffers intensely because her brand of selfishness is still consistent with genuine love for her child. Richardson was ambivalent about her; in the list of "principal characters", he described her as "mistress of fine qualities, but greatly under the influence not only of her arbitrary husband but of her son" (37). Ironically, the very qualities that should qualify Mrs. Harlowe for an exemplary wife and mother – her good education and gentleness – turn out to disqualify her from "exert[ing]" the influence that her youngest daughter feels she is entitled to (54). Her character illustrates the crux that *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* thematise, yet also gloss over: that the good wife must exert influence even while submitting. As Sarah Fielding commented,

> from this Character of Mrs. *Harlowe*, we may draw a noble and most useful Moral; for as in the Body, too rich Blood occasions many Diseases, so in the Mind, the very Virtues themselves, if not carefully watched, may produce very hurtful Maladies. Meekness therefore, and a long Habit of Submission, is often accompanied by a want of Resolution, even where Resolution is commendable. (*Remarks* 10)

The diagnosis seems quite appropriate – and it describes not only Mrs. Harlowe's case, but simply the perversion of the system of duty as displayed in its effect on a wife and mother. Through her obedience, Mrs. Harlowe contributes to a pattern that confirms, instead of softens, her husband's authoritarianism.[110] The strains of compliance are visited on her body: even before Mr. Solmes has made his proposals, Mrs. Harlowe falls ill with "a very violent colic", which Clarissa interprets as the consequence of family strife and of her mother's fears of another duel (54). Clarissa nurses her through it – the last time that mother and daughter spend together peacefully.

Within Richardson's novels, the mother's natural role is presented to be that of the mediator. However, the hierarchy inherent in the husband-wife relationship is frequently allowed to suppress other strands of the network of duty. If this tendency is most pronounced in *Clarissa*, it is also very present in the sequel to *Pamela*. Significantly, the heroine's major conflicts with Mr. B. in

110 In Paul Watzlawick's terms, Mr. and Mrs. Harlowe form a prototypical "complementary" couple – self-assertion on one side is consistently followed, and thus strengthened, by submission on the other: "It is at once apparent that many systems of relationship […] contain a tendency towards progressive change. If, for example, one of the patterns of cultural behaviour, considered appropriate in individual *A*, is culturally labelled as an assertive pattern, while *B* is expected to reply to this with what is culturally regarded as submission, it is likely that this submission will encourage a further assertion, and that this assertion will demand still further submission" (49).

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their married life involve her duty to and her relationship with her first child.[111] Their first disagreement occurs because she wishes to breastfeed her son. When Mr. B. objects, Pamela tries to engage her parents as mediators. Her husband agrees to let her write a letter, but tells her that he will not change his decision based on their advice. Predictably, and in agreement with moral writings in general, the Andrewses confirm Pamela's opinion about her duties as a mother, but advise her to submit, since she will otherwise estrange her husband. Pamela then yields – unconvinced, but "chearfully" (318), although she has to retire first to her chamber to cry. The conflict shows the very limited power a wife has to counter her husband's will. Pamela uses the earnest 'expostulation' encouraged in such situations, and she draws on communal opinion and on moral writings. Mr. B., on the other hand, can avoid considering his own duties altogether. Both Pamela and Mr. B. draw on a variety of arguments – including medical authorities and biblical precedents, and the particular circumstances of their own individual situation. Surprisingly, one common denominator is the system of duty, but the use they make of it is diametrically opposed. Mr. B. stresses his right as a husband to make void even a wife's vow, that is, his right to shape the duties his wife has to fulfil. Thus, while Pamela sees herself as having to negotiate a network of duties, her husband considers himself as the authority which controls *other people's* duties. By denying his wife's obligation to their child, moreover, he obscures his own responsibility as a father.

Pamela argues that it is a mother's natural duty to nurse her own child; therefore, the husband should not interfere despite his equally natural authority. She therefore rejects the "Dean's Opinion", which is "That if the Husband is set upon it, it is a Wife's Duty to obey":

> But I can't see how that is; for if it be the *natural* Duty of a Mother, it is a *Divine* Duty; and how can a Husband have Power to discharge a Divine Duty?—As great as a Wife's Obligation is to obey her Husband, which is, I own, one Indispensable of the Marriage Contract, it ought not to interfere with what one takes to be a superior Duty: And must not one be one's own Judge of Actions, by which we must stand or fall?— (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 309)

Pamela here draws on similar arguments which she had used successfully before her marriage. Taunted by Mrs. Jewkes's suggestion that she will be married to Mr. Colbrand, who will then sell her to Mr. B., she had rejected the possibility that a husband's authority can replace divine authority and constrain a wife to

111 For discussions of Pamela's motherhood, see also Chaber, "'This Affecting Subject'", and Davies.

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commit adultery (179–80, 194). Now that she *is* a wife, however, she finds that Mr. B. brandishes ideas similar to Mrs. Jewkes's. "[...] you seem not to have a right Notion of the Obedience which a Wife naturally *owes*, as well as voluntarily *vows*, to a Husband's Will" (313), he writes, reminding her of Numbers 30 – a text which Richardson went on to quote with approval in *Clarissa* (cf. 2.2). David Graham said of Clarissa that she always remembers "all the duties resulting from the several relations of social life" (cf. 1.2); while Pamela does so too, her husband effectively forbids her to act accordingly unless he gives her leave. Thus, a wife's duty can "swallow up" a mother's obligations.

Pamela's difficulty is that Mr. B. uses the same grounds of argument that she does, but to opposite effect. He can do so because, like the Harlowes, he concentrates not on his own duties, but on hers. He is not concerned to show her what they as a married couple and parents ought to do, but rather to prove that she has to submit to his will whether or not that is compatible with his own duty as husband and father. Indeed, Mr. B. uses the argument from Numbers only *after* he has made clear his motivations for prohibiting Pamela to nurse her child. Conceding that a new-born child needs "the first Milk", he agrees that Pamela may nurse hers "for one Month, or so", if no nurse can be found who can supply colostrum. He immediately insists, however, that she may not extend this time, "for I shall not care to have my Rest disturbed; and it may not be quite so well, perhaps, to lay us under the Necessity of separate Beds" (312). Mr. B. desires unlimited access to his wife's body, as well as unrivalled attention and importance: he will not allow "even a Son and Heir" to be a "Rival" (312). By requiring Pamela to put wifely duty before all her other obligations, he ensures this precedence. And Pamela, bound by the requirement to do her own duty rather than enforce her rights or insist on the duties of others, must give in. Mr. B.'s obligations as a husband escape close scrutiny.

The respective positions of husband and wife here are typical of conflicts in other relationships – the one Lovelace imagines for himself and Clarissa, the one between the Harlowe parents, and the one (only hinted at) between Sir Thomas and Lady Grandison. At the same time, Pamela's conflict with B. provides a rare inner view of the obedient wife. Pamela's 'cheerful' obedience, it is clear, is an effort of self-control, and one, moreover, which does not cancel out her inner conflict. Although she successfully masters her emotion, continues to fulfil her duties within the range allowed by her husband, and loves him as before, her letter to her parents records her unchanging position as to the matter in question. Pamela demonstrates the strength that a good woman needs if she is under the authority of an imperfect father or husband: to yield when she needs to while still relying on her own moral perception. "[S]he

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can see her duty as a mother and as a wife, even if Mr B cannot see his as a father and husband. Her judgement and action are separate – but both morally validating, because she understands the requirements of motherhood but also the regrettable necessity for wifely submission" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 83). Mrs. Harlowe, in contrast, is unable to do so – she vacillates between pleading for her daughter openly, conniving at that daughter's secret correspondence, and rejecting her unconditionally. Her somewhat erratic behaviour indicates her inability to identify and act on her responsibilities within the narrow bounds of the system of duty.

In contrast, it is Pamela's ability to retain her own perception of morality even while submitting to B. which allows her to insist on her role as a mother in two more (potential) conflicts with her husband. The first of these does not, at the outset, involve their child directly. Mr. B. takes his pregnant wife to a masquerade, meets an attractive woman of high rank, and starts a flirtation. Pamela, unable to suffer patiently according to conduct book script, resolves to return him his freedom and offers to withdraw so that he can live with her rival, although she hopes the adulterers will in time recognise and renounce their sin. However, she is determined to take her son with her. Even though she presents her confrontation with her husband as an indictment of herself in a court of justice, she reserves her right to her child (albeit aware that she has no actual power to keep him against her husband's will). The relationship of mother and child, for her, exists in its own right, not as an extension of the father's power over both.

Luckily, the actual legal situation does not become important, for Mr. B. is touched by her speaking out, tells her that he never committed adultery, and promises to reform entirely. His reformation is proved in another potential scene of conflict, where he sanctions his wife's notions of the mother-child relationship. When her son falls ill with the smallpox, Pamela asks to be allowed to nurse him through his illness. Mr. B., who had objected to her breastfeeding as it would restrain his access to her body, now (after some hesitation) allows her to risk that body – life and beauty – in order to fulfil her duty as a mother. When he decides to restrict her access to her child after all, it is out of "cruel Kindness", and he then takes her place in the child's room (461). Although it is improbable that he does more than watch his son there, the action is remarkable in a father who had earlier demonstrated marked disinterest in the nursery. His agreement signals that he has finally come to value Pamela's mind above her body, virtue over pleasure. The natural consequence of his reformation is that he is able to conceive of himself, and of his wife, as parts of networks of duties.

Like Mr. B. and the Harlowe men, Lovelace is unwilling to allow relationships which centre on anyone other than himself. More subtly than in Mr. B.'s case, this is expressed through his fantasy of Clarissa nursing her children (cf. 1.5), "the pious task continued for one month, and no more" (706). Lovelace functions, in this instance, as the author's mouthpiece to promote maternal breastfeeding, although his strict limitation also signals that, like B., he is jealous of his wife's body and attention. Unlike Mr. B., however, Lovelace also envisages his children as extensions of himself, as "eager hunter[s]", whose need forces Clarissa to look up to him for help, as the only one who can legitimate her children (706).[112] The mother, in his vision, is bound to the father through her children, yet without the power to defend them against his despotism. Indeed, Lovelace's term for his children – "a twin Lovelace at each charming breast" – signals precisely not their name, since their father has not yet, and perhaps never will, "deign to legitimate". Instead of showing their right to a place in the Lovelace family, it turns them into mere extensions of their father's power, powerless in themselves. The scene, which "resembles the model sentimental family", is in fact "a test" for Lovelace (Kukorelly, "Samuel Richardson's Visual Rhetoric", 278, 279). The vision which he conjures up should evoke paternal feelings in him; by failing to respond to the plight of his wife and children which he himself conjures up (first in thought, then, as far as his power goes, in reality), he shows that "he is beyond reformation" (279). In visions like these, fathers appear not as the natural protectors of their children; instead, they threaten with their despotism the natural relationship between mother and child. Men, Clarissa ponders at one point, in excuse of her uncles' unforgivingness, are less gentle than women, at least until they "ha[ve] their masculine passions humanized by the tender name of FATHER" (992). Figures like Lovelace and Sir Thomas, and even the reformed Mr. B. and the respectable Mr. Harlowe, put into question even that moderate hope.

Grandison provides two contrary examples of (biological) fatherhood. The hero's father, despotic toward his motherless children, is not shown directly

112 Blackstone specifies that children must be born "after lawful wedlock" in order to be legitimate (443; bk. I, ch. XVI); exceptions are possible only "by the transcendent power of an act of parliament" (447). Possibly, Lovelace imagines that he can obtain such an exceptional favour; in another fantasy (or rather dream, although the two are difficult to distinguish), he imagines that his illegitimate children by Clarissa and Anna "intermarry" and inherit "by Act of Parliament" (922). Mr. B., more modest as well as more responsible, excludes this possibility. One of his reasons for desisting from his scheme of tricking Pamela into a sham-marriage is that "it would be out of my own Power to legitimate" his children by her (269). He also provides for his illegitimate daughter by Sally Godfrey as soon as she is born.

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opposing their mother's wishes on behalf of them. Yet his presence looms over the scene where Lady Grandison takes a final leave of her daughters, stating that she did not feel justified in leaving anything to her daughters, and advising them to look to their brother for protection (cf. 3.2). Here, the father's authority is sufficient to circumscribe the mother's love even without direct interference. Although Lady Grandison 'gives' to her daughters a male who actually will protect them later, she takes no other measures to secure their future happiness. The contrast to this kind of fatherhood is offered by Lord G., Charlotte Grandison's somewhat effeminate husband who is enraptured at the sight of his wife nursing their daughter. Although the scene is presented in comic terms, his enthusiasm signals the proper response of the loving father-husband to the wife's maternal role. The fact that their child is a daughter is perhaps a nod to gender stereotypes – if a son is potentially worth more than a daughter, the saucy Lady G. and her not-quite-masculine-enough husband can hardly be rewarded with a son for their first child. At the same time, however, it is intriguing to note that Richardson's only detailed scene of a mother happily nursing her child is also a depiction of a relationship between two females, appreciated, but not *initiated,* by a man (cf. also 3.1).[113]

The mother's position in the family is thus liminal, situated between love, honour, authority, and duty. The network of responsibilities which she has to negotiate includes at least husband and children. Her lesser authority as compared to a father's constrains her, but it also leads to a freer relationship with children. While Anna's bantering with her mother may be faulty, it also enables her to influence her mother in a potentially beneficial way. (Clarissa criticizes Anna's impudence in the incident of Antony Harlowe's proposal of marriage, but she does not say Mrs. Howe should have actually accepted it; the outcome may well be desirable). A mother's authority has much weight, but it is not as indisputable as a father's. If a father is associated with protection, his authority is also more dangerous when he abuses his position. A mother's role, in contrast, is comparatively free of such dangers; even such a cruel, violent mother as Mrs. O'Hara in *Grandison* can finally be managed for her own as well as her daughter's good.

The divergent roles of father and mother can be summarized in a juxtaposition of Clarissa's and Sir Charles's relationship to them: Clarissa's father stands for protection (which he could, but does not, afford), divinely sanctioned authority, and tyranny, her mother for love and weakness. Sir Thomas, too, holds authority,

113 At least in a social sense – biologically speaking, he has of course contributed to it. However, the image of Actaeon surprising Diana, which Charlotte uses to describe the scene, rather obscures this.

expressed in his son's almost limitless deference and his earnest endeavour to copy everything which he can without acting imprudently or immorally (expressed mainly in his perfect swordsmanship and his "rich" dress). However, it is the mother who, through her example, has had a far more profound impact on her son. Her influence is highlighted by her daughters and Harriet, but less so by Sir Charles himself – precisely because it depends so much on her individual behaviour, and less on her status. Moreover, her influence is so far-reaching, so prevalent in all his actions, that he need not emphasize it – Sir Thomas's, in contrast, can be followed honourably only in few situations, and is therefore explicitly acknowledged. While emphasising his father's magnificence and spirit, his commendation of his mother can be summed up in a single sentence: "She is always before my eyes" (2:42).[114] Lord W., to whom this is spoken, instantly recognises the appropriate difference between Sir Charles's appreciation for his father and his mother, respectively, and intimates that he will no longer object to the hero's commendations of Sir Thomas, "because I see it is all from principle."

Lady Grandison's gentle influence is opposed to her husband's neglect, cruel raillery of his daughters, and selfish use of fatherly power. One method, and effect, of the behaviour of each is their structuring of relationships. Sir Thomas severs them, Lady Grandison knits and strengthens them. Thus, Lady Grandison distributes charity in the name of her husband. As she is dying, her last advice to her daughters, and her last wish to her son, is that they should love each other. In contrast, Sir Thomas, who has already caused her death – and thus divided his children from their mother – goes on to divide the family further. Although he adores his son Charles, Sir Thomas sends him abroad so that he will not be a disapproving witness of his father's vicious life (cf. 1:322). To prevent his daughters from criticizing him, he moreover prohibits his children's correspondence. This is a version of the more familiar command that a wife abandon her friendships so that she will not expose her husband.[115] It is, if

114 Sir Charles's emulation of his mother has even led Dussinger to argue that the community "at Grandison Hall is strongly matrist" ("Love and Consanguinity" 521). The remark ignores the crucial importance of the father-figure; nevertheless, it also reflects important aspects of the text. It is notable, for example, that Sir Charles greatly admires and loves the Marchioness della Porretta; perhaps this is a sign of his longing for a mother-figure, similar to Clarissa's longing for something "paternal and maternal" in those around her.

115 Exemplified, for instance, in Mirabell's demand in *The Way of the World*, and in the story of Mrs. Morgan in *Millenium Hall*, quoted as epigraphs by Todd. The first of these characters is sympathetic, the second is not.

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possible, even more extreme, since it has the potential effect of severing family bonds, while the exclusion of friends could theoretically strengthen them.

The same general effect results when Sir Thomas first hires a governess against the will of his daughters, then seduces her (cf. 1:319). He thus deprives Mrs. Oldham of the respect of good women (and his children by her of the right to inherit), while leaving his daughters without a female advisor. (Sir Charles will later do his best to rectify the situation, helping Mrs. Oldham and teaching his sisters to treat her with compassion.) The father's division of the family, it is shown, could lead to a continuance of misbehaviour in the next generation. Thus, although Harriet approves of the sisters' spirit in opposing the return of the seduced Mrs. Oldham, she rather distances herself from their opinion that they are in no need of a governess at the ages of almost sixteen and nineteen, respectively – and indeed, she later on apologizes for instances of 'improper' behaviour in them by reminding herself that they lost their mother early.

If the Grandison sisters do not realise that they sustain a loss when Mrs. Oldham is seduced, they are very much aware that their father's behaviour deprives them of their brother. Sir Charles, they fear, may be estranged from them through the prohibition to correspond (1:322). There is no hint in the novel that Harriet or the sisters believe this has actually happened. Yet although Sir Charles returns full of affection, there is a perceptible distance: the sisters feel awe as well as love for their brother, and Sir Charles, who had asked them for their opinions in difficult situations *before* the prohibition, now goes for advice to Dr. Bartlett. Indeed, although Sir Charles once claims to Jeronymo that he may have hopes of Harriet through his sisters' mediation, he does not tell them of his proposal to Harriet until it has been accepted – so little direct communication is there now between him and them (cf. 3:11, 3:21). At this point, it seems that equal, unreserved communication between good men and women has been effectively disturbed. The hero takes upon himself both his mother's legacy – love – and his father's – distance and authority. In the passages leading up to Sir Charles's revelation of his history with Clementina, only his repeated complaints about the distance between himself and his sisters can make an equal interchange of confidence and advice seem even possible – through the hero's regret at its absence.

This very history, however – which has been kept from his sisters and thus signals his distance from them – also supports, or even initiates, the novel's drive toward far-reaching, international and cross-gender networks of relationships (as friends as well as relations real and imagined). The love triangle between Sir Charles, Clementina and Harriet enables them to transcend the dangers of love and jealousy, overcoming both in order to create lasting friendships. In the

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process, relations and friends of each are welcomed into a growing 'family'. The periphery of these networks even provides space for such characters as Lady Olivia – urged by Sir Charles to "cultivate […] the friendship of" Mrs. Beaumont, a friend of the della Porrettas (2:643) – or for Sir Hargrave, who, after vacillating between reform and viciousness, names Harriet his heir when he dies.

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3. *Grandison* and utopia

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, Richardson's novels envisage various structures, and bases, of relationships. None of them comes without risks. The supreme problem of them all, however, is that they are interconnected, but often contradictory. To the extent that relationships are envisaged as networks, they require individual agency; to the extent that they are hierarchies, they limit that agency. For the individual caught on a lower scale of the ladder, conflicts of duty are nigh-insolvable, for there is no clear indication that, and when, the individual may rebel against tyranny. Most frequently, it is women who are most exposed to the consequences of conflicting duties and abuse of power. Richardson addresses this problem by creating, in his last novel, a powerful man who acts up to his responsibilities, thus enabling those around him to do the same.

In the preface to *Grandison*, Richardson explains that this narrative is the response to readers' demands: "[I]t was insisted on by several of his [the 'editor's'] Friends who were well assured he had the Materials in his Power, that he should produce into public View the Character and Actions of a Man of True Honour" (1:4). Some of these "materials" may have been proposed by the insisting friends themselves. As Richardson wrote his final novel, he solicited his correspondents for advice, although he did not always use their ideas in the way they expected. One friend who contributed a number of suggestions was the clergyman Philip Skelton. "Let [your hero] suffer […], and that greatly, both in respect to the severity of the suffering, and the manner of bearing it. Your good man will be out of nature, if he is not persecuted: nay, he will be no very good man, if the world do not give him this testimony" (Schellenberg, *Correspondence* 52; 10 May 1751).[116] Such suffering on the hero's part, however, would have emphasized the problem which pervades *Clarissa*: that virtue cannot always defend itself. Indeed, virtue may even draw on itself its own punishment. As Clarissa's friend Anna observes, "[t]he person who will bear much shall have much to bear all the world through" (69), for the less worthy will trespass on their patience. Worse, as Kay argues, the virtue which should inspire emulation

116 Skelton might have been better satisfied with the hero of the German comedy *Minna von Barnhelm* in this respect. G. E. Lessing creates a good man who is indeed persecuted, for a time, because of his virtue. His generosity to the losing side in a recent war appears too good to be true; he is suspected of having accepted bribes, discharged from the army, and forced to await his trial almost penniless.

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may have the opposite effect. Thus, the heroine's siblings, instead of succumbing to "Richardson's favorite moral mechanism, the influence of good examples [...] envy the praise of Clarissa" (Kay 168). The force of example may fail.

The mere depiction of a good man, then, is no adequate answer to *Clarissa*, where tragedy grows out of an allegedly harmonious family in a peaceful neighbourhood. The faults of the Harlowes, while many, are each of them in themselves quotidian. Their interest in money, for example, is a feature they share with Mrs. Howe, who manages ultimately to maintain a loving relationship with her daughter. Jealousy among siblings, too, is not uncommon. Clarissa is shocked to discover that Arabella's envy is "of [...] long standing" (195), but, realistically, the latter's hostility becomes open only when her seemingly perfect younger sister seems to betray faults of her own – the "obstinacy" and preference of a rake of which the Harlowes accuse Clarissa. And Mrs. Harlowe's weakness, her offer of sympathy instead of help, is a kind of maternal love which might even look speciously attractive in different circumstances. Catastrophe strikes not because Clarissa's family is so much worse than average but because the system of duty has no in-built structures of de-escalation in the case of parent-child conflicts. The absoluteness of fatherly authority encourages Mr. Harlowe to arrange a marriage before asking his daughter for her consent, and when Clarissa vehemently refuses, a retreat on his part seems unthinkable to everyone. Moreover, the daughter's duty to obey allows the rest of the family to hide their own motives – envy, greed, cowardice – behind the simple rule of paternal right. Indeed, their arguments were convincing enough for some early readers to feel that in the conflict with Clarissa, their position is only too justifiable (cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 128).

Having illustrated, therefore, that every-day mis-use of the system of duty can lead to tragedy even in the case of a respectable family, Richardson now needs to show how systematic good deeds will lead to the spreading of virtue and to the building of a community where it can prosper. *Grandison* sets about to solve, or at least contain, the conflicts depicted in the previous novels – not by legitimizing rebellion, but by demonstrating how the very conditions that create double-binds can also provide double insurance of good relationships. "In *Grandison*, Richardson returned to his roots, as it were, allowing readers to experience, as he had 13 years earlier in *Pamela*, what is required for 'virtue' to be 'rewarded' in the temporal world of everyday, lived experience" (Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 61). This time, however, he does so focussing on a protagonist who wields real power – someone who not only occupies a high position within the system of duty, but who is able to cement it as a giver of gifts, a negotiator of contracts, and as a friend.

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The project of creating and spreading virtue links *Grandison* to a genre which Alessa Johns discusses in her book *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century*. Texts featuring such utopias – like Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* – differ in crucial ways from classic utopian visions. In introducing the work of "female utopian authors", Johns speaks of "a 'partial vision,' one that eschewed a comprehensive, totalizing plan" (1). The kinds of Utopia which tended to appeal to male writers were "non-places", situated in far-away and fictional lands.[117] Female writers, in contrast, preferred ideal communities imagined as contemporary, situated in foreign countries which really existed, or even in unspecified, but recognizably English, locales (Johns 11). Moreover, instead of being opposites of contemporary society, these communities develop in "a gradual utopian process rather than the sudden imposition of an ideal state along the lines of Thomas More's *Utopia*" (2). Notably, this gradual process is one potentially available to any individual with influence. It does not require an uninhabited island or an army, but can be begun in the midst of the English countryside. This form of utopia is, therefore, one in which women can play an active role. Indeed, Johns links this form of utopia to images which are in accordance with women's domestic occupations, but which lead beyond them:

> Women's utopias of the eighteenth century [...] figured the globalization of utopia through a process of reproduction, or a kind of self-perpetuating replication. I therefore use "reproduction" in its broadest sense, encompassing not only the birth and education of children in order to expand and multiply utopias but also the propagation of utopian ways of life and behavior through imitation and circulation, moral conversion, transcription and duplication (even to the point of plagiarism), and literary mitosis. (2)

All of these features play a role in *Grandison*, and, indeed, many, though not all, of the "feminist utopists" whom Johns discusses were influenced by Richardson's fiction.[118]

117 Johns specifies that "classical utopias were largely written by men, but not all men wrote strictly traditional utopias" (11).

118 The two non-English examples of female Utopian fiction discussed by Johns are Jeanne Marie Leprince de Beaumont's *The New Clarissa* and Sophie von la Roche's *Events at Lake Oneida*. The latter's more famous novel, *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, whose plot and epistolary form are clearly influenced by *Clarissa*, includes reformist schemes which fit well enough into the pattern outlined by Johns, although she calls it "less reformist" (3). The question of influence is less obvious in the case of the English writers discussed – Mary Astell, Sarah Fielding, Sarah Scott, and Mary Hamilton. However, some of Astell's ideas are advocated in Richardson's novels, and Sarah Fielding was a friend of Richardson's.

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Although the hero of *Grandison* returns from his travels seemingly perfect, outshining his companions, the 'reforms' he starts are taken in small steps. Most of the many episodes of this sprawling narrative, as well as parts of its central plot – the double love of the hero –, are preoccupied with the spreading of virtue. This is brought about precisely through acts of imitation; indeed, the language of the last few volumes emphasizes the 'duplication' which results from virtuous imitation. Emily, Sir Charles's ward, becomes "a second Harriet" to the heroine's family, restoring to them their niece and granddaughter (3:321). Harriet herself arrives in her new home as the new Lady Grandison; her married name is not merely the normal sign of her new status, but symbolises her emulation of the last Lady Grandison, the hero's mother (cf. Shepherd 228). And the hero's two love interests, Harriet and Clementina, are constantly identified until they seem to become one: "My Harriet is another Clementina! You [Clementina] are another Harriet! *Sister*-excellencies I have called you to her, to all her relations", Sir Charles exclaims (3:343).

Virtuous actions and reports of them, love and friendship, letters and gifts, circulate in this novel – not excluding literary imitation (for example, through the explicit reference to *Clarissa*, which both Harriet and Charlotte have read, 1:229). By the end of the novel, most of the characters named, even minor ones, are part of a closely woven network of relationships. Even Sir Hargrave's wine-merchant, for example, turns out to be Edward Danby, one of the earliest people to profit from the hero's benevolence (cf. 1:451, 3:142). Sir Hargrave's desire to receive Sir Charles's advice and moral support during his final illness is thus based, on the one hand, on his direct knowledge of him, but is reinforced, on the other hand, through other beneficiaries of the hero's goodness. And through Sir Charles's Irish possessions and Italian connections, the possibility of a "globalizing" virtue becomes real. When, at the end of the novel, three women have recently given birth and the heroine is pregnant, this is only the 'embodied' symbol of a continual process of reproducing virtue, begun long before the start of the novel and continued indefinitely. As Richardson makes clear in one of the appendices to his novel, the novel's final events lead almost seamlessly to the reader's present (3:467). The reform of society has thus already begun and is being continued – ideally with the reader's assistance.

Another aspect of feminist utopianism identified by Johns is its focus on "themes that are subordinated in the mainstream tradition, such as love and friendship, education, and cooperation" (7). These are also themes which are present in all of Richardson's novels, but especially in *Grandison*. In the continuation of *Pamela*, as well as in large portions of *Grandison*, these themes supply the place of plot in the more traditional sense (just as plot

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is limited in *Millenium Hall*). The gradual forming of social bonds between the women surrounding Sir Charles, for example, modifies and sometimes almost pushes to the side the connection he may or may not form through marriage. Similarly, extended debates on gender relationships, social duties, politeness and similar topics acquire a value in themselves which far exceeds the importance of the conclusions reached when such a debate ends, or rather, is suspended.

Johns differentiates between four different forms of women's utopias. The first of these are "'intimate utopia[s]'", "writings focusing on love and friendship" (7) – often, in fact, "a single instance of female friendship" (8) – while neglecting "socioeconomic and organizational elements" (8). Secondly, "plans for systematizing women's learning", such as Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, constitute "educational utopias" (9). Thirdly, texts like Delarivier Manley's *New Atalantis* belong to the category of "anti-utopian satire" (10). *Grandison* corresponds most closely to Johns's fourth type and the focus of her study, "'invented societies'" (7), small communities, often under the leadership of benevolent aristocratic women, who reform society through the gradual reform of the individuals that come into contact with them. These societies

> take into account the full range of human needs—material, economic, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual; they construct environments, beautiful and efficient, that are to foster happiness and convenience; they posit social, economic, and emotional systems that are to offer fulfilling human ties; and they establish means to perpetuate the society. [… T]heir authors seek first and foremost to represent a world that offers satisfactions in many areas and for whole groups of people, and they delineate how that world can be instituted within their own. (10)

Grandison differs from this model in several ways, most crucially by assigning the leadership to a man rather than a group of women. Furthermore, the novel does not contain "[p]lans for such complete societies" (10). In contrast to texts like *Millenium Hall*, no community with a framework of rules is instituted, and the network of relationships which is formed is based on ties of family and friendship. The people that come under the hero's spell are his relatives and dependants; they meet him on the Grand Tour or, at the most adventurous, on the road to be saved by him, like Jeronymo or Harriet. He institutes no new societies; instead, his endeavour is to guard and extend his heritage – material as well as non-material (in the case of his mother's legacy). However, as in Johns's invented societies, the influence of Sir Charles spreads steadily. Unlike Fielding's heroes, who withdraw from a vicious world to the countryside, Richardson's hero uses Grandison Hall as the centre from which he keeps

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mutually beneficent contact with the world. Moreover, the novel shares the invented society's emphasis on universal benevolence, the desire to shape the existing community – the country estate – in such a way as to benefit all, and the focus on "fulfilling human ties" which, it is implied, will long outlast the end of the novel.

As a male writer – and one embracing patriarchy – Richardson's vision is hardly a "feminist" utopia. However, Johns's work on female utopists helps define the features which make his novels, especially *Grandison*, attractive even to those women who took issue with some of his moral strictures. Although Sir Charles is the dominant reforming figure, ordering his landed estates and initiating contact between most of the novel's protagonists, other characters participate actively and spontaneously in the development of the community. Indeed, Sir Charles himself has been formed by his mother's example, and the (not always so) subtle pressure he exerts on people needing reform, although efficiently backed up with the authority of money and masculinity, takes forms which can be copied by any individual, offering a model for female reformers as well. By creating a male, patriarchal centre to the novel, Richardson emphasised the need for patriarchal authority. However, this authority works in subtle ways; instead of regulating (female) behaviour through strict rules and unceasing surveillance, Richardson's paragons – male as well as female – "work with the personalities in the group" (Johns 15). Johns contrasts "ideas of divine right and patriarchal authority" with concepts of "a constitutional monarchy and commercial economy" (19), which, according to her, formed the basis for feminist utopias. However, *Grandison* proves that this opposition is not absolute; indeed, patriarchy and feminism can be mutually contingent (cf. also Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 91). The affirmation of patriarchy in *Grandison* is combined with emphasis on individual (female) agency and (mixed gender) reformative group solidarity. Richardson constructs a double vision of patriarchy and feminism, subordination and empowerment – in short, a better, utopian, world.[119]

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119 Intriguingly, the patterns of this utopian world correspond quite closely to patterns detailed in Deborah Tannen's study of behavioural differences between contemporary American men and women, published in 1990. According to Tannen, men tend to strive more for freedom and respect while women strive for intimacy. Sir Charles, the independent and respected man of action, as well as judge of others' actions, achieves the first, while the women around him achieve the latter.

3.1 The harmonious body

The joyous, utopian atmosphere of *Grandison* is indicated already by the first few letters. For Dussinger, "[s]exual love radiates its force mysteriously in the text, charging every material thing with erotic significance – clothing, food, and even pen and ink" ("Love and Consanguinity" 525); this statement, which he uses with regard to Richardson's novels in general, is especially apt for his last. McMaster agrees: "[t]he equivalent for me of the drama and the sensational interest that balance the overt moralizing is the felt presence of the body" ("*Sir Charles*" 248).[120] Indeed, the body is enlisted in the business of "moralizing". "The proper relation of mind to body" (249) is shown to consist not in the negation of physical desires but in the acknowledgment of the body, combined with virtuous control of both mind and "person", or outward beauty (*OED*, "person, *n.*" 4). As McMaster notes, *Grandison* (and indeed Richardson's other novels) is "remarkably explicit about the body" (250). However, this explicitness is not tied to corruption, although the celebration of physical love affords some of the satisfactions one would normally associate with amatory fiction (and although the diseased body is not excluded from the picture). Instead, it is enlisted to celebrate the rewards of virtue in an ideal world. Virtuous characters can enjoy the body because it *is* virtuous, just as the love of Milton's Adam and Eve is innocent before the fall.[121]

The novel starts with a situation faintly reminiscent of that in *Clarissa*, but without the threatening overtones. Like Clarissa, Harriet Byron is the paragon of the neighbourhood, able to choose between several (if rather unattractive) suitors. And like Clarissa, Harriet's fame has spread far beyond her own neighbourhood. However, if Clarissa's fame is in part the cause of her tragedy, Harriet's is, at the most, a nuisance to herself as she has to fend off unwelcome suitors. Lovelace was attracted by Clarissa's reputation and then compelled to test its foundations – for him, the reputed "angel" cannot coexist with the mere "woman". Harriet's lovers, in contrast, believe in the possibility of a harmonious relationship between body and soul. Indeed, the novel begins with Mr. Greville's praise of Harriet's harmonious "mind and person", expressed not only in her

120 Ian Watt's classic *The Rise of the Novel* probably reacts to similar aspects in *Pamela* when claiming that it "gratified the reading public with the combined attractions of a sermon and a striptease" (179). Somewhat surprisingly, Watt also makes the claim that "the new ideology granted [most women] a total immunity from sexual feelings", and that Pamela becomes the prototype of the literary heroine who "is devoid of any feelings towards her admirer until the marriage knot is tied" (166, 167).

121 Indeed, the happy marriage between Pamela and Mr. B. evokes "the Happiness of the first Pair before the Fall" (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 225).

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smiles and open countenance, but also in her singing and dancing. Strikingly, the rakish Greville associates these comparatively sensual accomplishments with her inner worth. Following praise of her fine hands and their skill at pen, needle, and harpsichord, he continues to his female correspondent: “O Madam! women *have* Souls. I now am convinced they have. Given us for temporary purposes only, I dare own to your Ladyship, that once I doubted it.—And have I not seen her dance! Have I not heard her sing!—But indeed, mind and person, she is all harmony” (13).[122] The harmonious body has replaced the angelic mind threatened by the tainting body, even for a rake.

Even the display of Harriet’s body in masquerade dress, which becomes momentarily disgusting to Harriet after her abduction, ultimately leads to a union of minds – as Sir Charles says in answer to Harriet’s confession that she had loved him before he loved her, he himself had fallen in love with her at first sight. The hero himself is celebrated in terms of body as well as mind when Harriet describes his beauty in details reminiscent of a *blazon.*[123] “What is beauty in a man to me?” Harriet asks rhetorically – but only after giving a detailed account of his figure, the shape of his face, the “manly sunniness” of his complexion, and his “fine teeth” and mouth (1:181). In contrast to the good looks of Lovelace, the hero’s body, like the heroine’s, is also an expression of his beautiful mind.

The celebration of the beautiful body is supported by the celebration of physically expressed affection. The parts of the body which can be seen and touched by the chaste are caressed; friends and relations offer their hands, embrace each other, and kiss. Critics disagree over the extent to which physical contact was ‘normal’ in the eighteenth century. Simon Varey states that “[s]ocial contact is not usually physical contact” (204), while McMaster claims that customs like the “routine ‘saluting’ […] keep[…] before us the very frequent body contact in genteel society” (“*Sir Charles*” 251). Whatever the norm outside the novel, within it Sir Charles leads the way in appreciating (decorous) physical

122 John Gregory would caution his readers that “Many a girl dancing in the gaiety and innocence of her heart, is thought to discover a spirit she little dreams of” (57–8). Richardson would perhaps have agreed, but there is no hint of this anxiety in his novels. For a discussion of music in *Grandison*, cf. Doody, *A Natural Passion* 352–64.

123 Blazons had appeared both in *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* and *Clarissa*, but with rather more disturbing overtones. Lovelace’s of Clarissa, which describes her appearance when she opens the garden door to him (399–400), prefigures his attempt to possess her body (cf. Shepherd 155). Mr. B.’s comparative blazon of his wife and the Countess Dowager (451–3) is more ambiguous – it functions both as flirtation and as a safe-guard against seduction, since he gives a (slight) preference to Pamela. His praise of his wife leads to the Countess Dowager’s visit to the B.s’ home, which triggers their marital crisis and its happy resolution.

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contact. It is a mark of special disfavour when Sir Charles refuses to give his "assisting hand" (2:53) to the kneeling Mrs. Giffard, his uncle's kept mistress whom he helps dismiss genteelly. When he approves of women, he regularly takes their hands, as when he leads Miss Danby, the niece of a dead merchant friend, into his study to talk in private and sits down next to her, still holding her hand (1:452). He is gratified when she, at taking leave, "gratefully returned the pressure [of his hand]; but in a manner so modest (recollecting herself into some little confusion) that shewed gratitude had possession of her whole heart, and set her above the forms of her Sex" (1:456). Sir Charles's touch, both modest and attractive, can be safely enjoyed even by those women who would draw back from the approach of rakes. In a conversation on "Love and Courtship", Sir Charles represents himself as a connoisseur in this respect:

> For my own sake, I would not, by a too early declaration, drive a Lady into reserves; since that would be to rob myself of those innocent freedoms, and of that complacency, to which an honourable Lover might think himself entitled; and which might help him [Don't be affrighted, Ladies!] to develop the plaits and folds of the female heart. (1:429; brackets original)

The parallel to Lovelace's playful but anxious searching of Clarissa's feelings, or to Sir Thomas's brutal taunts of his daughters, is obvious. However, whereas the rakes' approaches constitute threats, Sir Charles's chaste use of his power turns courtship into a safe yet erotic game. The "reformed rake" was perceived as attractive because he "retain[ed] the wit, manners and sensuality that allowed him to fulfil that role in the first place" (J.A. Smith 1). Sir Charles, without ever having been a rake, nevertheless possesses the same qualities.

Some of the most extended and intense descriptions of physical proximity, however, are reserved for family relations – as, indeed, blood relationship, friendship and love converge in this novel.[124] When Sir Charles returns to his home after his father's death, the first meeting between the siblings is described with an intensity surpassing even many of the love scenes. As Harriet reports the Grandison sisters' first impression,

> [t]he graceful youth of seventeen, with fine curling auburn locks waving upon his shoulders [...] they remembred: And, forgetting the womanly beauties into which their own features were ripen'd in the same space of time, they seemed not to expect that manly stature and air, and that equal vivacity and intrepidity, which every one who sees this brother, admires in his noble aspect [...]. (1:359)

124 Wendy Jones has even suggested that Charlotte is in love with her brother (98).

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The siblings, separated for years, meet almost as strangers, but strangers with attractive, potentially erotic bodies. Overcome by a mixture of joy and fear – after all, Sir Charles had written to their father that his sisters' reportedly undutiful behaviour should "receive no countenance from [him]" (1:352) – Caroline almost faints, while Charlotte flees into the adjoining room, displaying an intensity of emotion which is usually reserved for encounters with fathers or lovers.[125] Sir Charles follows Charlotte,

> his arm round Miss Caroline's waist, soothing her; and, with eyes of expectation, My Charlotte! said he, his inviting hand held out, and hastening towards the settee. She then found her feet; and, throwing her arms about his neck, he folded both sisters to his bosom: Receive, my dearest sisters, receive your brother, your friend; assure yourselves of my unabated love.
> That assurance, they said, was balm to their hearts; and when each was seated, he, sitting over-against them, look'd first on one, then on the other; and taking each by the hand; Charming women! said he: How I admire my sisters! You *must* have minds answerable to your persons. What pleasure, what pride, shall I take in my sisters!
> My dear Charlotte! said Caroline, taking her sister's other hand, has not our brother, now we see him near, all the brother in his aspect? His goodness only looks stronger, and more perfect: What was I afraid of? (1:359)

By the end of this passage, the Grandison siblings form a triangle, their mutual love expressed through their connected bodies. Although Sir Charles has "all the brother in his aspect", his admiration of his sisters' bodies, and through them their minds, his loving support and his caresses, promise well for the "sister" – as he calls both Harriet and Clementina many times – whom he will finally choose as his wife.

Similar tableaux recur throughout the novel, often involving the hero either as participant or as spectator. One example is the scene after Clementina, partly recovered from her madness and officially allowed to marry Sir Charles, rejects him instead. For once, Sir Charles is almost overcome, "[his] mind tortured; how greatly tortured! […] Never was I so little present to myself, as on this occasion". His distress, however, is still surpassed by Clementina's, who fears that he is "offended with her" (2:567). In their mutual distress and admiration, the lovers meet and touch in a sentimental tableau:

> I kneeled to her, as she kneeled; and clasping her in my arms, Forgive you, madam! Inimitable woman! More than woman!—Can you forgive me for having presumed, and for still presuming, to hope such an angel mine!

125 See, for example, the eponymous heroine's reunion with her father in Burney's *Evelina* (317–20).

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> She was ready to faint; and cast her arms about me to support herself. Camilla held to her her salts:—I myself, for the first time, was sensible of benefit from them, as my cheek was joined to hers, and bathed with her tears.
> […]
> I raised her; and leading her to a chair, involuntarily kneeled on one knee to her, holding both her hands in mine as she sat; and looking up to her with eyes that spoke not my heart, if they were not full of love and reverence.
> Camilla had run down to the Marchioness—O madam! it seems she said—*Such* a scene! Hasten, hasten up. They will faint in each other's arms. Virtuous Love! how great is thy glory! (2:567–8)

"Virtuous love" has here the power to transform the dangerous "warmth" of the earlier novels into an image which celebrates the power of love and the attraction of bodies at the very time that virtue triumphs over erotic love. The scene demonstrates, moreover, the momentary equality of hero and Italian heroine, expressed in the similar choreography of their motions: "I kneeled to her, as she kneeled", "I myself […] was sensible of benefit from [her salts]", "They will faint in each other's arms". The hero's intense bodily reaction testifies to the sincerity and depth of his love, which is usually under such control that it requires sophisticated speculation to determine to what extent he is in love with either Clementina or Harriet.

After the intense eroticism of Sir Charles's and Clementina's anguished farewell, Harriet's claims as his true love need to be re-established. There is a curious gap between the fifth and sixth volumes, as the high-strained emotion of the Italian scenes is replaced with written discussions of Clementina's wishes to enter a nunnery. Although it becomes clear very quickly that Sir Charles will now make his addresses to Harriet – as the reader has suspected –, the hero's actions are at first reported from some distance. Harriet writes to Charlotte: "Do you know what is become of your brother? My grandmamma Shirley has seen his Ghost; and talked with it near an hour; and then it vanished" (3:15). Soon, however, this "ghost" materialises. He enters into details of the financial transactions of the projected marriage, and explains his "double Love" (3:76) to Harriet and her family: "The heart of the man before you, madam (to [Harriet]) in sincerity and frankness, emulates your own". Therefore, "something […] may be necessary to be said, in this audience, of the state of my own heart" (3:53). Sir Charles's detailed description of his feelings for both Clementina and Harriet at different times explain his earlier actions, but his careful distinctions also have some of the effect of Mr. Collins's infamous recapitulation of his "reasons for marrying" Elizabeth Bennett (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 103). The orderly account which he is able to give of his emotions is unsatisfying after

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his impassioned reaction to Clementina's rejection of him. Once again, it is the body which must speak for him.

Repeatedly, he embraces and kisses Harriet; often, this occurs in the context of negotiating for the wedding day (Sir Charles is eager for an early date, Harriet wants to wait), or in the context of Harriet's fears that Clementina may repent of her rejection of the hero:

> Let me have reason to think [Harriet says], that my happiness will not be the misfortune of a more excellent woman, and it shall be my endeavour to make the man happy who *only* can make me so.
> He clasped me in his arms with an ardor—that displeased me not—on reflexion—But at the time startled me. He then thanked me again on one knee. I held out the hand he held not in his, with intent to raise him; for I could not speak. He received it as a token of favour; kissed it with ardor; arose; *again* pressed my cheek with his lips. I was too much surprised to repulse him with anger: But was he not too free? Am I a prude, my dear? (3:101)

Another time, leading Harriet "into the Cedar-parlour to talk to her",

> I am jealous, my Love, said he; putting his arm round me: You seemed loth to retire with me. Forgive me: but thus I punish you, whenever you give me cause: And, dear Lady G. he downright kissed me—My lip; and not my cheek—and in so fervent a way—I tell you every-thing, my Charlotte—I could have been angry—had I known *how*, from surprize. Before I could recollect myself, he withdrew his arm; and, resuming his usual respectful air, it would have made me look affected, had I then taken notice of it. But I don't remember any instance of the like freedom used to Lady Clementina. (3:142)

Sir Charles's "fervency" expresses the sincerity of his love for Harriet – and this love clearly includes sexual desire (expressed also in his eager comment on the night of the wedding: "My Harriet [...] returns not this night", 3:237). In the safe relationship of honourable courtship, the "warmth" of the rakes Mr. B. and Lovelace can be enacted without bad consequences. Indeed, Harriet's surprise, and her mixed feelings – embarrassment, pleasure, even mortification ("I don't remember any instance of the like freedom used to Lady Clementina")[126] – testify not only to her modesty, but also to the affinity between Sir Charles's advances and those of a Lovelace. The paragon of male virtue, who appeared as a sentimental lover vis-à-vis Clementina, now shines as a "moderate rake".[127]

126 McMaster, however, interprets Harriet's comment as simple satisfaction that Sir Charles becomes more intimate with her than with Clementina ("*Sir Charles*" 260–1).

127 In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson asked: "And, were I to attempt to draw a good man, [... m]ust he be a moderate rake? – Must he qualify himself for the ladies'

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There is clearly some danger in advances which the surprized woman cannot repulse. The hero's very physical courtship of Harriet comes as close as possible to "warm scenes" in amatory fiction without surpassing the bounds of virtue.

Nevertheless, the warmth of physically expressed affection is not reserved merely for relationships between men and women. The love between women is similarly expressed in physical terms, although somewhat less fervently. For example, shortly before Harriet's wedding, Emily cries and is comforted in the heroine's arms. At this moment, Sir Charles and other family members enter.

> Sir Charles went to the two young Ladies. Harriet kept her seat, her arms folded about Emily; Emily's glowing face in her bosom.
> Sweet emotion! said he, my Emily in tears of joy!—What a charming picture!—O my Miss Byron, how does your tenderness to this amiable child oblige me! I sever you not; clasping his generous arms about them both. (3:207)

This "picture" anticipates a family tableau, with the father/husband embracing his future wife and their "child". However, a similar tableau occurs later between the hero and the two heroines for whom he felt his "double love":

> Then, taking my [i. e. Harriet's] hand; And will *you*, Lady Grandison, said [Clementina], be my Sister? Shall Sir Charles Grandison be my Brother? Will you return with us into Italy? Shall we cultivate on both sides a family-friendship to the end of our lives?
> I threw my arms about her neck, tears mingling on the cheeks of both: It will be my ambition, my *great* ambition, to deserve the distinction you give me—My Sister, my Friend, the Sister of my best Friend, love him as he honours you; and me for his sake, as I will you for your own, as well as his, to the end of my life.
> Sir Charles clasped his arms about us both. His eyes spoke his admiration of her, and his delight in each. Angels he called us. Then seating us, he took the Count's hand; and, leading him to her, Let me, madam, present to you the Count of Belvedere, as a man equally to be pitied and esteemed. He yields to your magnanimity with a greatness of mind like your own. Receive then, acknowledge, the *friend* in him. He will endeavour to forego a dearer hope. (3:392)

This scene is rich in associations. Shepherd has shown how the hero of *Grandison* arranges those around him into "pictures", including family pictures and conversation pieces. Like the patriarchs on family paintings of the time, he arranges, participates in, and enjoys these images (cf. 217–8). Comparing

favour by taking any liberties that are criminal?" (Sabor, *Correspondence* 170; 14 Mar. 1751). His discomfort stemmed both from Lady Bradshaigh's tendency to like Lovelace too much (shared even by her more serious sister, Lady Echlin), and from his friend Colley Cibber's incredulous laughter at the idea of a "male-virgin" for a hero (170).

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this scene with those discussed above, we can also see how the novel starts with images of eroticised family intimacy, leads over to love scenes, and then re-channels erotic love into friendship. Clementina, once Harriet's rival and the hero's love interest, is now a "sister" to both. However, the tableau – a "triangular composition" frequent in this novel (Shepherd 219–20) – is open. It has the potential to encompass the rest of the Porretta family ("Shall we cultivate on both sides a family-friendship") and even Clementina's suitor, the count of Belvedere. Sir Charles leads him to Clementina as a "friend". We have seen, however, how family relationships tend to be eroticised. Conversely, both Harriet and Sir Charles establish 'family relationships' to those who desire connections through marriage; Harriet, for example, calls the dowager Lady D. her "mother" when she rejects her proposals on behalf of her son, and Sir Charles initially calls Harriet his "third sister". This use of family relationship opens a space for friendship between those who, due to gender difference and erotic interest, should otherwise avoid any close relationship. If Sir Charles now presents the count to Clementina as her friend, just after having confirmed the 'blood relationship' between himself, his wife, and the woman who might have become his wife, this 'introduction' has the potential to be associated with any of these relationships. The hero's hope, it is clear, is that Clementina will accept the count as her husband, but in the meantime, his status as "friend" enables her to allow and perhaps enjoy his company without immediately accepting him as a lover.

Finally, it should be noted that the *initial* impulse of the tableau comes from the two women. Although Sir Charles later takes control of the picture, he appreciates and confirms the validity of Clementina's and Harriet's wishes for their relationship. Male approval and endorsement of women's relationships and desires is a running theme in this novel and provides a strong contrast with the earlier two novels (and the past of this one, represented by Sir Thomas) where, as we have seen, men tend to interfere with relationships between women and their friends or children. It would therefore be reductive to read the novel's presentation of the eroticised female body, viewed by an approving male spectator, simply as a covert expression of women's objectification and male control. Rather, these images allow a reconciliation, as it were, between such a patriarchal 'framing' of women on the one hand and women's legitimate desire for their own networks on the other.

The harmonious body encompasses – and perhaps is epitomized in – the maternal body, now presented as healthy, life-giving and safe, rather than as tainted and jeopardised. Indeed, the woman whose pregnancy and motherhood is depicted in some detail – Lady G. – is also very robust (Harriet remarks that

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she rarely needs smelling salts, 1:402). In the often-discussed breastfeeding scene towards the end of *Grandison*, bonds between mother and child, father and child, and husband/lover and wife are mutually strengthened. Charlotte's nursing of her daughter is initially an act confined to the female sphere: "I intended that he should know nothing of the matter" (3:402). Lord G.'s unexpected intrusion recalls earlier instances where his caresses are resented as too public and ill-timed by his wife; now, with barely covered breasts and a baby to take care of, Charlotte is more vulnerable than before (cf. Chaber, "'This Affecting Subject'" 245). Lord G., "trembling however", removes the handkerchief which covers her breast (3:403). The "wretch", as his wife calls him on describing the scene, recalls an eager lover when he uncovers a beautiful woman's breasts, leading Albert Rivero "to wonder whether Lady G.'s newly discovered love and respect for him stem from her discovery that her seemingly meek husband is a rake at heart, that she has after all lucked out and married a Lovelace rather than a Mr. Hickman" (219). Another image – Acteon surprising Diana – briefly evokes associations of sexual transgression as well as (male and female) aggression and violence. Yet Lord G.'s gaze is drawn not merely to the bosom as the site of erotic attraction but also – primarily – to the sight of maternal tenderness and care: "Let me see you clasp the precious gift [...] to that lovely bosom". Charlotte, indeed, is "not half angry enough" (3:403). The scene leads to the fullest and tenderest exchange of mutual appreciation and understanding between Lord and Lady G.

Critics are divided in their evaluation of the episode. As the most rebellious woman among the cast of 'good' female characters, Charlotte must undergo a process of reform; in the most pessimistic readings, the breastfeeding scene functions "in a taming-of-the-shrew paradigm" (Chaber, "'This Affecting Subject'" 242). For Lois Chaber, it is part of a "punitive trajector[y]" and, according to her, Charlotte is "silenc[ed]" (238, 242). Similarly, for Gwilliam, the scene shows that Charlotte "is ultimately entangled in the domestic world of submission, childbirth, and maternity" (144). More optimistic readings see Charlotte's development as desirable, taken all in all. McMaster, for example, comments on the scene:

> In setting out to justify an arranged marriage for an intelligent and rebellious woman, and to convince us that even such a woman may become happy in her male-dominated society through a full integration of her active mind with her own physical processes, Richardson took on a difficult task. On the whole, he succeeds rather well. ("*Sir Charles*" 266)

The cautious terms of McMaster's positive appraisal are very much to the point. Charlotte is not – and cannot be – allowed to play the role of shrew to the

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end. Once she is married, the question is not whether she will continue to rebel against her husband, but whether she can fulfil her role as wife in such a way as is beneficial to all – including herself. Chaber has stated with regret that, "[a]s a consequence of this episode, Charlotte is defined totally in terms of her services to others", and this is mostly true ("'This Affecting Subject'" 246). However, this 'fate' is surely one which Lady G. shares with the hero himself, who is defined almost entirely in terms of his role as "the best of Husbands, [...] the most dutiful of Sons; [...] the most affectionate of Brothers; the most faithful of Friends" (3:462). As Latimer observes, "[t]he creation of obligation is key to success in this novel". If Charlotte manages to "perform motherhood graciously and visibly", she, like her brother, has found this key (Latimer, *Making Gender* 183–4). Indeed, she is never literally silenced: she continues to write letters very much in her old style, even as she "is a charming nurse", "admire[d] of all women" by her brother's friend Jeronymo, and thoroughly approved of by Harriet (3:460).

In *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, a jealous husband and lover, respectively, interfere with maternal duty either in practice or imagination. The danger of being prevented from doing one's duty is the most painful consequence of women's subordinate status, and nowhere more painful than when it interferes with the relationship between mother and child, as the examples of Pamela and Mrs. Harlowe suggest. It is significant, therefore, that Lady G. *chooses* to breastfeed her daughter, a decision which she makes without consulting her husband, and indeed without his knowledge. Nevertheless, Lord G., in this respect a better father not only than Lovelace, but than Mr. B., spontaneously feels and acknowledges the merit of her act.[128] It is noteworthy that it is his aunt "Lady Gertrude [who] had taught him to wish that a mother would *be* a mother" (3:403). Female and male agency converge in this scene. In her role as mentor, one woman – Lord G.'s maiden aunt – "teaches" him correct values; another woman, Lady G., decides to act upon the same values. The two women's behaviour causes the man's exemplary use of his power. Lord G. can only endorse the choice which has already been made, but, through this action, he both justifies and confirms his authority. As Charlotte states at the end of her letter:

> What a scene is here!—I will not read it over. If it requires a blush, do you, my dear [Harriet], blush for me: I am hardened—And shall not perhaps, were I to reperuse it, my *maternity* so kindly acknowleged, so generously accepted, by my Lord G. be able to blush for myself. (3:404)

128 For a juxtaposition of the imagined breastfeeding scene in *Clarissa* and the actual one in *Grandison*, see also Kukorelly, "Samuel Richardson's Visual Rhetoric" 278–80.

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Charlotte is ready to value her husband for "generously accepting" her maternity; she appreciates his behaviour as a father who is ready to share his wife's body with his child. On his part, he is able to recognise the good wife in the tender mother: "You never, never, had malice or ill-nature in what I called *your* petulance" (3:403). Recognising "the mother", moreover, does not lead to the rejection of sexuality; indeed, Charlotte's playful comments on blushing signify both the erotic nature of the scene she has just recorded and her awareness that, as a wife, she is entitled to enjoy this. The maternal body is sexualised here as it is in *Clarissa* – but unlike *Clarissa*, this does not lead to lust and death. Instead, it contributes to increased intimacy and tenderness between *all* members of the nuclear family. In Levine's terms, the hierarchy envisaged by Lovelace gives way to a vision of a network so closely-knit that it is transformed into a harmonious whole.

3.2 Cross-gender solidarity

How can this eroticised mind-body exist in safety? And how can it grow out of the same world in which Clarissa suffered? The world of both novels is essentially the same, and some of the characters, as well as some of the plot lines, are consciously shaped as parallels. Thus, Richardson conceived of Harriet as a happier Clarissa (cf. Shepherd 201), and the story of the virtuous Lady Grandison's marriage to the rakish Sir Thomas re-imagines a storyline which could have been Clarissa's. Indeed, one of Richardson's correspondents had suggested that the very best cautionary tale against the proverb that a reformed rake makes the best husband would be to depict precisely such a marriage (cf. *Selected Letters* 123; 21 Jan. 1748/9, to Solomon Lowe). Clarissa, giving her reasons why she will not marry Lovelace after the rape, anticipates the sufferings of Sir Thomas's daughters; she cannot marry a man, she explains, who will be a bad father (1116). And Richardson himself anticipated Lady Grandison's continuing love for her unworthy husband when, in one of his letters, he insists that Clarissa would have made a good wife even to the brutish Solmes, despite her aversion to him (cf. 1.2). The same conflicts, too, threaten to emerge on the margins of *Grandison*, as Sir Thomas's daughters face the same pressure to marry for money as did Clarissa, but the mercenary and violent nature of the compulsion is even more obvious here, and, apparently, the Grandison sisters lack even the ineffectual help of a Mrs. Harlowe or a Mrs. Hervey. More in the foreground, Clementina's conflict with her family is another, happier, version of the Harlowes' conflict (cf. Latimer, *Making Gender* 178). These similarities,

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however, result in happy marriages and family unions, as one character after the other either dies or voluntarily adopts virtuous behaviour.

Virtue is safely established in *Grandison*, but it depends on those who safeguard it – most importantly, on the hero and his mother. Crucially, the spreading of virtue is brought about through the cooperation of men and women, and of 'masculine' and 'feminine' values. The hero's mind is formed through the agency of a good woman, who also prepares her daughters to accept the guidance of the good man she has helped to form. The mutual encouragement of good men and good women creates a world where it is no longer necessary to shun men, "a world where an angel can comfortably unfurl its wings and be confident of having an influence" (Clery 155). In the following, I will trace the ways in which cross-gender relationships in both *Clarissa* and *Grandison* lead to virtue and happiness. While expressions of solidarity between men and women tend to be muted in the former novel, they move into the foreground in the latter.

Writing of gender relations in *Clarissa*, Varey notes that "Clarissa's resistance to Lovelace certainly becomes woman's opposition to man, as Clarissa's will poignantly underlines: her corpse 'shall not be touched but by those of my own sex'" (193 n.24). Likewise, Todd explains that "Anna is so insistent on the single life for herself and Clarissa because she sees all dealings between the sexes as warfare" (52). How necessary this is in *Clarissa* is shown, for example, by one of Lovelace's many comments which use his relations with Clarissa as a starting point for social comment. His musings come after he has been moved to tears ("I even sobbed", 695) with Clarissa's joy at the prospect of a reconciliation between her and her family, which, she hopes, will take place after her marriage to Lovelace. He then ponders:

> But this effect of her joy on such an occasion gives me a high notion of what that virtue must be (what other name can I call it?) which in a mind so capable of delicate transport, should be able to make so charming a creature in her very bloom, all frost and snow to every advance of love from the man she hates not. This must be all from education too—must it not, Belford? Can *education* have stronger force in a woman's heart than *nature*?—Sure it cannot. But if it can, how entirely right are parents to cultivate their daughters' minds, and to inspire them with notions of reserve and distance to our sex; and indeed to make them think highly of their own? For pride is an excellent substitute, let me tell thee, where virtue shines not out, as the sun, in its own unborrowed lustre. (695)

Characteristically, Lovelace is looking for something other than "nature" to explain the virtue which has moved him. Equally characteristically, he uses

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the supposed "pride" of all, or most, "virtuous" women to end his account of Clarissa's joy. By calling into question the reality of the virtue he has witnessed, he prepares for his admission, at the outset of his next letter, that 'Captain Tomlinson', who has given Clarissa hopes of a reconciliation, is, in fact, his tool Patrick McDonald. For Lovelace, women's false virtue, based on pride, neatly complements men's manipulation of appearances. In such a situation, clearly, "reserve and distance" are necessary for women. Towards Sir Charles, they become *un*necessary (even Lady Olivia, who offers to become his mistress, is saved from dishonour by the hero's refusal, cf. 2:646–7). On the other hand, "pride", as we shall see in a later chapter, is out of the question vis-à-vis such a paragon of a man. Nevertheless, even in *Clarissa*, as will appear, there are hints that the heroine's personal tragedy does not imply that the world is uniformly evil.

Several discussions of Richardson's second novel have focused on its bleakness. Eagleton, for example, comments that the dying Clarissa "has understood well enough that this is no society for a woman to live in" (76).[129] The "malevolent world" of the novel provides no safe space for a truly virtuous woman (Todd 11); this, in turn, amounts to an utter condemnation of this world, according to Belford: "the decree is certainly gone out. The world is unworthy of her!" (1299). However, in many ways, poetic justice is observed meticulously at the end of the novel. The bad are punished, the good are rewarded, and if the good suffer through being deprived of Clarissa in this world, they are at least comforted to know that their loss is her gain, since she must now be in heaven. Her exemplary death provides assurance of her eternal happiness, as well as an example to all those who are good already or who are capable of reform. Yet Clarissa's influence is shown to reach to this life as well. Her last will emphasises the worth even of material goods (including various works of art), as well as distinguishing those who have been kind to her (cf. Reeves). Her legacy, however, reaches beyond those material gifts.

Before Clarissa's death, Belford muses that her suffering is an indication that heaven exists, since otherwise, Clarissa (and Socrates) could not have suffered as they do. This reflection is a motive for turning to religion. It is, however, little calculated to inspire optimism concerning this world; taken to its extreme, this thought might well lead to an entire rejection of it – to saintly death rather than a saintly life. What is needed is an assurance that virtue can spread, something which Belford, as we have seen earlier, is inclined to doubt. His early pessimistic

129 The BBC film version similarly emphasises the depravity of *Clarissa's* world by cutting many of the characters who offer help or sympathy to the heroine, as well as by suppressing the momentary remorse shown by many of Lovelace's associates.

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attitude towards the spreading of virtue runs counter to the biblical injunctions that men and women should "[b]e fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1.28). If marriage and procreation lead only to death and physical as well as moral decay, then the relationship between the sexes is, perhaps, best conceptualised as a 'warfare' indeed. And while the first part of Paul's injunction that "the man [was not] created for the woman: but the woman for the man" (1 *Cor.* 11.9) corresponds well enough with the attitude of the men in *Clarissa*, the second part may reasonably be doubted, since these same men are usually unable truly to 'profit' from the virtue of the women they (wish to) call their own.

It is, however, Belford himself who finally provides the assurance that a different kind of relationship between the sexes is possible by "becom[ing] at once the Executor of *Clarissa*'s Will, and [...] the Heir to her Principles" (Sarah Fielding, *Remarks* 40). Surprisingly, the ending of *Clarissa*, with its generally dark perspective on male authority figures, also provides an example of successful cross-gender friendship and influence. Although the exercise of virtue and its spreading through example are shown as precarious, the growing respect between Belford and Clarissa signals a way in which good can survive in an imperfect world (cf. Reeves 608). Like Pamela and Sir Charles, Clarissa is shown to be essential to the community she is a part of. Her tragedy leads to a loss to the community, and her increasing serenity at the approach of her death corresponds with her attempts to make it up to those connected to her – not only by a distribution of her possessions, but also, explicitly, by passing on her responsibility for others. As she writes to Belford in one of her 'posthumous' letters:

> And now, sir, having the presumption to think that an *useful* member is lost to society by means of the unhappy step which has brought my life so soon to its period, let me hope that I may be an humble instrument in the hands of Providence to reform a man of your parts and abilities; and then I shall think that loss will be more abundantly repaired to the world, while it will be, by God's goodness, my gain [...]. (1368)

Clarissa has, as she claims, weaned herself from the world; even her love for Anna begins to turn to the expectation of future, eternal, companionship and away from their worldly friendship. Her fear of damnation has given place to her confident expectation of God's mercy. Yet Clarissa's eagerness for death is not, in the end, a denial or despair of life, however much this may be so initially. On the contrary, in her practical preparations for death, she re-affirms the very worldly bonds from which she weans herself. In her will, she mentions almost every single person the reader knows her to have been connected to, and her bequests are measures either of her duty to the benefited, of their merit and her

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love of them, or of each of these. Clarissa's will, however, is not confined to what remains – instead, it leads to what may become dynamic, developing good. Her poor's fund will be a source of continuous charity. As the editor assures us in the afterword, it becomes the vehicle for other benefactresses to channel their good offices.

In her last – written – words to Belford, Clarissa points to a perhaps more crucial influence: by being instrumental in reforming a rake, she makes up her loss "more abundantly". Her words are perhaps conventionally self-deprecatory, yet they can take on more specific meaning. Belford has been a rake; his reform will mean *both* that less evil is committed and that more good will be created. The good example of a reforming rake will complement the warning Clarissa's fate provides. As Richardson expresses himself in the Preface, "one of [the rakes] actually reform[s], and antidot[es] the poison which some might otherwise apprehend would be spread by the gayer pen and lighter heart of the other" (35). As a (wealthy) man, moreover, he has more far-reaching powers to do good than had Clarissa. At the same time, the fact that Clarissa is instrumental in bringing about change points to the importance the virtuous have irrespective of their sex. Virtue, it is suggested, can spread, and it can cross gender boundaries. Belford's reform is one of the central counterforces to the tragic drift of the novel.

For Clarissa herself, a happy death may be enough to ensure a happy ending. However, with regard to the world she lives in, the move to tragedy is inevitable unless virtue can be found and propagated in others besides the heroine. It is interesting to compare the casts of Richardson's novels with those of Fielding's in this respect. In *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, and *Amelia*, happy endings are achieved largely by the good characters gathering together and establishing, far from the crowd of opportunistic or evil characters, a small community of goodness and happiness. Such a community, it is suggested in one of his sister's novels, is fragile: if virtue, as in *David Simple*, or as in Henry's works, is to be found but not created, the failure of money will quickly destroy the Utopian community, as "Volume the Last" shows, where almost all the good characters die young and in poverty. Conversely, *Clarissa* ends with the heroine's death, but not with the failure of virtue, for virtue is not situated in her alone, though she may be its most shining paragon. The margins of the novel are peopled with moderately good or even exemplary people, from Clarissa's less intimate friends to the Smiths and Mrs. Lovick. The last of these is invited by Belford to live with him, thus further strengthening the cross-gender relationships which lead to virtue and the confirmation of social bonds, realising "a vision of social reformation that hinges on eternity's immanence" (Reeves 605).

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The forming of (non-sexual) bonds between men and women, who assist each other in cultivating and spreading virtue, is supported through the novels' form. *Clarissa*, the story of a woman, is not only authored by a man, but also 'edited' by Belford. This framing of a woman's voice by an approving man corresponds to the behaviour of Richardson himself, who encouraged women to publish (cf. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 78). As Taylor has argued, Richardson may have been particularly eager to include the bluestocking Elizabeth Carter's "Ode to Wisdom" in *Clarissa* because he believed the author – whom he knew to be a woman, although he could not identify her – to be connected to John Norris, who, in his turn, had corresponded with and encouraged Astell, whose suggestion for "protestant nunneries" Richardson endorsed (cf. *Reason and Religion* 81ff.). In this *mise-en-abyme*, Richardson has his heroine endorse the poetry of another woman and set it to music (which Richardson paid for); this other woman was, he may have thought, connected to another man, Norris, who was eager to promote the writings of virtuous and intelligent women. It is no wonder, then, that Mulso, despite refusing to agree with Richardson against her judgment, ends her third letter with the wish "to think with you on all subjects; [...] because I am ambitious enough to wish to emulate the excellence in heart and head of my dear papa Richardson" (247). While the expression of her admiration may owe something to her desire to mollify him after their (largely friendly) debate, this desire must be based on her perception that he was "a constant advocate for *the reading and writing ladies*" (243),[130] as well as opposed to "tyranny" (239).

Another friend of Richardson's, John Duncombe, cast Richardson in the role of women's protector in his own *Feminiad* (1754). This poem opens with a general call to men to defend women's "genius": "Rise, rise, bold swain; and to the list'ning grove / Resound the praises of the sex you love" (l. 9–10). The poem is addressed to Richardson:

> To these weak strains, O thou! the sex's friend
> And constant patron, Richardson! attend!
> Thou, who so oft with pleas'd, but anxious care,
> Hast watch'd the dawning genius of the fair,
> With wonted smiles wilt hear thy friend display
> The various graces of the female lay;
> Studious from folly's yoke their minds to free,
> And aid the gen'rous cause espous'd by thee. (l. 15–22)

130 The italics and the immediate context seem to indicate that Mulso is quoting Richardson here.

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In Duncombe's apostrophe, Richardson seems to occupy at once the role of the inspiring muse and of the judging friend, who will approve the "weak strains" which are, nevertheless, employed for the cause which he supports. At the same time, his "anxious care" casts him in the role of a father of "the sex", who watches with pleasure as his charges prove themselves worthy – just as Sir Charles likes to gaze on Emily or Harriet. Like Richardson, Duncombe encourages women of "genius" to publish. In the "advertisement" to the poem, he states as one of his aims in publishing it that "the public Curiosity" may be excited and so encourage the women he mentions to have their works printed.[131] Similarly, Richardson liked to emphasise that his debates with women were meant to encourage them to voice their own thoughts:

> When I love my correspondents, I write treatises, you know, Madam, rather than letters. What care I for that, if I can but whet, but stimulate ladies, to shew what they are able to do, and how fit they are to be intellectual, as well as domestic, companions to men of the best sense! (Sabor, *Correspondence* 153; Dec. 1750, to Lady Bradshaigh)

In *Grandison*, this intermingling of male and female voices becomes, if possible, more pronounced. The title page states that this is the "history of Sir Charles Grandison", a man. Yet the story does not start with the hero; instead, it focuses on Harriet Byron. Even after the hero's appearance late in the first volume, most of the letters are written by female correspondents. Out of seven volumes, only one contains more letters written by men than by women.[132] In most volumes, far more than half of the numbered letters are sent by female correspondents. Some of these enclose lengthy letters by male correspondents, which raises the actual proportion of 'male' writing. Nevertheless, the fact that some of the letters by Sir Charles or Dr. Bartlett are framed by comments from Harriet and other women points to the importance of the female perspective. If these men's accounts of events sometimes comprise the bulk of the heroines' letters, it is because they are worthy of female approval. Indeed, the hero's voice tends to be doubly framed. His letters are edited by his mentor Dr. Bartlett before being enclosed in Harriet's correspondence with her friends. Although Sir Charles proves his qualities through benevolent and heroic actions, these are rarely allowed to speak entirely for themselves.

However, if the narrators are predominantly female, the author-'editor' is male. The female voices comprising the bulk of the narrative are (really) created and (ostensibly) collected by a man – who, however, applied to his female

131 For Duncombe and the *Feminiad*, see also Clery 165–7.

132 Volume V, which follows Sir Charles's experiences in Italy trying to heal Clementina's madness.

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acquaintance to help him form a perfect man. One of these, at least – Catherine Talbot – felt that the women's contribution had been substantial; in a letter to Elizabeth Carter, she compared herself and her friend to "two Pigmalionesses", ready to fall in love with their own creation, Sir Charles (qtd. in Clery 162). In this web of male and female voices, it is difficult to define who is speaking at any given moment, and the question of the effect of this intermingling is a vexed issue. If it is a male voice we hear, is it demanding female subordination or, on the contrary, giving value to the female experience it presents? If the voice is female, is it advocating 'proto-feminist' values or rather reinforcing patriarchy by showing women subscribe to male authority? These two options – patriarchy and (proto-)feminism – are often seen, or at least presented, as mutually exclusive. But in order to understand the 'double narrative' of *Grandison*, it is necessary to envisage the possibility that the same person – man or woman – can endorse patriarchy as well as values which we recognise as (proto-)feminist. The focus of *Grandison* is not combat, but cooperation between the sexes. Thus, 'proto-feminism' is expressed less in hostility to men than in women's esteem for women, a sentiment which is, in this novel, finally endorsed by men.

Which character can be interpreted as "a champion of the downtrodden woman of her day", as Jean Hagstrum describes Clarissa for her resistance to a forced marriage (206), depends on the emphasis given to specific criteria. If scorn of men and parental tyranny is highlighted, then Anna and Charlotte are much more radical than Clarissa. However, even they subscribe to female submission in many cases and concede, for example, that the marriage vow is of binding force. Anna may (be-)"little" that "piddling part of the marriage vow, which some prerogative-monger foisted into the office to make that a *duty* which he knew was not a *right*" (277–8). Nevertheless, she later explains her reluctance to marry as the result of her respect for this same vow – she fears owing obedience to a husband regardless of his fitness to lead (cf. 1456). Similarly, Charlotte initially objects to a church marriage precisely because the location will reinforce, in her own mind, the importance of her vow. Although both Anna and Charlotte retain aspects of their rebellious tempers, they accept the husbands approved by their relations and find happiness with them.

In contrast, the more respectful and 'feminine' Clarissa holds out against her family's pressure and, after the rape, refuses Lovelace's 'amends', even though marriage to him would be the easiest way of regaining her place in society. Just as the 'gentle' heroine of *Clarissa* proves more courage than the 'rakish' Anna, Harriet exceeds the 'feminist' Charlotte both in word and deed. While Charlotte combines her impatience of masculine domination with

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mockery of women, Harriet rejects compliments that seem to elevate her as an individual by criticising women in general (cf. 3.5). Charlotte, who frequently voices her reluctance to marry and her regret at being married, is ironically the one who mocks the very 'old maids' whose comparative independence might, from a feminist standpoint, seem attractive. When quoting the unmarried Lady Gertrude's opinion that a single woman with money can be more beneficial to society than one who marries a bad man, she frames this vision – which seems to describe what Anna and Clarissa have longed for – in slightly mocking terms (3:408). Once again, it is Harriet who notes the injustice of such mockery, reminding Charlotte that, if the single state is so terrible, she ought to be more grateful to her husband for saving her from that fate (2:662). Both Charlotte's and Harriet's views find some confirmation in the novel. Aunt Eleanor or "Nell" is faintly ridiculous (although far more sympathetic than many comparable characters in Henry Fielding's or Smollett's novels), but Mrs. Shirley's dead friend, Mrs. Eggleton, provides a counter-example of a wise old maid. Both positions may have their origin in Richardson's correspondence with Lady Bradshaigh – she wrote mockingly of old maids while Richardson defended them (cf. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 94).

Despite such minor disagreements, Richardson's virtuous and mixed female characters are ultimately joined in their capacity for friendship. This is not tied to antagonism to men, although good women react to masculine tyranny by emphasising gender solidarity (while bad women, we have seen, express their corrupted nature in contempt for women). In *Clarissa*, women's friendship appears as an ideal but doomed alternative to a tainted patriarchy. Indeed, Todd has stated that Lovelace – an agent of patriarchy, as it were – "caus[es Clarissa's] death", and thereby "returns her to her father and severs her friendship [with Anna] forever" (63). In Todd's reading, patriarchy and feminism are irreconcilable opposites. Clarissa's death and final parting from Anna is, for her, an expression of defeat. Yet as Taylor remarks when discussing Todd's statement, "[f]riendship, in this scenario, is not destroyed, but deferred" (*Reason and Religion* 107). Once both friends have left behind their mortal life, Clarissa explains, "[o]ur love then will have one and the same adorable object, and we shall enjoy it and each other to all eternity!" (1348). The breach in women's relationships, then, may be part of patriarchy perverted in a fallen world. However, in the unalloyed presence of the ultimate patriarch, women's earthly love will be renewed *through* "the same adorable object" of their common love, Christ. Clarissa's hope for eternity foreshadows the development in *Grandison*. There, friendships are allowed to grow and prosper – as a part of a reformed and benevolent patriarchy.

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Interestingly, just as women's friendships are supported by Sir Charles, who also teaches his sisters to pity the 'fallen' Mrs. Oldham, the hero himself is the product mainly of a woman's teaching. Lady Grandison appears, from her children's account, a version of what Clarissa could have been had she married Lovelace. Having married a rake, she continues to love and respect him to such an extent that, after he has been wounded in a duel, her fears for him cause her death. At the same time, she remains conscious of his vices and takes care to counteract his example in her education of their children. Her main care appears to be directed to her son, who not only excels in 'masculine' qualities, but exceeds his sisters in such 'feminine' virtues as compassion and delicacy, and apparently matches them in chastity. Nevertheless, the blending of gender attributes does not imply a clearly 'feminist' stance.

Lady Grandison's upbringing of her children may call into question those 'masculine' qualities which are in conflict with Christian virtues, but it also supports the division of gender roles. Her dying injunction to her daughters is to "[l]ove [their] brother" (1:315). Her advice is appropriate to the actual power relations – Sir Thomas will do little for his daughters, and Sir Charles may do much – as well as just to her son. However, it also indicates that her daughters' financial security should rest on their emotional ties to a male relative. Indeed, Lady Grandison contributes to this dependence. She "regret[s], in her last hours, that she had no opportunity, *that she could think just and honourable*, to lay by any thing considerable for her daughters. Her jewels, and some valuable trinkets, she hoped, would be theirs: But that would be at their father's pleasure" (1:315; my emphasis). What keeps Lady Grandison from bequeathing even her personal property to her daughters is, it seems, not her husband's extensive legal power, but her own sense of what she owes to him. Strikingly, this self-restriction is less absolute in the case of her son than her daughters, as appears when the casket with her jewels is found after Sir Thomas's death. It contains, among other things, three purses – two with a bond and ready money given to her by female relations, one containing valuable keepsakes. This last one is labelled "*For my beloved son*" (1:368). Although this bequest far from ensures Sir Charles's independence and has, for reasons which are unclear, been kept from him by his father, it is, nevertheless, a gift denied to his sisters – a fact which is all the more striking because she is passing on presents given to her by other women.[133] Her

133 It is possible that Lady Grandison's family had made a marriage settlement protecting her right to make a will under coverture; this would explain why she finds it necessary to comment on her reasons for not bequeathing anything to her daughters. It is interesting and somewhat disheartening to note that Richardson, a champion of women's worth, makes his ideal woman acquiesce so absolutely in women's financial dependence. This

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preference for her son over her daughters thus breaks a potential line of gender solidarity.

Lady Grandison's legacy turns out to be restrictive of women in another way. As her education does not question gender roles as such, her son's virtues establish a new standard not only for men, but also, by implication, for women. His implicit obedience to his father is in contrast to James Harlowe's arrogance and suggests that sons have the same duties to their parents as daughters. Yet his deference is not such an advantage to his sisters as might have been supposed. Although Sir Charles does not actively injure them, his acquiescence when Sir Thomas forbids his children to correspond deprives them of the comfort and advice which Clarissa receives from Anna Howe. More disturbingly, his compliance can be read as an implicit criticism of Clarissa, who continues to write to her friend against both their parents' prohibition. Sir Charles even writes to his father that he will repudiate his sisters if they prove undutiful, even though he must (as becomes clear at his return) know of their difficult position. When Harriet is told that Charlotte and Caroline wrote to their brother but received no answer, she comments: "I should have been concerned, I think, that my brother, in a point of duty, tho' it were one that might be *disputable*, should be more *nice*, more *delicate*, than I his sister" (1:322).[134] Sir Charles's feminised virtues undermine the justification for female resistance advocated in *Clarissa.*

There is, however, a side effect of Sir Charles's perfection which to some degree balances this. He is rarely allowed to hint at the costs his dutifulness allegedly brings with it. His letters, as well as his account of Harriet's rescue, are subject to a masculine standard; Mr. Reeves praises his "coolness" (1:138). This limits the reader's access to the hero's thoughts. Richardson's innovation was to represent characters from within, giving access not only to their actions, but also to the subtle shifts in reasoning and feeling, to momentary lapses even of the best characters. The epistolary novel allows virtuous women to be central to their own story – something which is difficult in a narrative focusing on action. In a letter to Sophia Westcomb, Richardson stated that letters fulfil a similar function outside of fiction: "the Pen is almost the *only Means* a very modest and diffident Lady (who in Company will not attempt to glare) has to shew herself,

is in accord with "the literary opinion of any variety of married women's property, notably separate estate" – but it contrasts with historical evidence that women who made wills tended to show "particular generosity to the poor" and a "preference for female kin" (Amy Erickson 113, 228).

134 When it comes to romantic matters, Harriet's judgment is more conflicted – she approves of Lady L.'s fidelity to her lover even in the face of paternal prohibition, but is inclined to think that her correspondence with Lord L. was wrong (1:333).

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and that she has a *Mind*" (*Selected Letters* 67–8; 15. Sep. 1746). "Modesty" here clearly refers not only to bashfulness, but also to proper feminine reserve and the absence of arrogance. Sir Charles, too, is "modest". The masculine version of this virtue, however, does not require silence in public. Instead, it demands the suppression of many of the thoughts preceding public utterance. As the hero is barred from fully expressing any unworthy thoughts or moral struggles, female voices become the vehicle for enlivening the novel and exploring Sir Charles's thoughts and emotions.

3.3 Grandisonian re-presentations of truth

As has been seen, the relation between truth and appearance within the system of duty is complex. To the extent that status duties require certain thoughts or feelings, they demand immense self-control from the individual. Even more problematic is the fact that, although some occupants of status duties need to love and respect their role partners, they are paradoxically forbidden to follow their example if they are, in fact, worthy neither of love nor of praise. Parents owe their children a good example, but a bad parental example will not save children from hell if they follow it. Children of bad parents, then, face a double-bind; if they perceive the parents' faults, they are 'undutiful', but if they do not, they are in danger of imitating their sins; in either case, they are damned. Another, related double-bind concerns the general duty to influence others to good behaviour, if possible. Yet how can this be achieved from a subordinate – or even equal – position? Any answer which remains within the framework of the system of duty must combine attention to the general duties of charity and sincerity, to specific duties required in specific situations to specified people, and to the claims and needs of the individual negotiating these duties. *Grandison*, therefore, does not entirely reject the virtuous 'hypocrisy' which Lovelace fears and which Pamela, jealous of her husband's affair with the Countess Dowager, finds unbearable. Instead, the novel subtly illustrates ways in which behaviour closely akin to hypocrisy can be still more nearly related to truth and virtue.

If Sir Charles's masculinity prevents him from giving voice to his inner struggles, it does not prevent him from another kind of eloquence – a rhetoric which combines a regard to truth and virtue with obvious manipulation. The way in which Richardson's novels, especially *Grandison*, negotiate the thin line between truth and hypocrisy is salient and, at the same time, hard to describe. Frequently, the metaphor of role-play, masks and masquerade is chosen by critics to approach this aspect. Commenting on Clarissa's anonymous letter

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to an unduly coercive mother, where the heroine assumes the persona of an elderly person, Doody suggests that "[s]he picks up a mask and puts it off again" ("Identity and Character" 112). Such impersonation, however, is not necessarily hypocritical: "Character is something like an empty shell, a carapace that can be truly inhabited by the right person, no masquerader but someone acting perfectly in character" (119). Interestingly, the ambiguity of the term "masquerade" seems to inform, or infect, critical language here. Clarissa acts perfectly in character when she takes up a "mask" to advise an authoritarian mother on behalf of a victimised daughter; her role-play exemplifies her wisdom, appropriate for the elderly character she assumes, as well as her compassion. At the same time, however, she conceals her identity, an action which may well influence the result of her interference. Acting in character is effective in this instance because it is done under cover of a mask.

The slipperiness of the term in scholarly essays echoes the ambivalence and ambiguity which has been discussed concerning the entertainment of the masquerade in part I. It may, moreover, be a consequence of modern sympathies for role-play confronted with an eighteenth-century discourse which uses the mask as a metaphor for hypocrisy. In Johnson's *Rambler*, for example, the "studied compliance, and continued affectation" often practiced by young men and women in courtship is linked to this dangerous pleasure: "From the time that their love is avowed, neither sees the other but in a mask" (247; No. 45). Similarly, Sarah Fielding uses the image of the mask to evoke Lovelace's speciously generous appearance when he gives a dowry to "Rosebud": "From this Incident […] arises a Moral which can never be too often inculcated; namely, that[ ]Pride has the Art of putting on the Mask of Virtue in so many Forms, that we must judge of a Man upon the whole, and not from any one single Action" (*Remarks* 36).

However, if selfish duplicity amounts to "masquerade", is virtuous behaviour any different? Critics who are concerned with epistolarity and reliability routinely doubt this possibility. Thus, Dussinger suggests at the end of a discussion of *Clarissa* that "[a]lthough usually regarded as the antithesis of sincerity, role-playing, as Clarissa discovers, is the requisite condition of being in the world, inescapable not only in talking to others but also in setting pen to paper" ("Truth and storytelling" 50). Other, less sympathetic, critics focus not so much on the difficulty of living up to one's genuine love of truth as on the power which the skilful negotiation of 'truth' may afford. As Doody has observed, Sir Charles's "frankness" to a new acquaintance is strategic and "entices the other into masochistic frankness, while concealing the fact that conversation is a test, presumably scientifically designed to permit maximum characterological

reading" ("Identity and Character" 119; 1:428). Such a strategy does not entail any lies – indeed, Sir Charles's position is so strong precisely because he always behaves in such a manner that he could not fail the same "test". If Lovelace "constructs his lies by providing a fabrication which is so close to the truth that it can function as such, seamlessly replacing 'the truth' in the minds of an audience [… t]he deceptions of Clarissa and Sir Charles are decoy readings which *distract from* the truth but do not *replace* it" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 110). Although Lovelace initially succeeds with his manipulations, the latter strategy appears to be more successful in the long run. 'Ingenious' and 'ingenuous' turn out to be compatible and even mutually reinforcing character traits.

If strategic truth-telling is shown to be closely allied to lying, "frankness" cannot be innocent. Nor can public actions, as Doody's rather hostile comment on Sir Charles's behaviour to his dead father's penitent mistress suggests: "As he ceremoniously conducts the weeping Mrs Oldham through the house, and silences his petulant sisters with grand displays of magnanimous charity, Sir Charles invents his own kind of virtuous masquerade" (Doody, "Identity and Character" 120). In contrast, Doody describes the mistress's behaviour in more sympathetic terms. Mrs. Oldham wears mourning for Sir Thomas although she has no right to widows' weeds. Nevertheless, "[s]he is not masquerading, and she is 'a *real* mourner'" ("Identity and Character" 120). She does not disguise herself, but instead displays reality, just as Pamela does when she puts on her rustic dress. There seems to be, after all, a kind of performance which is also 'truth'; display as such does not equal dissimulation, nor is it always simply a function of power-play. As a consequence, the reader is faced with the task of deciding between truth and hypocrisy in a novel where every utterance partakes of the "theatricality of letter-writing" (Cook 87), where every gesture is part of a 'performance' displayed by the writer of the letter which describes it (cf. 1.3).

Once human behaviour as such is perceived as role-play, or akin to it, specifying the boundary between truth and hypocrisy becomes impossible. However, it is feasible to change the line of enquiry, asking instead about the affordances of such performance. A mask can be used to act in character, as Doody suggests with regard to Mrs. Oldham, or it can disguise pride and cruelty, as Sarah Fielding makes clear in the case of Lovelace. The playful coyness of a coquette can be a strategy to catch a lover's interest, masking her sexual desire – but the virtuous Eudosia's patience, while exemplary, is similarly mask-like (cf. 1.4).[135] As Latimer argues, "saying that virtue is instrumental does not mean that

135 Haywood's coquette Briscilla manages to prolong her love affair with the rakish hero by acting coyly at first (cf. *The Masqueraders*, Part II).

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it is only a tool for selfish ends: Sir Charles's self-construction as insuperable is [...] necessary to his (essentially masculine) ability to organise his society into a happy, productive and religious one" (*Making Gender* 138). In what follows, I will analyse the ways in which *Grandison* stages a rapprochement between frankness and manipulation, and show how skilful role-play enables both the powerful and the seemingly powerless to have an impact on their environment – either for their own benefit or for that of the community as a whole. The latter is exemplified by the hero, while the most salient example of the former is embodied in his unruly sister Charlotte. The role-play of both differs from that of Harriet, who, more than perhaps any other Richardsonian hero(ine), tries to act in character. Her virtuous frankness – as opposed to the libertine's 'free-living' or 'free-speaking' – is extolled as the final result of universal good behaviour. Her ability to speak her heart holds out the promise that, in an ideal world, all hypocrisy will become obsolete. In the earlier novels, 'truth' is problematic, and frankness is often literally prohibited – for example, when Mr. B. commands Pamela to submit cheerfully to his prohibition to nurse her own child, or when Clarissa's parents insist on her 'cheerful' acceptance of a forced marriage. If this total acquiescence is achieved, it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish truth from hypocrisy, as is exemplified in Lovelace's frantic search after the 'true' Clarissa. In *Grandison*, these problems can be 'solved' because reality is such that truth merges seamlessly with hypocrisy.

Frankness is the distinguishing feature of the English heroine in *Grandison*. The beginning of the novel sees her, time and again, reject unwanted suitors firmly though politely. Abjuring the behaviour of a coquette, she is as open as possible about her feelings in order to spare those of others. Later, she is equally open concerning her love for the hero when dealing with worthy people who try to negotiate a marriage with her. In these cases, her frankness is almost radical; according to custom (and even according to Richardson's own *Rambler* essay, 156), her love ought to remain hidden. Early readers of the novel were sometimes disturbed by her openness about her love for Sir Charles (cf. Doody, *A Natural Passion*, 311–3). Harriet can be so open-hearted because she has nothing to be ashamed of: "to fall in love with Sir Charles, whose *person* is a true mirror of his noble mind, is almost a virtue in itself, since it shows a proper and rational admiration for virtue" (McMaster, "*Sir Charles*" 255). Paradoxically, the plot suggests that sincerity and frankness, however desirable, are not so much the cause as the effect of a virtuous community. As Allestree remarks on the virtue of charity: "It casts out Dissembling and feigned kindness [...]. Indeed where this is rooted in the heart, there can be no possible use of dissimulation, because this is in truth all that the false one would seem to be [...]" (348; Sunday XVI). In

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Grandison, truth can (and therefore should) be spoken because reality is good; this is exemplified in Harriet. However, it must also be spoken in the right way, and this right way is demonstrated most clearly in Sir Charles.

Appropriately, among the hero's admirable qualities which Harriet singles out for praise is his sincerity, related to frankness: Sir Charles "never perverts the meaning of words" (2:388). However, as more than one critic has argued, his use of 'truth' is not only strategic, but creative – this, too, is perhaps appropriate for a novel where hero and heroine meet in the aftermath of a masquerade. The point is not that Sir Charles utters outright lies, far less that he lies in order to hurt others. Rather, despite this novel's emphasis on frankness, utterance needs to be controlled.[136] In his concluding note to *Grandison*, Richardson claims that his hero is not above life, but that it is safer to draw a hero too perfect for imitation than to depict a realistic, but faulty, character: "There is no manner of inconvenience in having a pattern propounded to us of so great perfection, as is above our reach to attain to" (3:466; quoting John Tillotson). The same rationale, it appears, lies behind the hero's use of truth. His words, which present truth in the right light, are meant to have a good effect, for "it is surely both delightful and instructive to dwell sometimes on this bright side of things" (3:466).

Presenting truth 'correctly' in order to spread virtue is a skill which Sir Charles learns from his mother. If Sir Thomas provides his children with a 'model' of inappropriate behaviour and cruel use of rhetorical powers, Lady Grandison embodies the virtuous use of (false) representation – for example, "the practice of giving away property in his [the hero's] father's name" (Price 46). Managing her husband's estate and 'his' charities during his absence, she insists on doing it as his 'proxy' – a practice which her son continues as he distributes his paternal heritage directly contrary to his father's tastes and intentions. Truth clearly is less important than correct behaviour, and yet it is hardly hypocrisy that is at stake here. Lady Grandison, however much she may bend appearances, is not a liar. Her statements about her husband may be false in relation to his actions, but they are true with regard to the role she has taken on herself: that of the devoted, virtuous wife. Her sincerity consists in keeping true to that status.

Only rarely does she hint at the masklike quality of that role. The first example is when she tells her husband that she will forgive his lengthy absence if he "can forgive [him]self"'. "This he called severe", Harriet notes – and "[w]ell he might, for it was just" (1:313). The severity consists in the implication that the forgiveness belongs not to his act, but to hers, that it is she only that can claim a

136 Latimer connects this "manoeuvring conception of virtue" to the latitudinarian movement (*Making Gender* 111f.).

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merit from it. Slight as is the reference to 'truth' in Lady Grandison's answer, it is powerful enough to disturb Sir Thomas for a moment – and it is, indeed, what Lovelace is afraid of when he contemplates marrying Clarissa. At one point, he peevishly imagines that "[s]he had formed pretty notions how charmingly it would look to have a penitent of her own making dangling at her side to church" (970). As he expresses it, Clarissa's desire is linked to that of a coquette. "Dangling" is the word Charlotte uses when explaining the use of suitors she does not mean to marry: "One wants now-and-then a *dangling* fellow or two after one in public" (*Grandison* 2:86). But the expression also reduces Lovelace's own role to that of a fashionable accessory and a product of Clarissa's "own making" (like a show piece of embroidery). If there is any value in the "penitent", it apparently belongs to Clarissa rather than to Lovelace; in his image, it is the wife who confers status on her husband (and, by implication, effeminates him). Mr. B. solves this problem by positing *libertine behaviour* as the pattern he will not submit to follow (269), by emphasising the originality of his own reformation, and by his pride in elevating Pamela. However, B. is a *reformed* rake. His preference for a virtuous representation of reality which allows him to interpret his wife's merit as a reason for pride is a mark of his own quality. The contrasting anxiety of Lovelace and Sir Thomas, on the other hand, betrays their awareness of their own faults.

Lady Grandison's second hint that her husband's merit is a fiction that she helps to create is on her deathbed. Like her earlier 'rebuke', it is couched mostly in indirect terms, culminating in her advice, quoted above, that Caroline and Charlotte should "[l]ove [their] brother". Her indirect admission that loving their father will not protect them from abuse is accompanied with the advice that they should, nevertheless, act on her example. Rather than questioning patriarchy, they should adopt the best of the roles it offers them. This is masquerade and no masquerade; love is instrumental for security, but it is also 'true'. It is part of the utopian vision of *Grandison* that this opportunistic incitement for love is revealed only after Harriet has witnessed the sincerity and disinterestedness of the sisters' feelings. No longer financially dependent on their brother and educated by his goodness, they can reveal their mother's advice without calling forth suspicions of hypocrisy.

The difference between Sir Thomas's and Lady Grandison's use of language, then, lies less in their regard to truth than in what they aim at. Lady Grandison's speech and actions are subservient to her chosen role of virtuous woman (and in accordance with conduct books); his are subservient only to his pleasures. His own re-presentation of reality concerns his daughters' characters, and he uses his rhetorical skill in order to reinterpret Caroline's virtuous love as a sign

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of an "amorous" disposition for which she should be ashamed – but which, he suggests, he will gratify by "hasten[ing] with [her] to the London market": "Hold up your head, my amorous girl! You shall stick some of your mother's jewels in your hair, and in your bosom, to draw the eyes of fellows" (1:340). Sir Charles inherits and develops his parents' talent of representation, using it for the good of others – for instance, to mediate in family quarrels – as well as in order to negotiate contradictory demands of the system of duty. The most salient of these is the need to revere his father while eschewing his faults.

By the hero's first appearance in the novel, the most difficult part of his task is over. Once his father is dead, there are few to challenge Sir Charles's depiction of Sir Thomas; moreover, the father can no longer interfere with his son's virtuous behaviour, so that the hero is spared conflicts of duty similar to Clarissa's. Nevertheless, given Sir Thomas's way of life, the son is hard-pressed to show esteem without denying truth. From his sisters' report to Harriet, it emerges that the list of Sir Thomas's sins is long; it includes duelling, seduction, and neglect of his family. Instead of giving his children a good example (cf. Allestree 313), he gives a bad one. Even the governess supposed to guide his daughters is seduced by him; it is owing to their inherent virtue, or to their mother's teaching, that they then insist that Mrs. Oldham must leave. Sir Charles suffers less immediately, but he is 'banished' to continental Europe precisely because he is too good to follow his father's bad example; Sir Thomas sends him away because he is afraid of his son's censure. When he is with his daughters, Sir Thomas is unkind. He even neglects his duty to provide for his children; he is one of those "very unnatural Parents, who, so they may have enough to spend in their own riots and excess, care not what becomes of their Children, never think of providing for them" (Allestree 311; Sunday XIV).

In marked contrast to Mr. B. (and to Clarissa), he never makes a will (1:382); if he dies before his daughters' marriage, therefore, Sir Charles will be sole heir by common law. Moreover, he prevents his eldest daughter's love-match in order to save her dowry. As is made clear, Lord L. expects only a standard dowry with Caroline, yet this is too much for Sir Thomas (cf. 1:329). Although he proposes to carry his daughters to town (or rather, the "market") to marry them, it is clear that his main aim will be not to marry them "comfortably" or "Christianly", but cheaply (cf. Allestree 316; Sunday XIV). His behaviour is perhaps a concession to Mulso, who wrote that

> I took it into my head, I can't tell why, that fathers and mothers, now-a-days, frequently dressed out their daughters, and sent them into public places, with an appearance of five times the fortune they could give them, in hopes they might

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> catch—what? Not a man of sense and worth, who should make them happier and better, but a fool, a rich fool [...]. (239)

With regard to Charles, Sir Thomas's attitude is more complex. To his son and heir, he acknowledges an obligation to leave him money (cf. 1:329). However, he will not submit to any personal sacrifice to ensure that he can perform his intention (although he has no objection to enforcing this from his daughters). On the contrary, he squanders money his own father had saved, as well as the "produce of [his dead wife's] jointure" (1:329). Charles, of course, makes it clear that he has no expectations on his father. What he receives, he insists, is Sir Thomas's free gift; therefore, he, the son, will be under obligation however small the sum. Sir Charles's words here are in direct contrast to the way he will speak later, once he has come into his inheritance. *Then*, he insists that he is only doing his duty for his sisters, and doing what his father would have done "had he lived to make himself easy" (1:382). (Ironically, his words are true: Sir Thomas, who wastes his fortune in the pursuit of his vices, would always have been "a little embarrassed in his affairs" (1:382).) There is a clear logic to Sir Charles's expression as a dutiful son. Seen from the perspective of status duties, Sir Thomas fails almost completely as a father. If Charles wishes to acknowledge the system of duty, he must find a way to honour his father without perceiving his egotism as praiseworthy. He therefore chooses to view his father's behaviour from a different angle: Sir Thomas has no obligations at all; whatever good action he actually performs is therefore a free gift which his children can be grateful for, and whatever good he omits to do he must have intended, at least.

From this analysis, it might appear that it is the family tyrant who has most to gain from a virtuous re-presentation of appearances. The case is more complex, however, for Sir Charles combines his dutiful gloss on his father's behaviour with apparent oblivion of the 'faults' of the latter's victims. Towards the end of Sir Thomas's life, he had complained to his son that Caroline and Charlotte were undutiful. Charles, then on his travels, immediately confirms the father's authority: "I shall let them know, that my love, my esteem, if it be of consequence with them, is not founded on relation, but merit: And that, where duty to a parent is wanting, all other good qualities are to be suspected" (1:352). Yet when he returns home after his father's death, this threat is apparently forgotten, at least by him. Charlotte and Caroline clearly remember it, for they explain to him that they "meant not to be *undutiful*" (1:359). Sir Charles immediately interrupts: "Love your brother, my sisters, as he will endeavour to deserve your love. My mother's daughters could not be undutiful! Mistake only!—Unhappy misapprehension!—We have all something—Shades as well as lights there must be!—A kind, a dutiful veil—" (1:360). His broken, unfinished sentences signal

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the pain of the dutiful son who must acknowledge and yet conceal his father's faults. Glad to forget Sir Thomas's tyranny, he shuns an examination of its consequences – his sisters' attempts at resistance. By tabooing the topic, he manages to be just to his sisters as well as respectful to his father. Similarly, he calls Mrs. Oldham Sir Thomas's housekeeper rather than his kept mistress, combining filial piety with compassion; the two motives reinforce each other. Just as he "cover[s] and conceal[s]" (Allestree 297; Sunday XIV) his father's seduction of a dependant (who is, moreover, the widow of a friend, 1:319), he also "covers" the fault of the fallen woman. Sir Charles speaks just enough of the truth to acknowledge that most of it must remain concealed. By passing lightly over everyone's faults, he avoids taking sides where all are in some measure to blame.

However, management of appearances can equally be used for benign control and for evading control, as becomes clear in the juxtaposition of Charlotte and Sir Charles. If, initially, Sir Charles is presented as the embodiment of plain truth by Mr. Reeves, Charlotte confuses him even while she charms him through her playful (mis-)representation of what passes. However, as the narrative progresses, parallels between these two siblings become ever clearer, even as they are described in contrasting terms. Charlotte's secret of her engagement to Captain Anderson is expressive of female deceit and incompetence, but when Sir Charles is secretive about his charitable actions and his involvement with Clementina, this is an expression of manly reserve. Her flirting is coquettish, his is gallantry; she is like a kitten, playing with other people's feelings, he is a reformer whose very playfulness always stands in the service of higher aims – be it a pleasant general conversation or the reformation of his friend Beauchamp's stepmother. He manipulates the latter by painting her portrait, as it were, telling her how she should look so that he can do her 'justice' (cf. Shepherd 193–4 and McMaster, *Reading the Body* 93–5). Casting women in roles is what he has learned from his father, but he now uses his skills for the benefit of everyone, including the angry woman whom he secretly despises.

If Sir Charles's behaviour is seen as admirable while his sister's is frequently criticised, this is partly due to their different motives – she never takes on the role of mentor or mediator – and partly to gender roles. Both Sir Charles and Charlotte are briefly associated with rakish behaviour, but this must make him more attractive, more of a "moderate rake", while it makes her less feminine and less virtuous. For him, rakish manners are part of those few superficial accomplishments which, like a skill in weapons, he may justly copy from his father. For her, imitating Sir Thomas's manners constitutes a double breach of norms – firstly, because she neglects a truly virtuous feminine example in favour

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of a masculine one, and, secondly, because she voluntarily aligns herself with the very embodiment of abusive masculinity from which she has previously suffered. The identification thus undermines her most feminist denouncements of patriarchy and underlines her streak of misogyny (which, Harriet fears, Sir Charles has in too great a degree). As we have seen, Charlotte makes fun of old maids; once she is married, she also likes to boast of her maturity in comparison to immature, romantic "chits" (3:404).

Both brother and sister have some characteristics typically associated with the other gender (including Sir Charles's beauty and Charlotte's comparatively masculine looks), but this tends to work in favour of Sir Charles and against Charlotte. Sir Charles is femininely delicate and, in this respect, his mother's heir; but this entails that unruly Charlotte is her father's. This cross-gender identification does not, however, put into question his masculinity or her femininity. Charlotte is as much a coquette as she is a 'rake', while Sir Charles is masculine in his (self-)control. Indeed, his following a female role model seems less to feminize him, as some critics have argued, than to push the boundaries of what female behaviour should be like. If even a man can be modest, a woman should be doubly so. Thus, if Lady Grandison's virtue is emulated by her son, it is nevertheless a more important model for women than for men. Put simply, women must confine themselves to a single self-image, while men can adapt their behaviour more freely (cf. McMaster, *Reading the Body* 62). After reading Sir Charles's account of his proposal to Miss Mansfield on his uncle's behalf, and of his behaviour to Lady Beauchamp to induce her to let her step-son return to England, Harriet remarks: "See him so delicate in his behaviour and address to Miss Mansfield, and carry in your thoughts his gaiety and adroit management to Lady Beauchamp, as in this letter, and you will hardly think him the same man" (2:272). Sir Charles's mock-flirtation with Lady Beauchamp is justified, since it serves to revoke his friend's banishment. Similar behaviour in a woman, in contrast, would call into question her virtue.

This is a lesson which Harriet has learned the hard way (cf. 1.4), and which Charlotte is determined never to learn. Casting herself alternately in the role of coquette, romance heroine, goddess and modest wife, she counters the demands of a patriarchal world with the adoption of any female role that seems to offer most freedom. In courtship, she insists on the woman's prerogative, suggesting that, like the anonymous letter-writer of the *Familiar Letters*, she likes to have "now-and-then a *dangling* fellow or two after one in public". The remark is true insofar that coquetry is the most apparently 'powerful' of female roles an unmarried woman can take on – as long as the appearance of chastity is

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preserved. Apart from that, however, it is strikingly far from her two deepest worries: to pledge herself to a man she cannot respect, or to become an old maid.

In a conversation about Charlotte's suitors, Sir Charles responds to Charlotte's playful evasions with a remark that seems, at first sight, intended to catch her playful tone, but is even further from the actual truth than her own self-representation. Charlotte, he suggests, can talk about "*courtship* and *marriage*" only in a proper romance setting, "upon the mossy bank of a purling stream, gliding thro' an enamelled mead" (2:98). Like a female Quixote (Charlotte Lennox's novel with this title appeared the year before the first volume of *Grandison*), he suggests, she is unable to adapt to the reality of courtship. He thereby re-casts her resistance to norms as something more harmless. By implying that she has simply learnt the wrong codes of behaviour, he neutralises her identification with a coquette. Gordon has argued, in an article on *The Female Quixote*, that it was feared that women would learn coquetry from romances; he contrasts this with Lennox' heroine Arabella, who learns moral values from them ("The Space of Romance"). Sir Charles, then, chooses the 'better' of two bad roles for his sister. However, this re-presentation of her behaviour also negates her real anxieties. A coquette is a woman of the 'real' world, grasping at a power she has no right to; a romance heroine belongs to a genre of fiction and can have no serious claims to power in the world of a 'realist' novel. Echoing his sister's language, Sir Charles devalues it.

Charlotte, however, is not subdued for long. Instead of subjecting her voice to that of a male guide, she continues, even after marriage, to tell her own story. This is possible partly because her husband is far less able to cope with her than Sir Charles and partly because the latter leaves the country immediately after her marriage. The absence of a dominant male mentor creates a power vacuum which allows a relapse. Sir Charles, it is true, several times threatens to rebuke or even disown her should she prove a bad wife (a threat which contrasts strikingly with his behaviour to a faulty father and uncle). However, his failure to make true his threats actually makes more conspicuous the fact that Charlotte is not reformed through male agency. After Sir Charles has ended her entanglement with Captain Anderson, confided it to Lord G. and hastened the marriage, he remains remarkably peripheral to all that concerns her. First his absence, then her pregnancy put off his intervention; when her behaviour to her husband has finally become socially acceptable, it is Harriet who celebrates this change. It is almost as if Richardson had taken pains to prevent further interference on Sir Charles's part – which, the reader is certain from the whole tenor of the novel, must have been successful. Sir Charles's threats that he will either control or punish Charlotte may, in fact, be another kind of masquerade. He could not

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really interfere in her marriage without the risk of subjecting himself to the charge of cruelty. Indeed, the role of a good sister (and probably brother) in a family conflict is that of a mediator. Richardson's *Familiar Letters*, for example, include an exchange between a daughter "*pleading for her Sister, who had married without* [the father's] *Consent*"; and the angry, but not unforgiving, father (84–6).

Sir Charles's failure to act on his threats enables Charlotte to reform on her own initiative and at her own time. She is, in fact, the only character in *Grandison* who significantly changes her behaviour without immediate outside pressure. When she tells Harriet that she will need "[a] month, at least" to accept the change of role from courted young woman to wife, her words are taken for wilful procrastination (2:315). Yet Charlotte goes on to pursue her own course of managing a husband, and, finally, it is she who shapes the course of their quarrels, their reconciliation, and the improvement of "both [...] as husband and wife" (3:412). Her story, although it ends with her accepting the role of a loving wife, endorses female choice and development.

Ironically, her power in marriage rests on circumstances which seem, in part, intended to punish her unruliness. From the beginning, Charlotte is presented, by herself as well as Sir Charles, as inferior to Caroline, whose character, however, remains much more shadowy. Her playful transgressions, her impatience under the arbitrary control of her father, and her sometimes unfeeling raillery associate her with rakes and with men in general. It is no coincidence that the only one of her songs which Harriet specifies is *The Cuckow* (1:238). The text – two apparently harmless stanzas celebrating spring which gain more bawdy overtones in the context of the refrain, in which the cuckoo "mocks married men" – is taken from Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (V.ii.878–95) and was set to music by Thomas Arne. She sings it at the request of her rakish cousin Everard, but if this deflects some part of the blame possibly attached to this choice, it also emphasizes the connection between them – it is she, not Caroline, who knows how to perform this particular piece. In retrospect, the singing and playing with which she torments her husband are linked not only with a general indifference to his feelings, but to the more concrete threat of wifely infidelity.

Her 'masculinity' makes her unsuitable as a wife to one of the supposedly exemplary men. For a friendship, Lovelace suggests, one of the friends must display a forbearing "woman spirit". Charlotte's refusal to embody this spirit casts her in the masculine role in the "highest state of friendship", namely marriage, and thus at once unable and unworthy to become happy with a manly husband. As Sir Charles explains to Harriet, his exemplary friend Beauchamp and Charlotte could not be happy together, in part because Charlotte's entan-

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glement with Captain Anderson would offend him more strongly than it does Lord G. (2:113–4). Her hints that she would like to meet Beauchamp before tying herself to another are consistently ignored till after her marriage – the first time she meets Beauchamp is at her wedding (2:343). The timing could very well form part of her punishment – and lead to the realisation of the common fear of 'romantic' girls, namely to meet an "Oroondates", the type of the romance hero, after they are irrevocably tied to another man (cf. 3:398). Charlotte herself attends more to her brother than to the bridegroom during the wedding, emphasising the superior desirability of the masculine over the feminine man. As her marriage threatens to collapse, Aunt Eleanor finally asks the question the reader has felt to be obvious for a long time: would Charlotte have preferred Beauchamp to Lord G. (2:505)?

The question is tied up with another. How can a woman who likes to be in control be happy in marriage? Those who love control best are seldom fit to be trusted with it, Clarissa states when explaining her reasons for giving her dairy-house into the control of her father, who will abuse his power (104). In a wife, despotism looks particularly bad, since passive endurance on the husband's part dishonours them both, while an oppressed wife may earn admiration through her impeccable behaviour, as Mrs. Harlowe observes. It is also, Clarissa once suggests to Anna Howe, an invitation to would-be seducers. In this context, it is no wonder that Harriet tries to re-interpret Charlotte's behaviour in more harmless terms. Charlotte has early on told her she intends to quarrel with Lord G. occasionally to make him more grateful whenever she is kind. Harriet is shocked at the moment, but when she later describes her friend's behaviour, she casts it in terms not of design and power struggle, but in those of thoughtless play: Charlotte, she says, is like a kitten who "regards not whether it is a China cup, or a cork, that she pats and tosses about" (2:330).[137] The expression presents Charlotte as loveable, but at the price of negating her purposeful agency or serious concerns. Her danger, however, shines through: married happiness is fragile, as fragile as the chastity and reputation more frequently associated with china (e.g in Pope's *The Rape of the Locke* or Wycherley's *The Country Wife*). A woman who cannot be controlled, it seems, cannot control herself.

137 Harriet also uses other methods to – literally – re-present Charlotte. At one point, she envisages dividing a letter by her into a good half, to show her friends, and a bad half (3:120). The latter she will "present" – like a present – to Charlotte to show her which parts of her behaviour must be discontinued and to encourage her to form herself on the example of the good half, the side which can be safely presented to others (cf. also Price 33).

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Harriet is not entirely wrong that Charlotte likes to play. Her behaviour seems spontaneous, driven by the spur of the moment. However, Charlotte claims at least once that her disrespect towards her husband is strategic: "I'll tell you how I will manage—I believe I shall often try his patience, and when I am conscious that I have gone too far, I will be patient if he is angry with me; so we shall be quits" (2:362). It is difficult, therefore, in her case to keep apart self-perception and self-representation, conscious and unconscious impulses. If Harriet strives to know herself and admit her knowledge to her friends, Charlotte uses the very instability of roles and interpretations to achieve her own goals. To Harriet, the uncertain link between mask and character becomes frightening. To Charlotte, the potential of a mask to represent either devil or saint, the ability to act as a charming witch or immodest nun, is exciting. In her skirmishes with Lord G., she depends on her ability to cast both him and herself in roles of her own choosing, alternatively representing herself as stable or variable, virtuous or rightfully coquettish. "I show him the same face that I ever wore", she counters when he complains to Harriet of her lack of respect (2:399). It has been suggested above that Charlotte's coquetry during courtship is, to a considerable extent, a ploy to put off marriage until she can free herself from Captain Anderson. It also provides a justification for some liberties; despite *Grandison*'s insistence on frankness and simplicity, the rules of courtship demand more respect from the man than from the woman. Charlotte's argument after marriage denies not only her use of these forms as a screen of her real motives, but also negates their existence as *form* – what she showed during courtship was her *real* face, not a mask she could tear off. Re-presenting her coquetry as frankness, she implies that Lord G. dissembled. In the terms of the *Rambler*, he showed himself in a mask, while she presented her true face.

Charlotte's self-representation frequently draws on stereotypes of shrewish or unfaithful wives, forging a connection while also emphasising her difference. Thus she claims that her husband should have known she has an affection for him, since she avoids public entertainments, stays at home and supervises her household: "Am I fond of seeking occasions to carry myself from him? What delights, what diversions, what public entertainments, do I hunt after?—None. Is not he, are not all my friends, sure of finding me at home, whenever they visit me?" (2:505). The complaints she imagines he might make, and which she represents as groundless, belong to the world of comedy[138] and, to some degree,

138 See, for example, *The Provoked Husband* by Vanbrugh and Cibber, where Lord Townly complains that his wife, although not unfaithful, "is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, [while her husband], poor wretch, is left at large to take care of his own contentment" (13; Act I, ll. 17–20).

of amatory fiction. In Haywood's *The Masqueraders*, part II, for example, the married Lysimena's infidelity is caused by her attendance of a masquerade. On the stage, shrewish behaviour, infidelity and masquerade tend to go together. By highlighting the contrast between herself and such wives in one area, Charlotte represents her husband's complaints as preposterous. Within the frame of a 'realist' novel, an unruly wife can draw on the conventions of female misrule to vindicate her behaviour.

This is not to argue that Charlotte's self-representation is actually endorsed within the novel. Her family and friends certainly condemn her while pitying her husband – their pity, incidentally, is also the sign of how little he is in control, casting him in the injured wife's role. However, as in the case of Harriet's literal masquerade, the mask assumed cannot be entirely ignored. At the very least, it undermines any effort to clearly categorise behaviour. In Charlotte's case, this can be illustrated with the crisis of her marital conflict. Lord G. has rented a house without consulting her – as ever, proving good taste and bad judgment. Her anger, backed up by Caroline's rare support, leads him to give up the house. Charlotte then goes to see the house, approves of it, and rents it herself. As she represents it, her action casts him into the role that she had been in before ("Would *he* dislike [the house], because *I* liked it?", 2:501). Her act, however, in part confirms the division of gender roles. Instead of following the consensus-oriented model of her sister's marriage, where both partners take what money they need and account for all of it, she echoes her husband's behaviour, where one partner decides for both. Her independent rental of the house implies that his fault lay not in the fact that he did not ask her opinion, but in the assumption that he was the one allowed to act. Incidentally, this rental is also the closest to public exposure of her husband that she ever goes. In response to his consequent anger, she "calmly rebuke[s] him" and then starts to play on her harpsichord (2:501). She ignores his attempts to speak with her until, furious, he throws his hat at her harpsichord and "silenced, broke, demolished" it. Charlotte continues her account: "You are a violent wretch, Lord G. said I, quite calmly: How could you do so?—Suppose (and I took the wicked hat) I should throw it into the fire? But I gave it to him, and made him a fine courtesy. There was command of temper!"[139] To her husband (and in her report to Harriet), she responds with a mixture of reproof, meekness and threatened violence.

139 The next sentence, while not material in this place, is nevertheless noteworthy: "I thought, at the instant, of Epictetus and his snapt leg. Was I not as great a Philosopher?" Charlotte here refers to the philosopher whose works Elizabeth Carter was translating, and which would be printed by Richardson in 1758 (Hawley).

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When she speaks about the scene to Aunt Eleanor, however, only Lord G. is cast in the violent role:

> His violence to my poor harpsichord startled me; but I recollected myself; and had he buffeted *me* instead of *that*, as I was afraid he would, I should have thought I *ought* to have borne it, whether I *could* or *not*, and to have returned him his hat with a courtesy. Believe me, madam, I am not a bad, I am only a whimsical creature. (2:506)

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In this picture, the threat of excessive violence comes from the husband, while meekness and self-control belong to the wife; "tak[ing] advantage of the attentive audience of 'mediators' to present a jarring fiction of herself as abused, yet forbearing […] Charlotte presents herself as a passive victim of unreasonable behaviour, silenced by a vindictive man" (Latimer, *Making Gender* 184).[140] At the same time, her explanation contains the hint of an apology – if Charlotte is not "bad", she at least has given reason for others to fear she is. Her statement that she "would have thought" she "ought to have borne" even a blow vacillates between these two positions. On the one hand, it can be read as a tacit admission that she provoked her husband's just anger. This disarms further reproof; she knows herself to be in the wrong, and would have suffered her husband's punishment. To that extent, Charlotte even seems to endorse the physical punishment which one reader imagined for her: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu thought she should be "*** whipped in the presence of her friendly confidante Harriet" (qtd. in Doody, *A Natural Passion* 291). Her statement can, however, be read in a slightly different way – not as an admission of individual guilt and deserved punishment, but as a more general acceptance of marital roles. In such a reading, the justice of Lord G.'s anger does not matter. Her submission is the correct response of any long-suffering wife to a tyrant husband. Such an interpretation might be even more disturbing with regard to gender roles in general. However, it also casts Charlotte in the role of exemplary wife, insisting on her own version of the truth. The point is that no exact meaning can be grasped. Charlotte avoids any outright admission of guilt even while setting limits to her own transgressiveness. Neither shrew nor paragon, she can neither be fully condemned nor seen as entirely 'tamed'. Indeed, her ambiguous speech makes clear how impossible it is to fix the point at which she is 'reformed'.

Charlotte must reform – within the sphere of Sir Charles, transgression cannot go unchecked. It can, however, go largely unpunished. What Charlotte achieves is to determine her own time and method to conform. In doing this, she

140 For a very different reading of this scene, see Chaber, "'This Affecting Subject'" 242.

both confirms and falsifies Clarissa's assertion that those impatient of control need it most. She seems to confirm it by her abuse of power. Later, her growing kindness could be seen as a sign that Harriet's metaphor of the kitten was right, after all, that her behaviour had everything to do with play and nothing with power. However, if Lord G. comes to perceive her mockery as friendly raillery, it is Charlotte who teaches him to do so. Harriet attempts in vain to bring him to such a view of things. Latimer rightly states that "Charlotte must learn that as a married woman, the way to assert agency is to work not against the grain but within the space of marriage, as a wife and mother" (*Making Gender* 186). However, as Charlotte seems to know, the agency of the "wife and mother" may be enhanced by the right kind of preparation. Significantly, the point where she convinces Lord G. that she loves him is just after he has finally given up all hope of love and all pretence of control – when he has, he says, "done complaining to *any*-body" (2:507). Charlotte is moved by his expression of love and by "his eyes glistening" (2:508), but, on a more subtle level, she also recognises that he is now ready to be grateful for her kindness, instead of taking it for granted. If he can now enjoy a husband's prerogative – or at least "assure [him]self of the first place in [her] heart" (2:509) – it is because she has allowed it. After all his attempts to please her with presents, it is she who confers the greatest gift – material as well as non-material. Lord G. expresses his grateful joy by giving his wife "a bank note of 500*l.*" (2:510). Charlotte counters by presenting him with the 1000*l.* she had received from her uncle as a wedding gift and which she has hitherto concealed from her husband. The gesture is meant to show her submission – but once again, she has managed to outdo him in generosity.

Critical opinion of Charlotte is divided; she is sometimes perceived as the feminist spokeswoman of the work, but (even more frequently) she is also seen to embody women's subjection.[141] As a defender of her own sex who likes to mock women, and as an unruly wife who changes her ways, Charlotte falls short of the ideal champion of women's rights. However, if her story is unsatisfactory as the tale of a woman who defies male control, it has feminist potential in showing that good women will, and can, impose control on themselves when left to act at their own discretion. By 'reforming' voluntarily, Charlotte finally proves herself her mother's daughter as well as her father's. Like Lady Grandison, she has self-control and virtue; like her, moreover, she proves that performing the role of wife in the right way requires – and gives evidence of – female agency. Such a representation is double-edged, of course. It confirms,

141 Latimer questions her status as the novel's exemplary feminist (*Making Gender* 136), and Shepherd sees her as a potential Clarissa, namely a victim of a forced marriage (203).

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to some extent, the status quo of gender roles. Women's right to esteem is justified by women's voluntary acceptance of their 'proper place'. However, the very assurance that women are capable of preparing for and shaping that place themselves questions the efficacy of male control. As Harriet argues, "policy" and "superior motives" – true virtue – may well lead to the same behaviour.

3.4 Gift-giving in *Grandison*

The combination of virtue and policy may be eligible when it occurs, but, as a concept, it poses problems. These difficulties, once again, vary according to moral perspective. In the passage quoted at the end of the preceding section, Harriet is thinking of Sir Charles's strict adherence to the system of (filial) duty. In view of the rigidity of this system, her thought is rather comforting, although something of an oxymoron. No-one who takes the system of duty seriously has much room for "policy", a word which implies some freedom of choice. If the sentence is transferred to a different structure of relationship, however, it takes on rather different undertones. In the case of gift giving, as we have seen, 'virtue' and 'policy' are closely connected. The 'pure', completely disinterested gift can be perceived as the epitome of virtue – but, paradoxically, the norm which demands that gifts be returned also transforms donations into an instrument for achieving power. The greater the gift – the 'virtue' – the more effective, it would seem, the 'policy'.

As has been seen in part II, the specific circumstances and manner of gift giving influence the impact of the transaction on both donor and recipient. It is no surprise, therefore, that presenting something as a gift, and defining who is the giver, is one of the most salient forms of the creative use of truth in *Grandison.* Benevolent exchange, as Zionkowski suggests, is an important structuring device in Richardson's last novel, and one which is used strategically to produce desirable patterns of relationship and of behaviour:

> Troubled by readers' hostile response to the web of obligation that entrapped Clarissa, Richardson focused once more on the gift in his final novel, *Sir Charles Grandison.* This novel's structure is deliberately, even frustratingly repetitive: continual performances of Sir Charles's benevolence both form the plot and provide justification for his assertions of authority over the affective community that his "goodness" creates. Endlessly repeating the cycle of generosity and gratitude is necessary, however, because in the novel, gift relations offer the only basis for a viable social life: relationships grounded in other structures of exchange, such as contracts or marketplace transactions, fail in the purpose of sustaining a community. *Grandison*'s answer to *Clarissa*'s exposure

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> of the tyranny created and supported by obligation is a reassertion of the gift as the foundation of domestic and civic life and a reconstruction of generosity as a virtue exclusive to patriarchs. In this way, Clarissa's objections to men's deployment of the gift are consigned to silence. (*Women and Gift Exchange* 20)

This passage aptly summarises most of the aspects of gift giving which are crucial to *Grandison.* Generous donations create authority, but also an "affective community". Relationships are conceived as the dynamics between donor and recipient, and the former of these is firmly gendered male, as well as identified with 'father-right' ("a virtue exclusive to patriarchs"). "[O]ther structures of exchange" do not so much "fail" as that they are pushed into the background. Few "contracts or marketplace transactions" occur in the novel, and those relationships which could be defined purely in those terms are peripheral to the plot. There are some exceptions; unruly women like Mrs. Giffard (Lord W.'s mistress) and the unreformed Lady Beauchamp deploy contracts to assume power over their keeper and husband, respectively. In both cases, however, the authority which the women achieve is immoral in itself, constituting blackmail or usurpation of the husband's rightful power. Another 'contract', the one which Sir Charles negotiates between Clementina and her parents, is a complex process which begins and ends in structures which have little to do with the "marketplace" (cf. 3.6).

Indeed, concentrating on the market as the opposite to gift giving helps to obscure the fact that "generosity as a virtue exclusive to patriarchs" is a "re[-]construction". As we have seen earlier, the system of duty and the system of the gift are compatible, and *Grandison* demonstrates the benefits of combining the two. However, they are not identical; as is demonstrated in *The Whole Duty of Man*, patriarchy can exist even where generosity is entirely lacking. *Grandison* does indeed "consign to silence" the potentially abusive "deployment of the gift" by male despots. However, what is at stake here is not so much the system of the gift as the system of duty. The benefits of gift giving to all involved must be demonstrated so that it can serve as a reinforcing mechanism for the system of duty. This is the reason why Sir Charles's role as supreme donor must be unassailable. No serious challenge to his authority is possible for long; his influence over his social circle effectively amounts to that of a patriarch over his household. Nevertheless, he achieves this position of power through his judicious "deployment of the gift", thus muting possible objections to far-reaching patriarchal power: the patriarch of *Grandison* is eminently qualified to lead. If, however, Sir Charles had to divide his position as donor with other men, patriarchal power could not be depicted as both limitless and beneficent. Ironically, the difficulty of 'obliging' the hero is shared by women *and* men, and

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the former are rather more successful than the latter in their attempts to make suitable returns. Precisely because women's power to give is limited by gender norms and the law, they can remain donors without challenging the hero.

Richardson carefully naturalises as well as mythologises his hero's power. On the one hand, the justice of his position is demonstrated through the constant emphasis on his good deeds. Because the voice of authority in *Pamela* and *Clarissa* is so obviously selfish and abusive, these novels had raised questions about hierarchical and patriarchal structures. Sir Charles's power, therefore, must derive from his virtue. On the other hand, however, its basis must also seem to be timeless. If Sir Charles had to earn all his money and all his authority through labour, the connection between 'generosity' and 'patriarch' would dissolve. The novel would then be an argument for Locke's revised version of patriarchy, with its emphasis on gratitude and respect measured out according to merit. Sir Charles's beneficence, therefore, is connected to various discourses of giving. He is a landlord, ruling over his estates; he is a god-like donor, imitating the divine power of giving openly without needing any return; and he is a humble Christian, whose "left hand [does not] know what [his] right doeth" (*Matthew* 6.3). The grounds of his authority are multiple and therefore difficult to question.

Sir Charles enters the stage as a donor, as someone who has it in his power to dispense practical help, advice, and money. He rescues Harriet, persuades Sir Hargrave to retract his demand for a duel, and presents the treacherous servant Wilson with the starting capital he needs to lead an honest life. The use he makes of his power takes precedence over its origins, over the conditions which allow him to become a universal benefactor. A comparison with Clarissa is instructive. She, too, has wisdom, generosity, and money, but her influence is limited by those holding authority over her. Only when she is "nobody's" (1413) does she fully exert her power of giving, writing a last will which carefully balances the requirements of the system of duty with individual merit. In contrast, Sir Charles is nobody's but his own. Heir to an estate and, by his father's death, head of his household as well as titled, he can now act freely without the risk of interference on his father's part, or the opposite danger of usurping his father's position. Moreover, his last surviving uncle is related to him on the mother's side, further minimising the disruptive potential of a young man who acts as "a father to his *uncle*".

If Sir Charles's situation as an orphan helps to obscure the potential conflict between the system of duty and the system of the gift, his position as landlord obfuscates the fact that he is able to give only because he also receives. His wealth is based on the land he inherits and on the labour of his tenants and

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servants. However, as Zionkowski has noted, "Sir Charles's estate seems to run primarily on love", while the narrative occludes the details of his estate's financial workings (*Women and Gift Exchange* 71). Indeed, when the hero's role as landlord is discussed, it is his own labour which is highlighted, not that of his tenants: *he* insures that "he is not imposed upon by incroaching or craving tenants" (3:288), thereby ensuring both their and his own welfare (cf. also Bellamy 109). Sir Charles controls his cheating stewards so that he will, in the future, earn more from his estates; he gives benevolent rules to his household, ensuring that he receives the best service from it; he is his tenants' benefactor, dispensing, for example, the free services of an apothecary. These relationships could be conceptualized differently – for example, as an exchange of labour against wages – but at the price of limiting the hero's position as supreme donor. Although such a contractual view of the relationship between landlord and tenants does not preclude hierarchy, it disrupts the conception of authority as patriarchal or divine. Because the landed estate had associations with status rather than contract, the economic foundation of Sir Charles's power can be naturalised as something which inextricably belongs to him (cf. Pohl 55).

The ability to give without appearing to receive connects Sir Charles with divine power, the source of all authority. Tellingly, Taylor compares "[p]rovidence" in *Pamela* to "an invisible Sir Charles Grandison" (*Reason and Religion* 115). The hero, it seems, is fully capable of acting as God's proxy. The link between gift giving and divine power is made more than once in Richardson's novels, often in terms reminiscent of modern theories of the gift. Thus, Pamela, now on the point of marriage to Mr. B., tells of his "[g]oodness" (272) to her and explains that her reports of it are no sign of her "vanity",

> For it must be always a Sign of a poor Condition to receive Obligations one cannot repay; as it is of a rich Mind, when it can confer them, without expecting or *needing* a Return. It is, on one side, the State of the human Creature compar'd, on the other, to the Creator; and so, with due Deference, may be said to be God-like, and that is the highest that can be said. (273)

Of all Richardson's characters, Sir Charles is closest to this "god-like" state, and he seems indeed to usurp some of the centrality of God. By obliging everyone while avoiding obligation himself, he in fact resembles God in *Clarissa*, who, the heroine says on the day of her death, "WOULD NOT LET [HER] DEPEND FOR COMFORT UPON ANY BUT HIMSELF" (1356).

In one sense, indeed, all "creatures" are ultimately forced to rely on God, for he is the original and omnipotent donor, the source of all that exists. Therefore, only

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divine gifts are purely voluntary, Allestree concludes, and to think otherwise is a form of (all too common) hubris:

> Men look upon their Acts of mercy, as things purely voluntary, that they have no obligation to; and the effect of it is this, that they are apt to think very highly of themselves, when they have performed any, tho' never so mean, but never blame themselves, though they omit all […]. If there be any Charities, wherein Justice is not concerned, they are those which for the height and degrees of them are not made matter of strict duty, that is, are not in those degrees commanded by God […]. (388; Sunday XVII)

Human beings are so enmeshed in obligations from the moment of their birth that even the most virtuous people can hardly do more than act up to their "strict duty". In view of mankind's dependent and comparatively weak state, the very consciousness of being generous amounts to sin: "For let a Man have done never so many good acts, yet if he be proud of them; that Pride shall be charged on him to his destruction,[ ]but the good shall never be remembred to his reward" (Allestree 147; Sunday VI). Sir Charles, therefore, must not resemble God in *all* things. His ability to give is combined with Christian humility, the re-presentation of himself as someone who does his duty, rather than as a giver of free gifts. It is the fault of all the despots in the earlier novels – Mr. B., the Harlowes, Lovelace – that they concentrate on the obligations of others instead of on their own. In contrast, Sir Charles (like Clarissa) focuses on his own responsibilities.

He thereby fulfils the famous rules for right giving which are described in the gospel of Matthew:

> Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [2]Therefore when thou doest thy alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. [3]But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right doeth: [4]that thy alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (*Matthew* 6.1–4)

These exhortations resemble Derrida's argument that a gift ceases to exist as such as soon as it is perceived as a donation even within the giver's own mind. Indeed, Sir Charles's efforts not to let his gifts appear as his own seem to anticipate the condition for a 'true' gift which Jacques Derrida postulates

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(cf. 2.1).[142] For Derrida, the "very appearance [...] of the gift annuls it as gift, transforming the apparition into a phantom" (14). A gift which seems what it is immediately creates its own reward, the satisfying consciousness of generosity on the part of the donor, and a debt of gratitude on the receiver's part – indeed, when 'good' givers in Richardson's novels acknowledge that they have conferred benefits they usually claim that this consciousness is a reward in itself. Sir Charles demonstrates his willingness to forget his own gifts in a way which "exceeds even the psychoanalytic categoriality of forgetting" (Derrida 16). Instead of forestalling the appearance of gifts, he avoids the appearance of himself as donor.[143] Nevertheless, the final promise in the passage quoted above – the open reward provided by God the Father – indicates the possibility that giving may be both secret and open. Indeed, Sir Charles is the only one who will *not* view Sir Charles as a god-like donor. As we shall see, many of Sir Charles's benefactions are paradoxically public as well as private; they are disguised by the hero only to be disclosed by those around him. Precisely because he does not try to arrogate any merit to himself, he wins power through giving.

If Sir Charles successfully exercises both virtue *and* influence *within* the novel, his fate with critics has been worse. Mary Yates has summed up the problem of Sir Charles very succinctly: "Too good? Or not good enough? Worse than either, he is both" (546). His virtue is "too good" to be true, apparently as unrealistic as it is annoying for lesser mortals. Worse, it turns out to be such very good "policy" that it is easily perceived as a tool used for the acquisition of power. This has led some critics to interpret him as coercive even where he is uncommonly generous. His beneficence in money matters has become as frequent a ground of attack as his insistence on proper gender roles. Thus, Latimer writes that Sir Charles's generosity to the sons of Mrs. Oldham – some of them his illegitimate half-brothers – obscures their kinship claims (*Making Gender* 125), although any such claims were not enforceable. And when Price comments on his interactions with Emily's mother and stepfather, the O'Haras, she states that they are grateful although he is, in fact, "withholding" money from them (45). Yet by the last will of Emily's biological father, they have no legal claim on her inheritance, and no right to interfere with Sir Charles's decisions as the girl's guardian. Whatever the O'Haras' expectations may be, the hero voluntarily gives money to a couple who have proved their unworthiness by their cruelty to Emily (see below). Price's reading, therefore, seems to be based

142 This parallels Clarissa's habit to exhort others, but not to let the wisdom appear her own (instead attributing it to Dr. Lewin, for example, cf. 214).

143 For a similar argument, which has influenced my reading of Sir Charles's actions, see Hinnant 155–6 (on Thomas Day's novel *The History of Sandford and Merton*).

less on the particular circumstances of this interaction between Sir Charles and the O'Haras than on general discomfort with the hero's unlimited power.

From the stand-point of analysing power structures, such a reaction may be almost unavoidable. Once gift giving is analysed in these terms, all acts of generosity tend to appear either as manipulative or as ineffectual. It is not my intention here to ignore this aspect of giving completely. Rather, I want to shift the discussion from this one aspect to address a wider question. What affordances does gift giving have for those subscribing to the system of duty? One answer is that it can consolidate power – including legitimate power, since those who have the capacity to give usually occupy a strong position in the system of duty. At the same time, those most likely to strengthen their authority in this way are also those who – through their kindness or sense of responsibility – best deserve such power.[144] Secondly, where influence is secured through gifts, this leads to concrete benefits to those occupying a weak position. Charity may wound, but in practical (and sometimes in moral) terms, it is preferable to unscrupulous exploitation. Thirdly, gift giving introduces an element of flexibility. Although some have more to bestow than others, almost anyone is able to give something – advice, comfort, presents. The exchange of such voluntary gifts can personalise and soften the rigid and static system of duty without questioning it openly.

In the following, I will analyse a number of gift transactions which occur in *Grandison*; in most of them, the hero is a crucial participant. In the succeeding chapter, I will shift the perspective to examine exchanges *between women*. As will become clear, although Sir Charles is unquestionably the centre of the novel and consolidates his power through the gift, he is by no means the only donor. Besides winning power for himself and looking after the material needs of others, this god-like donor inspires and enables virtuous imitation. If Sir Charles is a version of providence, following divine example, others are free to imitate him to achieve happiness and influence. Both men and women emulate him and become donors themselves. Even the villain Sir Hargrave and his irreclaimable companion Mr. Merceda are shamed into adding to the hero's present of money to the repentant Wilson (1:391). While the rakes' short-lived generosity remains largely without consequences for them, more virtuous characters reap advantages from their donations. Often, they succeed in establishing minor networks of obligation which are compatible with his. Sir Charles thus comes to preside over a network where mutual obligations

144 As Zionkowski argues, the Harlowes shy away from the expenses of gift giving, while Clarissa, a true donor, gains "social recognition and influence" thanks to this character trait (*Women and Gift Exchange* 43).

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criss-cross, flattening all hierarchies except that between himself and those connected to him. The discourse of the gift is used by various characters such as Mr. Greville, Charlotte, and Clementina for their own various purposes. Indeed, by the end of the novel it becomes difficult in many cases to distinguish between donor and receiver, obliger and obliged – always excepting, of course, the supreme giver, Sir Charles.

In all transactions, giving in the right way is crucial. Depending on the situation, gifts should heal or inflict curative wounds, delight or instruct; often, they do both. The hero's talent in re-presenting circumstances in the right way allows him to deploy his donations in such a way that they lead to increased order, kindness, and happiness all around him. When dealing with potential equals, his proceedings are comparatively simple. For example, he wishes to support his friend Beauchamp, who, like him, is commanded to extend his Grand Tour, but has only a small allowance (1:461–2). Beauchamp, "a second Sir Charles Grandison" (1:463), does not need instruction, but money and a friend's sympathy. Sir Charles, therefore, provides him with the funds to travel east, pretending that he wishes Beauchamp to observe things which he himself missed on his own travels. The fiction is transparent – at least, Harriet perceives it thus – but it enables Beauchamp to accept his friend's financial support with a measure of self-respect (1:462).

If Sir Charles here masks a gift as a kind of transaction – money for information – his most frequent strategy is to arrange (exchanges of) gifts where he does not himself appear as a donor, or where his agency is disguised: he prompts others to give "as from themselves". It is thus that, as suggested above, gifts come to be the sustaining principle of community. In his dealings with his sisters, for example, he presents himself as an executor, not as an heir. Imitating his mother, he gives his sisters the dowries never intended for them, "as from [their] father's bounty" (1:382). Similarly, he uses his legacy from Mr. Danby for the benefit of those very relatives whom the latter intended to slight. Price has noted the different roles of Sir Charles and Clarissa with relation to wills: "As eponymous executor replaces eponymous testatrix, our attention shifts from the character who produces and signs a document to the character who interprets and enforces it" (44). Instead of defining rules for making wills, Sir Charles re-defines the intention of those he executes. Observing his tendency "to enforce non-existent bequests", Price comments: "One hardly knows whether to be more surprised that an executor who routinely flouts testators' instructions should remain in such demand, or that a priggish moral paragon should ostentatiously disobey his father's dying wish" (45).

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The case is here put rather harshly; after all, arbitrary Sir Thomas should not be displeased to find his heir similarly self-willed, and some testators, notably Sir Hargrave, have reason to trust their executor's judgment more than their own. Nevertheless, the comment captures a crucial aspect of Sir Charles's brand of virtue. It is vital that Sir Charles's generosity is obscured but remains nevertheless perceptible. If gratitude, as is so often suggested, is a form of subtle and thus all the more powerful control, this accords perfectly with the moral system endorsed by the novel. The hero's virtue must be influential so that he has the power to order and reform the world around him. The gratitude his generosity excites supplements his legal power, as is exemplified in his gift of dowries to his sisters. Whereas Sir Thomas's power rested in his daughters' helplessness, Sir Charles confirms his influence precisely by making his siblings independent. The act which frees them from control also refigures control as protection. As his sisters exclaim when he promises to provide for them, "[w]e cannot, we will not, be independent of you" (1:374). Moreover, by masking his gifts as the donations of others, Sir Charles is able to influence not only his own relationships to others, but to restore, in imagination at least, the system of duty where it has broken down. Thus, when he presents his father as a conscientious parent who wished his daughters to have appropriate dowries, he preserves a semblance of the love and respect owed to a father, and he ensures that his sisters will keep up the fiction at least while he is present. Thanks to his son's efforts, Sir Thomas – who is a far worse father than Mr. Harlowe, and whose fate after death must be at least doubtful – can posthumously attain some of the respectability which he forfeited while alive. Sir Charles does not, therefore, "disobey" his father so much as throw a "veil" over his failings.

He does the same for others, carefully nudging them into performing their duty (or, if possible, exceeding it). Suggesting what they should do and how they should appear, he then praises them for 'their own' motions. Sometimes, this behaviour is in accordance with the wishes of those he influences, as when his uncle leaves it to him to make settlements for his marriage to Miss Mansfield – a match brought about by Sir Charles. The latter writes,

> as from [Lord W.], that he proposes a jointure of 1200*l.* a year, peny-rents [*sic*], and 400 guineas a year for [the bride's] private purse; and that his Lordship desires, that Miss Mansfield will make a present to her sister of whatever she may be intitled to in her own right. (2:285)

Lady Beauchamp, whom he manipulates into raising her stepson's allowance and recalling him to England, proves more recalcitrant. However, she, too, is brought to adopt the kind of behaviour Sir Charles has let her know will

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be approved of. Thus, he tells her husband in her presence: “The moment *you* ask for her compliance, she will not refuse to your affection, what she makes a difficulty to grant, to the entreaty of an almost stranger” (2:282). Lady Beauchamp has previously done precisely this, but now she would have to repeat her refusal in front of a handsome stranger. If, on the other hand, she does what Sir Charles has just let her know he expects, she can present herself as an affectionate wife, overcome by her husband’s entreaty, and pretend that she is swayed by *his* entreaties, rather than Sir Charles’s manipulation. In the end, she even surprises the hero by her “emanation (shall I call it?) of goodness” (2: 283).[145] His mediation ends with another re-presentation of truth. “I think that the father and stepmother should have the full merit with our Beauchamp of a turn so unexpected”, he writes to Dr. Bartlett, asking him not to pass on any details about the negotiations with Lady Beauchamp (2:284).

In the process of reforming his ward’s mother and stepfather, the O’Haras, an even more complex transaction occurs. When this couple first appears, they are threatening, disruptive figures. Mrs. O’Hara, the reader learns, has abused her daughter violently, even threatening that “she would trample [Emily] under her foot”(2:24).[146] She has, moreover, led a ‘vicious’ life; it is initially not clear that she is actually married to Major O’Hara. The couple and one of their friends visit Sir Charles in an attempt to gain control of Emily, and thus of her money. When he refuses, they threaten and attack him; he defends himself and turns them out of his house (2:67). The threat constituted by these characters, however, exceeds the physical or financial harm they may do to Emily or Sir Charles. They also create a conflict of duties. Emily, as her guardian emphasises, should respect her mother, and the girl tries to do so. (Luckily, she also must obey her guardian, since her dead father has conferred this authority on Sir Charles – therefore he can protect her.) However, before she can safely act the part of a dutiful daughter, Mrs. O’Hara and her husband must be induced to mend their own behaviour.

Sir Charles incentivizes them by giving them voluntarily a part of what they had tried to gain by force or trickery: more money. He explains to them that Emily wishes to give each an annual sum out of her own inheritance. The gift of 100*l.* to the major should be “for [their] mutual use” and paid “quarterly, during Mrs. O-Hara’s life” – on the assumption that he will be a good husband. Mrs. O’Hara, in her turn, is to “accept, as from the *Major*, another 100*l.* a year, for pin-money” (2:310; italics original). The merit of generosity is here

145 Cf. also Shepherd 193–5 for a discussion of this scene.

146 This episode may be another concession to Mulso, who had written about a mother who “used frequently to strike [her daughters] down on the floor, and then trample on them” (230).

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distributed to different individuals. By presenting the gift as the major's, Sir Charles posits a debt of gratitude which Mrs. O'Hara owes to her husband. This debt is complemented by the obligation she indirectly confers on Major O'Hara – their benefactress, after all, is her daughter. Over and above these artificial and yet real debts, Sir Charles's formulation also highlights Emily's generosity, the more so as she does not claim gratitude for herself, but for other people. Finally, the merit of the transaction reflects on Sir Charles himself, not only as the guardian on whose approval the donation depends, but also as the possible source of Emily's generosity. After promising the money on Emily's behalf, he takes his ward aside and hands her banknotes to give to the O'Haras – with the injunction to let "the motion be all [her] own" (3:311). The carefully administered bribe successfully normalizes the family relationship. Emily can now safely visit her mother; soon, she even reports that the latter now repents her many sins. The hero's intervention has changed not only appearances, but reality.

Dussinger has noted that "Richardson exalted the masculine role as mastery over others through the agency of imposing obligations that ultimately cannot be repaid" ("Debt without Redemption" 60). This is true in many senses. First, in contrast to Pamela or Clarissa, Sir Charles has direct access to money; he can give when and to whom he likes, and he is rich enough to be independent of financial help. Moreover, because he is a man, he will retain this freedom even when he marries. This liberty allows him to decide on a case-by-case basis whether he will present himself as a donor, donate in the name of others, or teach someone to become a giver "as from himself". In the last two cases, repayment is especially difficult, for how can a gift be returned to someone who has not himself bestowed it? Sir Charles's mastery of the gift guarantees his mastery of other people. Latimer describes his impact on other men as the relationship between master and apprentice: "Most of the men in *Grandison* end by voluntarily accepting Sir Charles as a guide, and most of them 'grow up' to take their place as fully fledged masters of houses and families in their own right, having learnt their 'art' from him – but never able to forget their original debt to him" (*Making Gender* 175).

As we will see, however, at least one man – Lord G. – fails when he tries to imitate Sir Charles. What he must learn instead – and from his wife – is to renounce the position of donor and moral guide. Nevertheless, it is generally true that the hero's example both inspires other men and puts pressure on them to model their behaviour on his. Since other marks of 'masculinity' (such as duelling and seduction) are exposed as sinful, becoming a donor is one of the few strategies left to demonstrate one's manliness. It is therefore appropriate that Greville, the most 'masculine' of Harriet's rakish suitors, tries to employ Sir

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Charles's strategies to conceal his own failed courtship of Harriet. At first, he threatens the hero, but when forced to acknowledge that threats are ineffectual, he changes his strategy. Instead of challenging Sir Charles, he asks for his friendship, openly going to church with him, Harriet and her family. There, he pretends to give her hand to Sir Charles (3:84). For a moment, he establishes the fiction that he has power over both, that he is Sir Charles's benefactor and that Harriet is, as he has always wished, 'his'. While this, understandably, angers Harriet, he is later able to move her when he blesses her (although this act, too, has associations with authority, as in a father's blessing) (3:88). In a parallel to Mrs. O'Hara's reformation, the deceit which began in an effort to bolster Greville's reputation turns into something more real. It is noteworthy, however, that Greville is unable to keep up these appearances thoroughly. He throws out more threats against the hero; although these come to nothing, they demonstrate his own comparative unworthiness (and give rise to Harriet's womanly fears which will later serve to establish 'pusillanimity' as truly feminine).

Other male donors act with more real generosity, but rarely with more success. The Porrettas, who wish to reward Sir Charles, are thwarted first when he refuses to accept their gift of Clementina on their own terms and convert to Catholicism. Later, they agree to let him marry Clementina according to a compromise which he has suggested, but their debt to him has already increased: not only has he saved Jeronymo's life, he has now also been the means of re-establishing his health as well as Clementina's sanity. And while they still believe that Clementina is an ample reward for all this, they are again thwarted, for the Italian heroine decides to reject the hero. Her choice of religion over love has a curious effect; it exalts her and shows that virtue is more attractive even than the hero, but it also ensures that, once again, the hero escapes being indebted (cf. Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 83). It is perhaps important that it is the male Porrettas more than Clementina who are thus unable to reward Sir Charles. As we shall see, Clementina still manages to show her 'magnanimity' by imploring Harriet to reward him as her substitute (cf. 3.5). Similarly, Harriet is, as the hero claims, able to lay an obligation on him. Her relations, in contrast, fail to do so. Anxious that Harriet's fortune will seem inappropriate as a dowry, they explain to Sir Charles that they will jointly add to it – only to be refused by the hero, who, of course, has money enough of his own. Clementina's and Harriet's feminine versions of generosity can coexist with the hero's dominance, but more traditional male forms of giving might threaten Sir Charles's status as patriarch.

Even in less weighty cases, obliging Sir Charles is difficult, although some donors are able to force presents on his family, or to refuse to accept his presents

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to them. Thus, Sir Rowland Meredith persuades Sir Charles, and thus Harriet, to accept jewellery from him as her 'father' as a wedding present. That this gift is an obligation laid on Sir Charles as well as on her becomes clear when Sir Charles promises to make a similar present whenever Sir Rowland's nephew marries (3:298). Sir Rowland fails to 'keep' Sir Charles and Harriet under obligation to him, but he succeeds in initiating an exchange of gifts – thus expressing both his admiration for the couple and his own disinterestedness and generosity. Another man who succeeds in modifying the network of obligation envisaged by Sir Charles is Mr. Lowther, the retired surgeon who is instrumental in improving Jeronymo's health so much that the latter can later follow his sister to England. He rejects Sir Charles's promised remuneration, arguing that the Porrettas have already rewarded him so much that he will not accept double remuneration. Sir Charles is forced to submit, even though Harriet remembers he had "stipulated with Mr. Lowther, that he should receive no fee, but from [Sir Charles]" (3:301). Harriet's remark indicates a slight irritation, but all persons involved profit morally. Mr. Lowther shows his fairness and independence, Sir Charles's ineffectual wish to bear all expenses proves his generosity, and the Porrettas are, for once, able to repay an obligation.

If giving is difficult for men, it is generally assumed, it must be more so for women, whose gender restricts the roles they may play as well as their access to money. Once a woman is married, moreover, everything she can give her husband – or others – is already his (cf. Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 81). In a statement which seems to build on but extends Dussinger's claim that masculinity in Richardson's novels is constituted by the ability to give and the power which this entails, Zionkowski has argued that male "authority requires the total exclusion of women as agents in gift transactions" (*Women and Gift Exchange* 77). My argument, on the contrary, is that women's exclusion from 'masculine' power frees them from the direct competition of the hero. Their ability to make expensive presents is, indeed, limited; as we shall see, Lady Olivia's effort to lay an obligation on the hero in this way is doomed. This specific gift, however, fails in part because the female donor tries to vie with the hero in 'masculine' mastery. Those female characters who succeed in exerting influence through gifts do so in less aggressive ways, for example by continuing to practice the generosity which the hero has taught them, or by bestowing non-material yet precious gifts. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will discuss the case of four women who try to take an active role in gift exchange.

One of these female givers is Emily. Inspired by her guardian's management of the gift discussed above, she decides on a present for her mother which is really "all her own". In consequence of Sir Charles's generosity to Mrs. O'Hara

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and her husband, the two become “very good” and “quite religious” (3:167), joining a Methodist society. Since their new church is at a considerable distance from their home, Emily decides to increase their comfort by giving them a chariot; she even ascertains that her mother and stepfather will have the means for its upkeep. Nevertheless, the teenage would-be donor involves herself in unexpected difficulties. Emily, who has other expenses as well, soon finds herself in debt and needs to apply to her guardian for help. At the same time, the O’Haras, as a mark of their reformation, refuse to accept the present of the coach until they know whether their daughter’s guardian approves. As is to be expected, Sir Charles rewards Emily’s generosity with his praise and more money. The O’Haras and the girl react with helpless tears of gratitude. “O Sir, you made us all infants!” Emily reports in her next letter to him (3:171). She is referring to their tears, but her words carry an additional meaning. Sir Charles teaches, inspires, controls and protects his “infants” like a good father, and even ‘good’ children, it appears, need all this. Emily can be a donor *through* Sir Charles, but she remains second to him.

If Emily’s blunders are, perhaps, not very remarkable in a teenage girl, her position is similar to that of older women. Lady Beauchamp, like Emily, is taught by the hero how to bestow gifts, although she, unlike the girl, must also be taught how to be ‘good’. Initially, Lady Beauchamp is presented as a threatening figure, despite Sir Charles’s admission that she “is not destitute of some good qualities” (1:463). A rich and relatively young widow, she falls in love with, and even has a proposal made to, Edward Beauchamp. When she is rejected, she instead marries his father Sir Harry, a position which at least ensures her power to torment the man who did not return her love. She persuades Sir Harry to banish his son to the continent, giving him only a scanty allowance. Under Sir Charles’s tutelage, however, this Phaedra-like evil stepmother undergoes an astonishing transformation. After being flattered (and covertly insulted) into generosity, she becomes, at Sir Charles’s instigation, a ‘mediator’ between the very father and son whom she herself had kept apart. Surprisingly, she retains this position even after the hero leaves. Subsequent references to the Beauchamps are full of reports of her generosity. Later, when Sir Harry dies and Beauchamp inherits, her step-son is enabled to return her kindness. They both call in Sir Charles to negotiate her settlement as a widow, but in fact, mediation is unnecessary, as both parties prove themselves generous. As the scene ends, issues of gift giving dissolve into (almost) equal friendship, as Lady Beauchamp asks to be admitted as a third into the friendship of Beauchamp and Sir Charles (3:294). Despite Sir Charles’s secretly contemptuous manipulation of her, it emerges that she is

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far more capable of "reasoning" than would appear at first.[147] By her graceful submission to, and *application* of, the hero's teaching, the evil stepmother has succeeded in finding her place among the virtuous.

Even those who have little to give may, by skilful management, attain power, and mere superiority of financial resources is by no means enough to become a powerful donor. The potential of a recipient's shaping the meaning of gifts finds its clearest expression in the relationship between Charlotte and her suitor-then-husband Lord G. The latter is not only wealthy, but is also genuinely generous. Nevertheless, his efforts to confer obligations are shown to be at the mercy of his wife. Charlotte, we have seen, has more in common with her brother than her more conventionally good sister. She shares with him the skill of role play and argument; the difference between them is that she does not always subordinate her abilities to moral considerations – and that the use she is expected to make of them is severely limited by gender norms. This is because Charlotte, as daughter, sister and wife, is supposed to fill the role of recipient. In his carefully balanced sermons on matrimonial duties, Delany assumes that a husband's duties – "love, fidelity, and support" – correspond to a wife's obligation of "Love, Fidelity, and Obedience" (32, 47; sermons II–III). While granting that on occasion, the wife may be more qualified to support the family than her husband, he does not relativize her duty of obedience, which in itself limits her powers of giving (cf. 45, sermon II).

Through the early part of their marriage, it is consistently Lord G. who gives presents, but it is Charlotte who, in her letters, defines their meaning and, through them, her husband's character (cf. also Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 82). One of his earliest gifts is actually given not to his bride, but to another collector, and this is less the result of his generosity than of his dependence on Charlotte's opinion. The present – his collection of butterflies – is initially introduced as proof of his learning and intelligence. Sir Charles, himself a traveller who profited from his stay abroad, gives Lord G. "an opportunity to shine" as a "traveller", "a connoisseur in Antiquities, and in those parts of *nice* knowledge [...] with which the Royal Society here, and the learned and polite of other nations, entertain themselves" (1:229). Yet his erudition, potentially masculine, is turned by Charlotte into undue attention to little things. Telling Harriet that Lord G. "will shew [them] his collection of Butterflies, and other gaudy insects", she adds:

147 Latimer has argued that "Sir Charles declares at the outset that he will not 'offer to reason' with Lady Beauchamp [...]. Lady Beauchamp represents the haughty, irrational woman of Juvenal and his imitators; ratiocination is not an appropriate mode for engaging her" (*Making Gender* 61). This is true for his initial dealings with her, but she goes on to prove her ability to change and become worthy of a different treatment.

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Will you make one?—
Of the gaudy insects! whisper[s Harriet].—
Fie, Harriet!—One of the party, you know, I must mean. (1:229)

The misunderstanding which Charlotte provokes momentarily casts Lord G. in the role of rakish seducer, collecting female "butterflies", only to make clear that he pursues the wrong kind of "gaudy insects". Indeed, his attention to minuscule, colourful things like butterflies and shells positions him in the role of fops and females and undermines his claim to the superior knowledge that Sir Charles gives him credit for. The very determinacy of gender roles enables Charlotte to denigrate his qualities, which are too close to those her mother is praised for – such as "her fine taste in architecture, paintings, needleworks, shell-works" (3:277). Significantly, it is Charlotte who suggests he give his collection of shells to Emily, who, as a teenage girl, will be suitably employed by them.[148]

It is, then, through material possessions that Charlotte's deconstruction of her husband's authority is carried on, while Lord G. tries to employ gifts to win her affection. However, whereas the well-managed generosity of Sir Charles results in the love and respect of his environment, Lord G.'s is represented by Charlotte as either effeminate taste or arrogant domination. While it secures to him the pity of both his and her family, the very fact that he cannot uphold his interpretation of his gifts against his wife lends plausibility to her mockery. Thus, his giving away his collections is read not as a maturing of his character, but as a "compliment", or rather, an undue submission, to his wife; the trifles he relinquishes merely mean that he may have to find other trifles. "And by what study, thought I [Charlotte], wilt thou, honest man, supply their place? If thou hast a talent this way, pursue it; since perhaps thou wilt not shine in any other" (2:417). As it happens, he replaces his shells, emblems both of natural science and of trifling, with an antiquarian, but also house-wifely, interest in "old Japan china" (2:418) – a gift to his wife, which, however, serves to emphasise further the comparative effeminacy of his taste. Harriet later reports that Lady Grandison's collection of china is the finest she has ever seen, with the exception of the set which Lord G. has bought for Charlotte (3:270).

If Charlotte's ability to re-define gifts is used to undermine her husband's position, Sir Charles uses the same skill to clarify and reinstate proper gender roles. This is exemplified by an episode involving Lady Olivia, who, as a rich

148 The reference to Lady Grandison's taste was put into the novel to compensate for ridiculing an interest in shells – this had offended Richardson's friend Lady Bradshaigh, herself a shell-worker (cf. 3:482, note to p. 277). Richardson tried to make up for it, but although he may 'rescue' shell-work, the damage with regard to Lord G. is done.

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orphan, would appear to be as free to dispose of her possessions as Clarissa is when making her will. After trying, unsuccessfully, to win Sir Charles, Olivia sends him, "as a token of [her] past Love" (2:649), a family collection of medals. This puts him in a conflict: "It will give me pain [he tells her] to refuse any favour from Lady Olivia, by which she intends to shew her esteem of me: But favours of so high a price, will, and ought to, give scruples to one who would not be thought ungenerous" (2:651). Olivia's gift is oppressive because it cannot be reciprocated in a suitable manner. It is also, moreover, simply not hers to give. Like the dairy-house, pictures and plates of Clarissa's grandfather's will, they do not entirely belong to the individual currently in possession of them.

Olivia's gift of family medals, then, cannot be accepted by a moral paragon – but equally, Sir Charles cannot refuse it without appearing ungracious. What he finally does is exhibit the medals, for the time being, in his study. "They are not mine", he explains to his guests. "I only give them a place till the generous owner shall make some worthy man happy. *His* they must be. It would be a kind of robbery to take them from a family, that, for near a century past, have been collecting them" (3:271; emphasis original). In this short passage, Sir Charles manages to express many things. First, he is appreciative of Olivia's gift and thus not ungrateful. Second, he is nevertheless not really the recipient of her gift – it is not his; it will be her future spouse's. Olivia's gift has been ill-advised, but Sir Charles will rectify that by acting as her steward until she chooses a better one in the form of a husband (whom Sir Charles will oblige by giving him the medals). Finally, the passage clarifies why a woman can rarely be the giver of material gifts: she can freely own possessions only if she is not under the authority of a male head of a household. Olivia is, at present, her own mistress, but since she can be expected to marry, she is not free to give away the potential possessions of her future husband and children. The one gift she is allowed, as well as required, to make is that of herself.

3.5 Women among themselves

Most of the statements above have concerned relationships between men and women; in this section, I will place a particular focus on women – on the relationship of "[c]ommodities among themselves" (Irigaray 192). Gifts in human form, it has been suggested, cannot be givers. Indeed, Gayle Rubin explains the implications of Lévi-Strauss's theory on the exchange of women as follows:

> If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the woman being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it. The

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> exchange of women does not necessarily imply that women are objectified, in the modern sense, since objects in the primitive world are imbued with highly personal qualities. But it does imply a distinction between gift and giver. If women are the gifts, then it is men who are the exchange partners. And it is the partners, not the presents, upon whom reciprocal exchange confers its quasi-mystical power of social linkage. The relations of such a system are such that women are in no position to realize the benefits of their own circulation. As long as the relations specify that men exchange women, it is men who are the beneficiaries of the product of such exchanges—social organization. (174)

Relationships in *Grandison* have frequently been read in precisely such terms. Thus, Latimer believes that Sir Charles is eager to marry Charlotte because this will lead to a bond between him and his brother-in-law: "Why is Sir Charles so eager to effect this transferral [of Charlotte to Lord G.]? / The answer is that it is the responsibility of the masculine individual to create not just marriages, but social networks through marriage, which is really a cementer of male-male relations" (*Making Gender* 171). Only the women, it would seem, can provide such bonds, for Sir Charles, "as a man, is never in circulation" (Eagleton 99).

Since women's worth is decided by their exchange value, it seems logical that they perceive each other as rivals. To bolster self-confidence, they must 'cheapen' others. Latimer, who analyses in detail the mechanisms by which Richardson's heroines can present themselves as rational and valuable individuals, sees the depreciation of rivals as one such instrument (albeit not the most important one). In Latimer's reading, Pamela's pity for Sally Godfrey, or Harriet's comparison of herself to women like Charlotte or Clementina, serve to bolster their own position by highlighting others' faults: "The distancing mechanism implicit in Pamela's and Harriet's narration can serve, then, not only to remove the fallen woman from proximity to the heroine, but also to suggest the damaging lack of judgement common to other women who share virtuous qualities with the heroine" (*Making Gender* 96). In her reading of *Grandison*, Harriet needs to distance herself not only from the misogynist stereotypes of her society, but also from other potential heroines.[149]

149 Latimer's analysis of Pamela and Harriet as distancing themselves from less worthy rivals resonates with some of the reactions that Florian Stuber has recorded on the part of his students, with whom he read *Pamela*: "'It is with malice that I look forward to the day when Pamela is abused so she will be on the same level of all of us who have been abused. I respect her convictions toward virtue – yet I want her to be tampered with and become a weak human being. I feel if Pamela holds to her convictions she will be a much stronger, better person than myself'" ("Teaching *Pamela*" 16). Latimer's Pamela has to deal with a weaker, not a stronger, 'rival', but in her analysis, as in that of Stuber's student, the other must be pulled down in order to ensure a level of self-respect.

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In what follows, I will contest most of the above conclusions. The relationship between women in *Grandison*, I argue, is characterized by a struggle for solidarity and empathy, not by attempts to devalue others (although such attempts can be a part of the process). Women are not given in marriage to strengthen male-male bonds (although Charlotte must marry in order to have a male 'protector'). Sir Charles *is* "in circulation" (although this circulation is largely imaginative). Richardson's good women, I argue, strive to find means to form meaningful bonds with each other *within* a system that "specif[ies] that men have certain rights in their female kin, and that women do not have the same rights either to themselves or to their male kin" (Rubin 177). The general tendency of *Grandison* is that "the protagonists are educated to empathize with rather than to triumph over the other", and this "education" is depicted in most detail with regard to the female characters (Chaber, "*Sir Charles*" 198).

Enmity between women is not the only possible response to patriarchy, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have noted. Although they agree that "female bonding is extraordinarily difficult in patriarchy" (38), they also suggest that solidarity can be more important for women than for men. When it comes to the female writer, they argue, women are precisely not looking for a rival, but for a model: "far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, [a *female* precursor] proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible" (49). Gilbert and Gubar connect this model of female solidarity to authorship and the need to "legitimize [the writer's] own rebellious endeavors" (50). However, the same strategy is also more widely applicable. If one method of dealing with women's inferior position is rivalry – the attempt to gain self-worth through being better than all other women – another possible strategy is to uphold the worth of *all* women, and thus, by implication, oneself. Harriet frequently makes this point explicit, protesting that she desires no compliments "at the expense of [her] sex" (1:40), and that her individual faults do not justify criticism of women in general (cf. 1:34). Clarissa and Anna similarly comment that women, who share a precarious position within the structures giving power in this world, should show solidarity out of pity, justice, and self-interest. The former rebukes her sister Arabella for violating female solidarity; although her statement may be strategic, it is consistent with her general attitude.

In *Grandison*, both possible responses to female anxiety – rivalry as well as solidarity – are included in the plot. The contrasting motivations are embodied in Harriet, who successfully struggles to overcome her jealousy and instead forms loving bonds with most of the women she encounters, but especially with those most likely to rival her. In this respect, Pamela is a prefiguration of Harriet. In the midst of her jealousy of the Countess Dowager, she consistently

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writes of her in kinder terms than does her sister-in-law Lady Davers. Although there is certainly an element of scorn in her 'pity' for the alleged adulteress, this is still a comparatively friendly expression of superiority. As it transpires, the Countess Dowager is a far more admirable character than expected, and Pamela writes with equanimity, if not approval, of Mr. B.'s admiration of her potential rival – which will continue even though he breaks off the "*Platonick* Nonsense", or rather flirtation, which he had conducted with her (cf. *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 466). In her turn, the Countess Dowager unexpectedly proves her worth when she writes a letter of congratulations to Pamela after the latter survives the small-pox without any disfigurement (465). *Grandison* takes women's desire to be generous and just to each other yet a step further. 'Rivalry' becomes a means to form the very ties of friendship which it would seem to preclude. Women form bonds despite – or even through – the very mechanisms which tend to restrict their power over men. The mutual generosity of those who give despite having nothing leads to female friendships which become equally strong as the relationships which Sir Charles creates through his gifts – and the resulting friendships are far more equal than any achieved by men.

Women's solidarity/friendship is ultimately a source of pleasure and 'glory' in *Grandison*, although, at least initially, it is also a source of pain. In particular, Harriet suffers repeatedly in her self-esteem when she sees other women (the Grandison sisters, and later Clementina) as above herself. If there are many good women, they are replaceable; this is expressed in her imaginative identification of Sir Charles as a more perfect Adam, who would have refrained from sin and have waited for God to create him a second Eve. Indeed, if anxiety necessarily leads to rivalry, then the potential for strife among good women would seem to be intensified by the existence of a thoroughly good man. In *Clarissa*, the depravity or ineffectual goodness of men had strengthened female bonds. Solidarity among women was an obvious necessity, and female self-esteem was justified by the contrast between Clarissa and Anna, on the one hand, and abusive or weak men, on the other hand. In *Grandison*, in contrast, Sir Charles's superiority leads to a nagging feeling of unworthiness – not only in Harriet's case, whose love for the hero may realistically explain her insecurity, but also in others. Even her aunt, who is usually a model of decorum, fears appearing either indelicate or overscrupulous in her behaviour towards Sir Charles. Agonising over their decision not to invite him to stay at the Selbys' house – a decision made out of 'delicacy' – both Harriet and Mrs. Selby "thought all was not right; yet knew not that we were wrong" (3:44). Ashamed of their submission to "tyrant custom, and the apprehended opinion of the world", even these superior women wish in vain for the hero's guidance: "What would I give, said my aunt to me, this

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moment, to know *his* thoughts of the matter!" (3:45; emphasis in the original). Magically, "his" mere presence seems to lead to (minor) faults of conduct. Thus, after discovering that she was needlessly "petulant" at Sir Charles's prolonged absence, Harriet comments: "The fault is all my aunt's and mine—Was my aunt ever in fault before?" (3:49).

The hero's infallibility means that everyone feels a constant need for his avowed approbation. Indeed, the reader may feel that the force of "tyrant custom" is replaced merely by that of "the apprehended opinion" of the hero. His superiority, acknowledged by all, also means that Harriet feels she cannot deserve him. This, in turn, exacerbates her anxiety about Clementina. While she suffered patiently during Sir Charles's absence in Italy, she suddenly feels she is full of "caprices" and nervousness once the hero has actually proposed to her (3:41). These new feelings are almost always explicitly connected to Clementina, whom she regards as superior to herself. Supplanting her comes to seem immoral, and following her is fraught with anxiety. Ironically, then, the existence of "sister-excellencies"[150] is not unproblematic for good women. Within the harmonious world of *Grandison*, different strands of female fellow-feeling seem to be at work, including a sisterly solidarity which can perhaps be called proto-feminist in its awareness of a common cause, and the rivalry of "commodities in the marketplace".

This novel is, in strange ways, both male-centered and female-centered. On the one hand, the spreading of networks happens through women more often than through men, and women's friendships, however started, become strong and meaningful on their own terms. At the same time, however, there is no question of female communities in the way of Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*. The world of this novel is male-centered because, firstly, patriarchy (and women's role as wives and mothers) is so strongly endorsed, and, secondly, the hero immediately becomes the centre of all the characters' attention (although he also endorses, initiates and protects women's relationships, as we have seen above). On the one hand, there is room in this world for women's friendships – indeed, treachery to other women is, perhaps, the most unforgivable of all sins. The woman who is most harshly punished in this novel is Laurana, who abuses her cousin and former friend Clementina precisely when the latter is in most need of support.[151] On the other hand, a woman's worth is realised 'fully' only

150 Interestingly, Richardson used the same term to describe Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot's friendship (Schellenberg, *Correspondence* 82, 84; 12 Jun. 1753, to Elizabeth Carter).

151 Even Lady Betty Williams's greatest 'sin' is connected to other women: she fails to give a good example to her daughter.

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in her role at the side of a man. It is not surprising, then, that Harriet's anxiety over Clementina is so great, or that it finds symbolic expression in, among other things, her famous reference to Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Commenting on Sir Charles's suspense and prudent behaviour with regard to his as yet undecided courtship of Clementina, Harriet writes:

> But is not his conduct such, as would make a considerate person, who has any connexions with him, tremble? Since if there be a fault *between* them, it must be *all* that person's; and he will not, if it be possible for him to avoid it, be a sharer in it? Do you think, my dear, that had he been the first man, he would have been so complaisant to his Eve as *Milton makes Adam* […]—To taste the forbidden fruit, because he would not be separated from her, in her punishment, tho' all *posterity* were to suffer by it?—No; it is my opinion, that your brother would have had gallantry enough to his fallen spouse, to have made him extremely regret her lapse; but that he would have done *his own duty*, were it but for the sake of posterity, and left it to the Almighty, if such had been his pleasure, to have annihilated his first Eve, and given him a second—But, my dear, do I not write strangely? (2:609)

Sir Charles here takes a position somewhere between the 'old', fallen Adam and the 'new Adam', Christ. Although human, he is too perfect to have fallen needlessly in a prelapsarian world. Interestingly, the treatment of Eve is rather sympathetic here. What is emphasised is not her sin but her replaceability: God, if it had "pleased" him, could have provided a second Eve for Adam, who complacently awaits the divine decision.[152] What is beneficial to the 'good man' is problematic for his female counterpart. If good women are the rule rather than the exception, then their place vis-à-vis the hero is anything but certain, and if women still depend on men for the confirmation of their worth (as a "help meet" for them, Gen. 2.18), then such a replaceability threatens the individual woman even while validating women as a group.

Latimer, we have seen, argues that Harriet defends herself from these threats by subtly devaluing other women. In her reading, expressions of sympathy are a strategy in a power play. By presenting herself as sympathetic, Harriet highlights the inferiority of Clementina. It is remarkable, however, that the heroine's superiority *needs to take this specific form*. Harriet's rival is not a

152 Yates even links Harriet's 'Adam's' cheerful acceptance of a second Eve with Lovelace's many affairs (548). *Milton*'s Adam's "complaisant" behaviour is imitated not by Sir Charles, but by Clementina, who fears she would have converted to Protestantism had she married Sir Charles. Like Milton's Adam, her love for a human being tempts her to 'sin'. It seems that Richardson's best women equal the worth of Milton's Adam (rather than Eve), but then, Sir Charles's merits *exceed* Adam's.

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Molly Seagrim, a Mary Crawford, or a Lucy Steele, but a woman who, everyone emphasises, is inferior to Harriet mainly by differing from the hero in her religion.[153] The need to express admiration for one's rivals – whether the praise is sincere or not – arises only because *Grandison* contains more than one woman who could qualify as heroine. Richardson did not only object to explicit expressions of misogyny (especially by women, cf. also Eaves and Kimpel 565).[154] He carefully constructed a narrative which shows that good (or reformable) women are the norm rather than the exception[155] – and he shows the consequences this has for the heroine, who must deal with the existence of a "sister-excellency".

Harriet's feelings of inferiority to Clementina are, I suggest, heartfelt (and precisely therefore accompanied by half-conscious jealousy). Interestingly, Harriet's struggles with a female rival – and, even more, her own anxiety, directed both (unconsciously) towards Clementina and towards her own possible unworthiness – constitute a redirection of focus of the novel. Early in the first volume, Harriet forges a link to Richardson's previous novel, *Clarissa*, when she denounces predatory males and highlights the danger of welcoming them in polite society:

> The hyæna, my dear, was a *male* devourer. The men in malice, and to extenuate their own guilt, made the creature a *female*. And yet there may be male and female of this species of monsters. But as women have more to lose with regard to reputation than men, the male hyæna must be infinitely the more dangerous creature of the two; since he will come to us, even into our very houses, fawning, cringing, weeping, licking our hands; while the den of the female is by the highway-side, and wretched youths must enter into it, to put it in her power to devour them. (1:24)

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153 Critics like Latimer and Doody have rightly argued that there are, in fact, important differences of character, but these are not made explicit in the novel (cf. 3.6).

154 Keymer cites a letter from Jane Collier to Richardson, for example, where she expects that he will criticize her for a negative "general Reflection upon Women", although she also remarks that his judgment is not really far from hers ("Jane Collier" 151–2).

155 Richardson's correspondent Skelton had suggested not only that his "good man" should suffer, but also wrote: "I hope you intend to give us a bad woman, expensive, imperious, lewd, and at last a drammer. This is a fruitful and a necessary subject, which will strike, and entertain to a miracle. You are so safe already with the sex, that nothing you can say of a bad woman will hinder your being a favourite, especially if now and then, when your she-devil is most a devil, you take occasion to remark how unlike she is to the most beautiful, or modest, or gentle, or polite, part of the creation" (Schellenberg, *Correspondence* 52; 10 May 1751). While Richardson seems to have made use of the constituent parts of Skelton's outline, none of his "bad women" in *Grandison* are as threatening as those in his earlier novels; they are not "she-devils", but objects of the hero's successful reformatory schemes.

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The "fawning" hyena is reminiscent of Lovelace and prepares the reader for Sir Hargrave's attack on the heroine. However, men's "malice" extends beyond the monstrosity of seduction. While only some men – and some women – are monsters, Harriet suggests that this monstrosity is, when it occurs, naturally male, and men in general share the guilt of projecting their own failings onto women. Harriet's argument is essentially proto-feminist. Yet by the end of the novel, the dangers of hyenas male and female have entirely given way to Sir Charles's virtue. With all potential malefactors neutralised or excluded, there is space – but also the need – for finding one's place within virtuous society.

Harriet's attitude towards Clementina is complex. For a long time, it seems clear to her that this woman has unquestionable 'first rights' as Sir Charles's acknowledged first love, and as one who has triumphed in a struggle between love and duty which Harriet has not had to fight (cf. her juxtaposition of her own and Clementina's situation, 2:158). When Clementina rejects Sir Charles, this feeling is not immediately changed; it is, however, complicated by other considerations. Clementina turns from an exemplar to be imitated into a potential rival for Sir Charles's heart. As Jeronymo notes, Sir Charles can never stop loving Clementina (3:161), and Harriet does not believe Clementina can stop loving him. By marrying Sir Charles herself, she finds herself in danger of robbing a worthier rival even while losing Sir Charles's heart to her.

The various horrifying possibilities are combined into Harriet's nightmare during her engagement, which is apparently triggered by her fears that Greville may attack Sir Charles. However, in her dream, Harriet is clearly not preoccupied with this specific threat. Instead, most of the dream events which she reports are clearly expressions of the *emotional* dangers she fears: "I was married to the best of men: I was *not* married: I was rejected with scorn, as a presumptuous creature." Trying to hide, she is alternately "dragged" from her hiding place for punishment or for glorification. In one version of the dream, where Harriet again is married, Sir Charles "upbraided me with being the cause that he had not Lady Clementina. He said, and *so* sternly! I am sure he cannot look so sternly, that he thought me a much better creature than I proved to be: Yet methought, in my own heart, I was not altered" (3:148). The prospect of marriage to Sir Charles has indeed made concealment (figured by the cave in her dream) impossible to Harriet. Despite her far-reaching reputation at the beginning of the novel, she is now more immediately in the spot-light as Sir Charles's bride and the successor to Clementina. Instead of the simple alternative she envisaged early in their acquaintance – marriage or no-marriage – she is now confronted with the possibilities of scornful rejection, or of losing esteem in the very marriage she had wished for.

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This fear seems to hark back to Harriet's self-contempt after the masquerade: although she feels that she is "not altered", Sir Charles accuses her of being less worthy than she seemed. Alteration of the heart is, of course, also something that Harriet has had to combat before her engagement. Before she knows Clementina's full story, her jealousy of a "foreign Lady" tempts her to a degree of xenophobia; as she notes with some dismay, "I never, till of late, was so narrow-hearted" (2:110). The disappointment which Sir Charles expresses in her dream thus echoes Harriet's earlier, pained self-analysis. At a time when she already admires Clementina, but cannot yet sincerely wish the hero to marry her, she admits: "I do aver, Lucy, upon repeated experience, that Love is a narrower of the heart. Did I not use to be thought generous and benevolent, and to be above all selfishness? But am I so now?" (2:131). Even after the engagement, she suffers from fits of petulance against Sir Charles himself, as well as against friends who deflect his attention from herself.

However, the same dream which expresses the heroine's self-doubt and jealousy also offers a glimpse of an alternative vision. When Harriet, "dragged" from her hiding place,

> expected to be punished for my audaciousness, and for repining at my lot, I was turned into an Angel of light; stars of diamonds, like a glory, encompassing my head: A dear little baby was put into my arms. Once it was Lucy's; another time it was Emily's; and at another time Lady Clementina's!—I was fond of it, beyond expression. (3:148)

In her dream, Harriet merges with other women. Her apotheosis links her to the virgin Mary and thus to the Catholic Clementina. The baby might be a symbol and the fruit of her marriage to Sir Charles, yet it is not hers, despite being given to her; instead it is Lucy's, Emily's, or Clementina's. It simultaneously divides her from, and links her to, the man she desires, but *through* the women to whom she is likewise connected. Through Lucy, it links her to her own family and her childhood friends; through Emily, to Sir Charles's family (and companionship in the expectation of renouncing Sir Charles); through Clementina, to her strongest rival *and* "sister-excellency". In Harriet's dream, bliss is not represented through the union of hero and heroine, but through the union of women connected to both. It holds out the comfort of female companionship in the face of loss (if the child is Clementina's, this suggests the Italian has married the hero after all), and the comfort of shared joy in the face of success (if Harriet is "an Angel of light", she must surely be the hero's ultimate choice).[156]

156 For a discussion of Harriet's dream and its implications, see also Flynn 134–6. She, too, sees the dream as an expression of Harriet's general anxiety rather than the result of

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Of all the fragmented visions in Harriet's dream, this joining of the women comes closest to the events that follow. The baby turns out to be Harriet's own (the novel ends with her pregnancy), but she will receive the support and love of these three as well as other women, who should also, it is suggested, follow her to marriage and motherhood. Instead of severing connections, Harriet's marriage to Sir Charles is strengthened by her ties to women and strengthens them in return. The English heroine's internal struggles to live with her fears of inferiority, as well as to love and admire Clementina as she deserves, are rewarded when Clementina herself prays for her union with Sir Charles. This is the more striking as Clementina – despite her wish that Sir Charles marry someone else – has previously shown far stronger symptoms of rivalry than has Harriet. In contrast to Harriet, for example, she has felt – and openly stated – her aversion to Olivia, and her concern for a good wife for the hero is mixed with her concern that she may be disgraced in his second choice. Yet when she hears that Sir Charles is actually going to propose to a Miss Byron, Clementina's thoughts and actions, as if by magic, come to resemble those of her "sister-excellency". Like Harriet, she acknowledges the pain which the hero's "divided love" may cause to her rival. In an apostrophe to her, she claims: "If it were in my power, I would make you amends for having shared a heart with you (so it seems) that ought, *my* circumstances and *your* merit considered, to have been all your own!" (3:160). After hearing that Lady Olivia has met and praises Harriet, she even extends her charity to her formerly most hated rival and admits: "Olivia has shewn greatness of mind in this instance. Perhaps I have thought too hardly of Olivia" (3:162). A little later, Mrs. Beaumont guesses (unless she has been told by the hero, but there is no indication of this) some of Harriet's thoughts on being addressed by Sir Charles:

> Miss Byron may very well imagine, as his Love of you commenced before he knew her, that she may injure you if she receive his addresses: You had the generosity to wish, when you were reading those his apprehensions, that you *knew* the Lady, and were able to influence her in his favour. (3:164)

Although Sir Charles is still Clementina's main concern, this leads her to become interested in, and empathise with, her English 'rival'. The immediate result of Mrs. Beaumont's speculation on Harriet's thoughts is a paper which combines in its form and content poetry, prayer, and letter, just as it unites the English hero and heroine with the Italian one: "Best of Men! / Best of Women! } Be

her fear of Greville – it "illustrate[s] the cost of voluntary compliance" (136). She does not, however, discuss the dream in relation to other women.

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ye One" (3:164).[157] Clementina literally puts hero and heroine almost on a par, using the same form of words for both, although the hero occupies the opening, 'higher' space. They join, however, in the capitalised "One", becoming, it seems, something greater than either could be alone. After assuring Harriet that Sir Charles will make her happy, and exhorting her to make him so, she blesses the couple, ending her letter by asking both of them to

Pray for Her [Clementina]!—
That, after this transitory life is over,
She may partake of Heavenly Bliss:
And
(Not a stranger to you, Lady, Here)
Rejoice with you both Hereafter! (3:164)

In heaven, there will be no more limits to virtuous love – but even on earth, Clementina asks for a connection to the woman who will be Sir Charles's wife. Harriet returns the compliment. The very next letter of the novel is hers to Sir Charles, commenting on Clementina's letter and the letter by Jeronymo which contains it. "Harriet's ambition will be gratified, in being accounted second to Her", she writes of Clementina, later adding an apostrophe to her absent 'rival': "My next-to Divine Monitress, it *shall* be my study to make Him happy!" (3:165). Her promise is addressed both to Clementina and to Sir Charles, and it is indirect in each case. If Harriet's promise is to reach Clementina, Sir Charles must copy Harriet's letter and send it to Jeronymo, who will show it to her. However, as a promise to Sir Charles to make *him* happy, Harriet's resolution is filtered through her address to Clementina. Although there is little doubt that she already wishes to make him happy for his own sake, Clementina's desires, Harriet suggests, are an additional reason to do so (and, possibly, reason enough in themselves).

The ultimate friendship between the English and the Italian heroine is only the most salient example of women actively seeking the friendship of other women. These relationships rest partly on the exchange of non-material 'gifts' like trust, advice and comfort. Frequently, however, they are structured around a more material gift, that "most precious item" – Sir Charles. Early in the novel, Harriet gives expression to her admiration of the hero in a curious day-dream: "I wish, with all my heart, that the best woman in the world were queen of a great nation; and that it was in my power, for the sake of enlarging Sir Charles's to do good, to make him her royal consort. Then am I morally sure, that I should be

157 The "disposition of the lines" cannot be imitated exactly in this format.

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the humble means of making a whole people happy!" (1:193). Dussinger has read this as a "daydream of matriarchy" ("Love and Consanguinity" 522). However, the one who will, apparently, do most "good" will be Sir Charles; it is not clear whether the "royal consort" will also take over the rule from "the best woman in the world" or whether they will rule jointly. Similarly, it is left open whether either Sir Charles or the queen take active part in arranging their marriage, although they will presumably be as "happy" as their people.

Even Harriet's own role is something of a mystery. The vision is a cover for her as yet unacknowledged love for the hero; to that extent, she can be assumed to identify with the queen (after all, she will later be called the "best of women"). However, she also identifies with the one who 'gives (up)' the hero, foreshadowing her determination to yield to Clementina's better claims to him. Moreover, this identification links her to the former Lady Grandison, who has educated him, to Clementina, who will pray for his union with Harriet, and even to the hero himself, who arranges several marriages for the good of all concerned. Her agency in the dream is peripheral – she does not wish to rule herself – and yet central, for it is she who brings about a match which will benefit "a whole people". She gives them the ideal king – just as she will later give a good example to her neighbours when she publicly marries the "Husband of [her] choice" (3:222). Harriet's day-dream thus encapsulates many of the central elements of the novel: diffuse but exemplary giving, unselfish solidarity, strong female agency which yet takes a private, domestic form.

Other women, too, try to 'give' Sir Charles. Early in the novel, when his involvement with an Italian woman is hardly guessed at, his sisters promise Harriet their influence. As she reports,

> They both embraced me, and assured me of their united interest. [...]
> [...] They were extremely solicitous to see their brother married. They wished it were to me, rather than to any other woman; and kindly added, That I had their hearts, even at the time when Lady Anne, by a kind of previous engagement, had their voices. (1:422–3)

As it turns out, the "voices" of Sir Charles's sisters can have no influence over him – not only because he is independent and morally superior, but because he is already half engaged. Soon after this scene, Sir Charles tells Harriet of Clementina and his intention to return to Italy, where he hopes he may help restore her sanity. Clementina eventually recovers – only to declare that she cannot marry Sir Charles. If she married him, she fears, she would convert to a religion which she considers heresy. In order to strengthen her decision,

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Clementina urges him to marry someone else (she does not yet know that he already has a woman in mind):

> You must marry!—Then, Sir, shall I not doubt of my adhering to my resolution. But, say not a word till I have told you, that the Lady must be an English woman. […]
> If you marry, Sir, I shall, perhaps, be allowed to be one in the party, that will make you a visit in England […]. You and your Lady, and perhaps your Sisters and their Lords, will return with *us*. Thus shall we be as one family. (2:630)

Sir Charles, then, who cannot be given, can yet be given up. Clementina's refusal to marry him frees him to court Harriet, whom, he claims later, he has loved from first sight (3:284).

Harriet, however, is at first unsure if she can accept him. Clementina's decision to give up love for religion has shown her to be a worthy partner for Sir Charles. Harriet remains ready to renounce Sir Charles even during their engagement:

> And what, my dear, if Lady Clementina *should* RELENT, as you phrase it? [… T]he high veneration I truly profess to have for Lady Clementina, would be parade and pretension, if, whatever became of your Harriet, I did not resolve, in that case, to *try*, at least, to make myself easy, and give up to her prior and worthier claim: And I should consider her *effort*, tho' unsuccessful, as having intitled her to my highest esteem. To what we know to be right, we ought to submit; the more difficult, the more meritorious: And, in this case, your Harriet would conquer, or die. If she conquered, she would then, in *that* instance, be greater than even Clementina. (3:26–7)

It is thus by giving up that women in Grandison can be donors – and give gifts that rival Sir Charles's. Harriet, who is ready to give up the perfect man to a worthy rival, can surpass Clementina precisely by this act of generosity. As Jeronymo writes, "there *can* be but one woman greater than my sister—It is she, who can adopt as her dearest friend, a young creature of her own Sex in calamity (circumstances so delicate!) and for *her* sake, occasionally forget that she is the wife of the best, and most beloved of men" (3:452; the delicate circumstance is Clementina's flight to England, which will be discussed in the following chapter). Moreover, Harriet is able to lay Sir Charles himself under obligation, because, as his sister Charlotte notes, she marries him despite the fact that he can offer her only a "supposed divided love" (3:68) in return for her absolute love.

Harriet's generosity does not 'only' prove her worthiness to marry the hero. It is also the most obvious example of the way in which women in this novel regard each other as free agents and potential friends. Most of the friends that Harriet makes in the course of the novel she comes to know through Sir Charles, but her

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relationships with them become important in their own right. Charlotte becomes her major correspondent. Emily, Sir Charles's ward, wishes to live with Harriet, becoming her "ward" or "younger sister". Clementina is for her a shining example of a good woman, deserving of the best of husbands, and Clementina comes to return the sentiment. If Sir Charles is the original cause that these women meet, he is not the reason for their becoming fast friends. If, traditionally, one assumes that it is men who create relationships by exchanging women, the women in *Grandison* create relationships by giving up to each other Sir Charles.

The fact that they cannot ultimately control his actions is no hindrance to their friendship. Instead, it results in relationships where each woman is potentially both a donor and a recipient. Harriet is 'given' Sir Charles by Clementina but also 'gives' him in her turn – an exchange which results in mutual admiration rather than in the hierarchical friendships typical of Sir Charles's relationships to other men. Praise and gratitude among the women become so general that it becomes a moot question who owes more to whom. Even the fierce Olivia is capable of admiration of a rival. In her correspondence with Sir Charles, she admits:

> There is, among your countrywomen, one who seems born for *you*, and you for *her*. If *she* can abate of a dignity, that a first and only Love alone can gratify, and accept of a second-placed Love, a widower-bachelor, as I may call you, *she*, I know, must, will, be the happy woman. To *her* the slighted Florentine [i. e. Olivia herself] can resign, which, with patience, she never could to the proud Bologna [i. e. Clementina]. […] I loved, yet feared her, the moment I saw her. (2:647)

Although Olivia cannot quite wish for the match, she has at least the generosity to confess its suitability. By general consensus, Harriet is the one who best deserves the hero – precisely because she can give him up. His proposal occurs only once she is reconciled to his marriage with another (cf. Chaber, "*Sir Charles*" 197). And, magically, the man who cannot be controlled nevertheless marries the woman whom all other women have already 'chosen' as his bride. Although only one can ultimately be rewarded with the hero, the other women share vicariously in the joy of the union.

Women's bonds of friendship thus provide a counter-discourse to the idea that some obligations can never be repaid, and to the hierarchy endorsed by Sir Charles. Once women see each other primarily as friends rather than rivals, moreover, they can support each other in difficulties and help each other to personal growth. In the final volume of *Grandison*, the role of female mentor is exemplified in at least two instances. On the one hand, we have Mrs. Shirley's mentor Mrs. Eggleton. Harriet's wise grandmother recounts to the younger

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generation how she herself, as a romantic young woman, was 'cured' by her friend's advice from unreasonable expectations of pre-marital love. The tale of this 'conversion' provides a corrective to the expectations of romantic love which Harriet's happiness might raise in her friends and, by extension, in the readers of *Grandison.* However, Harriet, too, becomes a mentor to other women, most notably her husband's ward Emily, to whom she becomes "[an]other Guardian" (3:238).

Significantly, Emily, like Clementina, had at one point aroused Harriet's jealousy. Although there is never serious cause to believe that Sir Charles might want to marry his ward, her position grants her a closeness to her guardian which Harriet, as his honorary sister, cannot be assured of. However, Harriet quickly overcomes her jealousy, recognising it as unworthy and as cruel towards a girl who is worse than motherless. Now that she is safely married to Sir Charles, Harriet has to overcome another difficulty. Emily – not yet aware of her love for her guardian – has 'petitioned' to live with her and Sir Charles. Harriet, as well as her female confidantes, are aware that it is unwise for Emily to live so close to her guardian. However, refusing the girl's wish would entail hurting her feelings – either by forcing on her the conviction of her love, or by 'banishing' her without assigning a reason. Harriet's delicate navigation of this difficulty provides a prelude to the welcome she gives to Clementina when the latter elopes to England. It is Emily herself, however, who gives Harriet an opening to advise her.

After the first arrival of the married couple and some of their friends at Grandison Hall, Emily is uncharacteristically sullen – clearly an effect of unacknowledged jealousy. As Emily later explains, "while your suspenses lasted, I thought I loved you better than I loved my own heart: But when you were happy, and there was no room for pity, wicked wretch that I was! I wanted, methought, sometimes to lower you" (3:319). Emily, however, is finally able to recognise the symptoms. Precisely because her love for Harriet is genuine, she comes to suspect that her wish to "lower" her must originate not in any defect of her "other guardian" (as Emily calls her) or "elder sister" (as Harriet calls herself, 3:316), but in herself. She writes for advice to Dr. Bartlett, pretending that she is describing another woman's situation. Her suspicions confirmed by his reply, she confesses her love for Sir Charles to Harriet, asking her advice.

Harriet, however, refrains from suggestions. Although she and her friends have long concluded that absence from Sir Charles is the only remedy, she refers to Emily herself to find a solution. "What, my dear, did you think of doing yourself?" (3:320), she asks, and when Emily suggests she ought to "fly": "What can I say, my Emily? What *can* I say? Tell me, what would you wish me to say?" (3:321).

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Like another Socrates, Harriet subtly encourages Emily to form the resolution she has long believed to be necessary. However, by leaving the decision to the girl herself, she helps her preserve her self-esteem and confirms a friendship which might have been threatened by mutual jealousy. *Both* women prove their worth and find something to admire in the other. "In the same circumstances I doubt I should not be so generous as you are", Emily states, confirming Harriet's unique position as the one woman who is most able to feel for her rivals' plight (3:318). Yet Emily's courage to open her heart to the very woman of whom she is jealous, and her determination to counteract her improper love immediately, entitle her to admiration as well: "Charming fortitude! Heroic Emily!" Harriet responds to her communications. "How I admire you! I see you have thought attentively of this matter" (3:321). Emily decides to accept Mrs. Shirley's invitation to live among Harriet's relations in Northamptonshire (an invitation given, of course, because Emily's love has long been suspected), and this "preference [for living as far away from Sir Charles as possible], lifts her up above woman" (3:322). At the same time, Emily can tell Harriet that "in this instance of goodness, you more than equal Lady Clementina herself" (3:322).

This mutual love and praise reconfirms women's role as natural supporters of each other. Similarly, Harriet's refraining from exerting injudicious pressure on Emily confirms and anticipates the moral to be drawn from Clementina's story (cf. 3.6). Good women, the final volumes of *Grandison* suggest, are enabled to act most virtuously precisely when they are granted their free will. Just before her departure to Northamptonshire, Emily confesses to Harriet: "How good was [your grandmamma] on your wedding-day, to wish me, poor *me!* to supply to her the loss of her Harriet! Her goodness, her condescension, that of all your family, overcame me: It would *not*, perhaps, had I not tried the other experiment [of living with Harriet and Sir Charles]" (3:362). However, now that Emily has imitated Harriet in overcoming her jealousy, she can indeed, as the latter says, "be to my dearest friends what their Harriet so happily was!" (3:322).[158]

Opposed to these good women are those who act out of rivalry. They are doubly at fault – on the one hand, as women who show no solidarity, and,

158 Richardson's conscious aim to show the possibility of female friendship and solidarity is confirmed in a letter to Lady Echlin after the appearance of the last volume of *Grandison*. Against her misgivings, he defends the friendship between Harriet and Clementina: "I wanted to give an Example, against Cavillers at Female Friendships, of a truly disinterested one, and could I give a higher? Poets have made ungovernable Passion, Jealousy, Rage, Fury, to be the Consequences of a Rivalship in a Woman's Bosom. I wanted to shew that Meekness, Patience, Magnanimity, might have Place there, and govern the whole Conduct of a Woman ardently in Love" (Sabor, *Correspondence* 472; 24 Jul. 1754).

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on the other, as women succumbing to selfish passion. They embody the strictures Richardson often threw out against romantic love. As it is presented in *Grandison*, the "selfish" passion of love "puts two persons upon preferring their own interests, nay, a gratification of their passion often *against* their interests, to those of every-body else" (1:454). Lady Olivia, for example, can overcome her jealousy of Harriet in some measure, but continues to hate Clementina. She uses the latter's 'rash' flight to England in order to disparage her in public (cf. 3:412). This behaviour – especially ungenerous in a woman who has herself travelled to England because of her passion for Sir Charles – balances her generous praise of Harriet. As Richardson implied in the appendix, Olivia's fate is perhaps the only truly 'open' aspect of the ending (3:469). The reader does not learn whether she will act upon her best impulses, seek the company of good women and reform, or whether she will, on the contrary, lower herself to become the truly vicious woman that Skelton suggested Richardson include in the novel.

The fate of another bad woman, in contrast, is decided. Clementina's cousin, the "cruel Laurana" (e. g. 3:434), runs mad out of disappointed love and commits suicide; thus, Richardson comments in the appendix, she "has been punished, in kind, as we may say" (3:469). Like Harriet, Laurana had loved one of Clementina's suitors, in her case, the count of Belvedere. Motivated by the unreasonable hope that the count would be swayed by riches, she abuses Clementina during her insanity, hoping to break her so that she will enter into a nunnery and forfeit her inheritance, which would then fall to Laurana herself. Instead of admiring and supporting her worthy cousin as Harriet does, Laurana's off-stage cruelty to Clementina links her to the worst tormentors of worthy women in *Clarissa*. Unlike Harriet, therefore, she falls a prey to her passion. Although her madness could mitigate the guilt of her suicide, Harriet points out that she was in no state to deserve heaven while she was still sane (3:448). Shut out from the earthly paradise of the novel's ending, the reader must surmise she ends in hell.

3.6 Women, free will and control

Discussions of Richardson's third novel frequently involve two apparently contradictory issues: the importance of free will, and the prevalence of control. The former has been emphasized by Margaret Doody (*A Natural Passion*), while Carol Houlihan Flynn, among others, has highlighted the prevalence of "surveillance" and the pressure to "refin[e] individual desire into a rage to comply" (145). Latimer occupies an intermediate position: "*Grandison* is less interested in a passive female resistance to pressure than it is in the confirmation

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of a woman's actual choice – even if that choice is one which will subordinate her" (*Making Gender* 181).[159] As we have seen above, the very limited amount of power which women yield in *Grandison* does not preclude all kinds of agency. Although good women will regulate their emotions according to society's expectations, this power of self-control is a proof of their worth. In addition, the plot of the novel (as far as it is possible to speak of a single plot) indicates that self-control depends on a measure of individual freedom. Liberty and submission are, therefore, not contradictory with regard to the virtuous individual. Freedom will *lead* to submission in all cases where every party concerned – those in authority as well as those without it – adhere to the system of duty.

It is important to distinguish between coercion, manipulation and guidance. The first two indicate that the system has been disturbed, either because those in power abuse it or because those who are subordinate make an attempt at usurpation. In a smoothly running system, coercion is not necessary because the virtuous individual will seek to understand his or her own duty. In this context, it is interesting to consider a passage from Mulso's first letter on filial obedience, where she writes to Richardson that "you have given me leave to oppose my weak arguments to yours, till I can bring my reason to give its free assent to your opinion" (205). Whether this deference to his opinion is mere politeness or whether it expresses her real expectations is difficult to assess. In any case, Mulso and Richardson agree that a woman is justified in relying on her own "weak arguments" until she is induced by her "reason" to submit *freely* to another's (the man's) wisdom. Where both parties fulfil their own duties, coercion is replaced by voluntary obedience, on the one hand, and benevolent protection and guidance, on the other.

There are, nevertheless, cases where even such a general adherence to duty proves a strain: namely, when an individual's difficulty to fulfil her duty arises not from abuse of authority, but from her own unruly desires. Although

159 Latimer has, however, also highlighted the fact that, despite the importance of free will in *Grandison*, some elements of the story seem to contradict this general emphasis (cf. "'Apprehensions of Controul'"). In her analysis of the negotiations concerning Miss Mansfield's marriage to Lord W., Latimer has shown that the evidence provided makes it impossible to ascertain to what degree Miss Mansfield acquiesces in the marriage. Her silence – she never speaks her consent – can perhaps be explained with her position as an *exemplum* – in this case, for the possibility of an arranged marriage to turn out happy. The match raises a number of (mostly uncomfortable) possibilities: Miss Mansfield may be manipulated into marrying an aging rake; she may be mercenary; or she may indeed be able to love her husband out of gratitude. The problem can be solved either by giving extensive insight into Miss Mansfield's psyche, or by keeping her a shadowy figure, like Lady Grandison or like Haywood's Eudosia. Her importance for Richardson, apparently, does not entitle her to the former.

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Richardson emphasises that passions must and can be controlled, the cost of doing so is highlighted in his heroines' struggle to do right. In *Grandison*, such efforts are most clearly embodied in Clementina, the Italian heroine who has to resist her own passions even while being exposed to injudicious pressure by her family. The happy resolution of the conflict thus involves both an adjustment of the system of duty – which enables the Porrettas to reach a compromise with their daughter – and Clementina's victory over herself. For both problems, it is of crucial importance that she is granted the exercise of her own choice.

Grandison opens and closes by emphasising issues of free will, especially with regard to marriage. This issue is especially pronounced with regard to Clementina, but it is also very much present from the beginning and in connection to the English heroine. One of the first things the reader learns about Harriet is that she is entirely "her own mistress" (e. g. 1:64). "She is just turned of Twenty" (1:9); thus, she is the oldest of Richardson's heroines. Moreover, she is almost past the age "from sixteen to twenty-two" when, the married Charlotte thinks, "girls" are most susceptible to false romance (3:404). More importantly, she is an orphan. She is, thus, in the situation in which Mulso supposed a woman could shift for herself. In the second letter of her debate with Richardson, she asks rhetorically:

> Or suppose a *young* woman left an orphan (we will, however, suppose her a *woman*, of age to know the law she lives under, and to dispose of her own property), must she necessarily become the prey of some rapacious animal? and must she *of course* be unhappy, for want of prudence to conduct herself through life? [...] But you ask me what is to become of those young women who want prudence? Just the same that will become of *men* who want prudence [...]. (214–5)

As we shall see, Harriet's story is an implicit answer to Mulso's statement.

Harriet's situation as an independent woman is emphasized by the fact that her surviving relations are connected to her through the female line. As the only Byron among Selbys and Shirleys, dynastic ambitions and the continuance of the family line become unimportant – in marked contrast to the symbolic importance of Grandison Hall (cf. 3.7). The heroine's relationship to her family is, in fact, determined by love not hierarchy. The consequences of this are made clear when Mr. Greville comments on his chances of marrying her:

> The Grandmother and Aunt, to whom the Girl is dutiful to a proverb, will not interfere with her choice. If *they* are applied to for their interest, the answer is constantly this: The approbation of their Harriet must first be gained, and then their consent is ready. There is a Mr. Deane, a Man of excellent character for a Lawyer; but indeed he left off practice on coming into possession of an handsome estate. He was the girl's godfather.

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> He is allowed to have great influence over them all. Harriet calls him Papa. To him I have applied: But his answer is the very same: His *daughter* Harriet must choose for herself: All motions of this kind must come first from *her*.
> And ought *I* to despair of succeeding with the girl *herself*? (1:11)

Greville's description conjures up an alternative vision of 'duty' to the one I have described in part I. Harriet can be "dutiful to a proverb", and yet there is no hint of control. Moreover, the only 'paternal power' here – the godfather – uses the name of "daughter" not to insist on his own choice, but on Harriet's: "All motions of this kind must come first from *her*". So very great is the family's reliance on Harriet's own choice that their answer to Greville not only anticipates later norms for entering marriage, but goes beyond them. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, Mr. Darcy is the first to inform Mr. Bennett of his engagement to Elizabeth – although it is clear that her father respects her decision (355–6). Harriet, in contrast, is not only free to choose, but is also left, it seems, to manage all concerns of courtship for herself.

After confirming her agreement "to the parent's negative" in cases of marriage, Mulso had added that she would agree to it

> with still more pleasure, if the law you have laid down be allowed the weight it ought to have with all parents, that (at any time of the child's life from eighteen to thirty and upwards) the parents shall not, unless they can give superior reasons, refuse their consent to a child who, by her wisdom, prudence, discretion, justifies unexceptionably her passion for a particular object. (231–2)

Harriet's relations act according to this "law". Richardson thus signals his agreement with Mulso – but he also implies that this freedom can be a burden, partly because it interferes with notions of female delicacy. Clarissa, confronted with a lover who is both 'encroaching' and too 'modest' to properly urge an early day, writes in frustration to Anna: "I wanted somebody to speak for me" (423). Harriet's case is less 'delicate', for she is mostly concerned with *refusing* offers of marriage. Nevertheless, she finds the responsibility inherent in her freedom quite daunting. As she writes to Lucy after giving her "as good an account as I can […] of my two new lovers", Sir Rowland's nephew and Sir Hargrave Pollexfen:

> How I shall manage with them, I know not: But I begin to think that those young women are happiest, whose friends take all the trouble of this sort upon *them*; only consulting their daughters inclinations as preliminaries are adjusting.
> *My* friends indeed pay an high compliment to my discretion, when they so generously allow me to judge for myself: And we young women are fond of being our own

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> mistresses: But I must say, that to *me* this compliment has been and is a painful one; for two reasons; That I cannot but consider their goodness as a task upon me, which requires my utmost circumspection, as well as gratitude […]: Let me add besides, that now, when I find myself likely to be addressed to by mere strangers […] I cannot but think it has the appearance of confidence, to stand out to receive, as a creature uncontroulable, the first motions to an address of this awful nature. Awful indeed might it be called, were one's heart to incline towards a particular person. (1:64–5)

Female modesty, Harriet suggests, is almost incompatible with the frankness and determination necessary when answering proposals. Furthermore, Harriet's freedom implies a responsibility which she finds it hard to live up to.

A far more serious problem, however, is that many of her suitors will not respect her own decision. Indeed, we learn of the determination of Harriet's suitors before we know more of Harriet herself. In the first letter of the novel, her cousin Lucy reports that Greville and Fenwick announce that they will follow Harriet to London if she stays there long, and that Greville threatens to fight any successful rival (1:7). Harriet is quick to dispel any romantic illusions about their behaviour, emphasising instead their presumption: "[…] I think it very hard, that, when my nearest relations leave me so generously to my liberty, a man to whom I never gave cause to treat me with disrespect, should take upon himself to threaten and controul me" (1:14). In contrast to Charlotte, she disclaims all desire for "dangling fellows":

> I cannot bear, however, to think of their dangling after me wherever I go. These men, my dear, were we to give them importance with us, would be greater infringers of our natural freedom than the most severe Parents; and for *their own sakes*: Whereas Parents, if ever so despotic (if not unnatural ones indeed) mean *solely our good*, tho' headstrong girls do not always think so. (1:15)

Harriet's astute comment on male predators already prepares the reader for the novel's endorsement of women's free will combined with their need for a 'protector' (cf. 3.7).[160] The natural protector, it transpires, is the parent. The development of the argument cited above is instructive. At first, Harriet notes that "these men […] would be greater infringers of our natural freedom than the most severe Parents". The emphasis seems to lie on women's "natural freedom", and her condemnation of suitors over parents is justified. Not only do parents

160 Mulso was apparently ready to grant that women need some protection from such predators, but not forever. Just before the quote cited above (of a young orphan woman), she comments: "Suppose a woman lives single till forty; I fancy by that time the HAWKS, *vultures*, and *kites* will give her very little trouble" (214).

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have ‘natural’ authority over children according to the system of duty (and even according to Locke), but encroaching lovers aspire to at least an equal amount of control, either as husbands with their extensive prerogatives, or as seducers like Lovelace. However, Harriet then shifts the emphasis of her argument. Parents, she suggests, have their children’s good in mind, even “if ever so despotic” – the very plea which the Harlowes had made.[161] The possibility that *some* parents might be purely selfish (as Mulso had urged, and as Mrs. O’Hara demonstrates by her cruelty) is acknowledged only as an afterthought, literally bracketed off from the rest of her argument. “Unnatural” does here indeed mean against the rules of nature (not just ‘cruel’). By a final twist, despotic parents turn into protecting figures, for those who question their intention are “headstrong girls”, who, one may infer, are not to be trusted with the exercise of their “natural freedom”.

The main threat to “natural freedom”, therefore, does not derive from the system of duty (that is, the extensive but legitimate authority of parents and husbands). Instead, it derives from predatory males in combination with a lack of protection, or from female foolishness combined with a lack of guidance.[162] Both dangers are exemplified in some detail in the course of the novel. Thus, Charlotte’s entanglement with Captain Anderson is represented not so much as the desperate act of a daughter threatened with forced marriage, but as the foolish act of a young girl in want of guidance. Through her promise never to marry without her suitor’s consent while he is single, Charlotte observes, she has “made him my father, my guardian, my brother”, or at least forestalled her real father’s and brother’s influence (1:408). She has given him authority over her at the very time when she hoped to escape the fetters of filial duty. Harriet, who recounts the scene, might have remembered the role which fathers, brothers and one trustee (John Harlowe, although not Colonel Morden) play in *Clarissa* (which she has read), to explain that their influence might deserve to be forestalled. However, Charlotte’s statement should probably be read the other way round. Fatherly and brotherly influence, destructive as it can be, is at least legitimate in itself. However, the lover who arrogates to himself such a position is a usurper, and *qua* usurper probably the worse tyrant. An escape from parental authority by means of a lover, oppressive as such authority may

161 Mulso conceded to Richardson that, when the Harlowe parents “bade [Clarissa] be *guilty* and *miserable*, they […] thought they bade her be happy” (222).

162 Note that this need for protection is bound up with class, and that the almost-invisibility of lower-class women in *Grandison* helps to establish women’s need for protection. Mulso remarks in her third letter that “amongst the lower ranks of people, daughters are as soon independent as sons” (237–8).

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be, will also probably lead to even less freedom, while also calling into question the entangled woman's dutifulness and honour.

Significantly, Charlotte needs her brother's help to escape this unwanted, dissembling suitor. It is also significant that her entanglement is discovered at a time when, for all the reader has previously learned, she is as free as she can be. Not only is she of age ("about twenty-four", 1:179), but she is also in possession of money, for Sir Charles gave 10,000 pounds to each sister before Caroline's wedding to Lord L. (1:382–3). Charlotte is thus technically free to marry as she chooses – except that she has given her word to Captain Anderson not to marry any other man while he is single. It is only her brother's interference – he buys off the unwelcome suitor – which saves her. Charlotte's 'entanglement', from which her brother must save her, is shown in the present of the novel, while the (from a modern perspective, at least) worse threat of a forced marriage is safely set in the past. Preposterously, Sir Charles even implies that, had her father lived, it would have been better for Charlotte, since he could have freed her from her rash promise by forbidding it (1:408; cf. Numbers 30). Sir Thomas, whose cruel behaviour has been one cause for Charlotte's unwise engagement, is now presented, posthumously, as a potential saviour. His daughter, in contrast, is now 'proven' to be in want of guidance. Her brother's later pressure concerning another suitor – he demands that she immediately accept or reject Lord G.'s proposals – can thus appear justifiable, and cannot appear in the light of a forced marriage (or should not – some critics have read it almost in this light). Her displeasing her brother might alienate her from her family, but it would not mean financial ruin. Sir Charles thus replaces the tyrannical father with "salvific fraternity".[163]

Harriet, in contrast, is in little need of guidance, but, like Charlotte, she falls prey to predatory men. Sir Hargrave feels justified in abducting her partly because this will violate no father's prerogative, and the male relatives who try to rescue her are ineffectual (which is, perhaps, prefigured in the Reeveses leaving her to answer Sir Hargrave's proposal of marriage alone, 1:111). Although Harriet is prudent as well as "her own mistress", she "wants [...] a protector" (3:248). Tellingly, her most decisive act, which shows that she deserves to be given full agency, is when she chooses Sir Charles as her husband. In this act, free will and submission come together, for the good patriarch is the best insurance of a virtuous woman's free agency.

163 Here I am drawing on Debra J. Rosenthal's term "salvific paternity" or "redemptive power of paternity" (136), and on Pateman's term "fraternal patriarchy", which describes a condition in which "women are subordinated to men *as men*" (3). Richardson, however, does assign a special place to the father.

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Harriet's exposed position as "her own mistress" allows Richardson to combine an emphasis on the importance of (virtuous) women's free will with an idealising depiction of male authority and protection. This double perception of female self-determination finds its expression in a 'double discourse' used by the hero in the aftermath of Harriet's abduction and her rescue by himself. Despite Sir Charles's active promotion of women as subjects rather than objects of exchange, he is sometimes complicit in the *vocabulary* of objectification. The day after rescuing Harriet from Sir Hargrave, for example, he claims that the latter "might well give out that he was robbed; to lose such a prize as Miss Byron" (1:143). This forms a part of his complimentary language to Harriet and her relations, but it also echoes Sir Hargrave. Women's worth, it seems, is best described as that of a valuable commodity which men strive for with good reason. To Sir Hargrave, in contrast, Sir Charles uses a different vocabulary. Harriet is "her own mistress". While Sir Hargrave suggests that Sir Charles has, by his rescuing her, attained authority over Harriet – and could therefore give her as a bride to Sir Hargrave – Sir Charles disclaims any such authority.

One may assume that Sir Charles's language is at least as carefully chosen when he is addressing Sir Hargrave, a potential threat both to himself and to Harriet, as when he speaks to Harriet and her friends. His assertion of her liberty is meant to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, his complimentary objectification of Harriet also subtly confirms Lovelace's more callous objectification of women:

> And whose *property*, I pray thee, shall I invade, if I pursue my schemes of love and vengeance?—Have not those who have a *right* in her, renounced that *right*?—Have they not wilfully exposed her to dangers?—yet must know that such a woman would be considered as *lawful prize* by as many as could have the opportunity to attempt her?—And had they not thus cruelly exposed her, is she not a *single woman?*[emphasis original]—[…]Shocking as these principles must be to a reflecting mind; yet such thou knowest are the principles of thousands […]. (717; emphasis mine)

Like Sir Charles, Lovelace does not unequivocally endorse the language of objectification, but, also like him, he emphasizes that this kind of rhetoric expresses "the principles of thousands". Therefore, any woman who belongs to herself only is in a precarious position. Although she is "nobody's" and free to dispose of herself, she is both giver *and* gift. It is telling, for example, that Clarissa calls herself "nobody's" in her will in connection to *Lovelace*. Since she is no-one's – and thus no-one's to protect – Lovelace may feel he can claim a sight of her dead body against her will (1413). Before the rape, she had argued that those conceptualised as property need protection: "the man who has had

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the assurance to think me, and to endeavour to make me, his *property*, will hunt me from place to place, and search after me as an estray: and he knows he may do so with impunity; for whom have I to protect me from him?" (754). Given Lovelace's boldness, the protection which is at issue seems to consist not so much in financial resources or strength of arms as in a (legitimate) rival claim of possession. If Clarissa were her family's possession, Lovelace's right to her could be contested.

If, on the contrary, she is only her own 'property', then she can become fully his – coverture, if nothing else, will achieve this. Throughout the novel, Lovelace has claimed Clarissa as his possession, urging early that if he seduces and then marries her, he can have injured no-one but himself. As a *feme covert*, a part of Clarissa's personality would indeed legally be subsumed into Lovelace's. Blackstone's formulation of this has become so (in)famous that it hardly needs quoting: "By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and *cover*, she performs every thing" (430; Bk. I, ch. XV). Yet Lovelace goes even further, questioning the very possibility of a woman's belonging to herself alone.[164] Since Clarissa has been rejected by her family, she is legitimate prey for him, and since she forgives him, she must be "his".

In retrospect, then, his early promises to free Clarissa from control come to seem hollow not only with reference to himself, but in general: if men conceptualise women as property, the limits of any woman's liberty must be the choice of the man in possession of her. For once, James Harlowe is perceptive enough when he informs Clarissa:

> The vile wretch you have set your heart upon speaks […] plainly to everybody, though you won't. He says you are *his* and *shall* be *his*, and he will be the death of any man who robs him of his Property. […] My father supposing he has the right of a father in his child is absolutely determined not to be bullied out of that right. (223)

James Harlowe, father and son, are here linked with Lovelace as would-be proprietors of Clarissa, whose very ability to express her preferences is questioned here. At first sight, being possessed by any of these men may look equally undesirable. Ultimately, however, the system of duty with its rigid structure promises more safety to "property" than a system of reciprocal obligations

164 As London notes, Lovelace sometimes realizes that coverture is a fiction and that Clarissa would remain her own person (31). Like so many of his statements on women, the concept that they are property is one he seems to believe (only) in part and to use strategically when it can support his argument.

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within which she cannot figure as a donor. It is only consequential that, after the rape, Mr. Harlowe comes to figure as a potential saviour even though he still has not withdrawn his curse: in Clarissa's view, only her father's intervention could have saved her from Lovelace once she came under his power (989).[165]

This re-configuration of male (paternal) authority lays the groundwork for a new image of paternity in *Grandison*, where fatherhood (especially figurative fatherhood) comes to signify protection rather than authority. Latimer has emphasized that "it is significant that Sir Charles acts as a *brother* – and not as a father-figure" (*Making Gender* 173). As she explains, "[b]ecause it results from the *voluntary* subordination of notional equals, fraternal patriarchy is more effective than the prescriptive paternalistic brand" (174). The term "fraternal patriarchy" is somewhat problematic when used for *Grandison*, since fatherly authority has associations with sacredness which the authority of a husband or brother lacks. Paradoxically, this is precisely why it is, indeed, significant that Sir Charles "acts as a brother". His actions can be scrutinized in a way that a father's could not. He is the ideal defender of patriarchy because the evaluation of his actions can take place undisturbed by the system of duty. Voluntary elevation of the (potentially) equal brother into a father-figure amounts to a celebration of hierarchy and patriarchy. Patriarchy, here based on and growing out of individual worth, is thus naturalized. Whether or not Sir Charles himself sees women as objects therefore becomes finally less important than the easy availability of such a discourse of commodification. As long as the language of praise is compatible with the language of possession, women 'on the market' remain in need of a protector.

The ideal relationship between protector and protégé is presented through the married Sir Charles and Harriet and can be illustrated with their attitudes to the heroine's letters. In both *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, the heroines' predatory lovers try to gain access to their letters, both in order to learn about their thoughts and to control their actions. In *Grandison*, too, the heroine's mind as displayed in her letters comes to be read. However, these revelations come about by her own choice. At first, Harriet writes to her relations, conscious that they will pass around her letters and scrutinise them in jest (as her uncle does) or in earnest (as her grandmother and aunt do). Later on, she hands over selected letters to her new friends, the Grandison sisters, although she withholds her written confessions of love for the hero until Charlotte and Caroline have learned of her

165 The statement takes on an almost mythical quality, although Clarissa also gives a practical explanation: her father's interference is the only interference by a man which would not have provoked a duel or other violence. To the extent that Lovelace respects social norms, even he would have a residue of respect for paternal authority.

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feelings by other means. Finally, Sir Charles himself is granted access to some of her letters. Significantly, he comes at them not through theft or stratagem, but through an open request, reading only so much as she allows. Although he states that even the first letters of hers that he read would have led to an immediate marriage had he been free (3:130), he reads not so much to find out 'the truth' about her as in order to explore and appreciate the 'details' of her mind. Already convinced of her essential goodness, he desires to know more of her virtue for the sake of that virtue. Significantly, he reads the letters which could betray Harriet's secret – the fact that she has loved him from the first – only after she has freely admitted to him this love (3:283–4). And when a letter falls accidentally into his hand – a letter which would betray Emily's love for him – he returns it unread (3:105–6). After their marriage, he continues to respect his wife's privacy. Thus, when he comes into her closet while she is writing, he immediately offers to withdraw. It is only at her urging that he remains, but asks her to hide anything she would not have him see: "Remove your papers then, my dear". Harriet responds by telling him he can see all, but Sir Charles does not take her up on her offer: "A generous mind, my Love, will not take all that is offered by a generous mind" (3:311). In this ideal relationship, generous respect is met with generous frankness; the wife can trust and obey her husband implicitly because he foregoes not only to command anything immoral, but even anything which might subject her to inconvenience.

Just as the novel opens with issues of women's free will – with a focus on Harriet – it also closes thus – this time, with a focus on Clementina. In the character of the Italian heroine, most of the aspects discussed in the previous chapters of part III – the creative use of truth, friendship, gift-giving, free will – are combined. Indeed, Clementina's (re-)integration into her family and her glorification are the result of a combined effort on the parts of her family, her friends, and herself. The "divine" Clementina is perhaps the best example in Richardson's work of virtue as simultaneously policy, pretence, and essentially true. Indeed, the frequent identification of Clementina with Harriet is part of this pretence. Their similarity is insisted on even where they are very different. Sir Charles, for example, states that they share an "unaffected elegance", although Clementina's interest in her body and her clothes is far more prominent than Harriet's (2:524).[166] Generosity and love for others is also presented as a shared aspect of their characters, despite the fact that Clementina – in marked contrast to Harriet – often treats her servants with impatience and openly criticizes

166 For example, the Marchioness comments that her daughter takes pride in her beautiful hair (2:192). Moreover, her choice of dress is remarked on several times as an indication of the state of her mind.

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Olivia. For McMaster, while Harriet "represent[s …] the achieved harmony of mind and person", Clementina "is torn by an irreconcilable conflict of flesh and spirit" ("*Sir Charles*" 261).) And Latimer comments persuasively that Harriet's rational self stands in contrast to passionate Clementina:

> At no point does [Clementina] win an argument definitively […]. Repeatedly, the reader is told, Clementina possesses purity of mind, 'delicacy' and 'innocen[ce]' […]. These are traditionally prized 'feminine' qualities, and she also shares the flaws in this model of femininity. (*Making Gender* 100)

Richardson himself seems to have seen and intended clear differences between the two heroines (cf. Sabor, *Correspondence* 394; 14 Feb. 1754, to Lady Bradshaigh; *Selected Letters* 305; 28 May 1754, to Sarah Chapone). The constant identification of the heroines, it appears, is a strategy employed to emphasize the worth of each.

Like their characters, their actions stand in stark contrast. Harriet's "sister-excellence" (3:77), who at times threatens to dethrone her as the novel's first heroine (and indeed did so permanently for many readers), shows signs of madness when she tries to conceal her love for a 'heretic' Englishman. After marriage negotiations fail, she goes mad indeed, but her mental health improves through the skill of an English doctor brought over by Sir Charles. Her family now permit her to marry the hero, but she refuses on the grounds that her love for him may cause her conversion to Protestantism, which she regards as a sin. When her family use her decision to pressurize her to marry an Italian nobleman instead, she escapes to England – an elopement which is excused on the grounds of her still unstable mental health. Here, Sir Charles arranges a 'contract' between Clementina and her family which gives Clementina absolute freedom with regard to marriage. This seems finally to re-establish her health. It is suggested, although not unequivocally ascertained, that she will eventually marry her Italian suitor.

Clementina's story recalls Clarissa's, although in her case, tragedy can be averted. Her parents are mildly coercive (her father, for example, kneels to her to induce her to accept the husband he wishes for her, as Mr. Harlowe intended to do), she has an overbearing brother who, however, never insults her as James does Clarissa, and she tries to resist an unwanted bridegroom who, nevertheless, is perceived even by herself as a generally good and attractive man. The Porrettas' reaction to Clementina's love, then, provides a counter-point to that of the Harlowes – their attempts at control are both more gentle and more justified, and they are eager to excuse even her flight to England. At the end of the novel, Clementina is solemnly promised by all what has seemed likely from

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the start, namely that she will not be forced into a repugnant marriage. Although Clementina's story seemed to many the emotional centre of Richardson's last novel,[167] the interest of the character can suffer by such a comparison. Where *Clarissa* offers complex reasoning and conscious, if sometimes mistaken, decisions, *Grandison*'s Clementina scenes offer pathos. For readers sympathetic to Clarissa – especially those who can take seriously her scruples about leaving her father's house – it is, moreover, rather disturbing to note how easily Clementina is forgiven when taking much more radical steps than those for which Clarissa criticizes herself. As Beasley remarks, "what [Clementina] ought to do is plain enough to the reader" who has understood the patriarchal position of the earlier novels (47). However, the character of Clementina gains in interest when examined in relation to the agenda of *Grandison* rather than of *Clarissa*. There, Clementina embodies both some of the values which Richardson did not quite dare to depict in his main characters, as well as some of the weaknesses against which his main characters argue in the cedar parlour at Selby house and elsewhere.

Much of *Grandison* is concerned with the regulation of desire (cf. Jones 69). Both *Pamela* and *Clarissa* touch upon this theme, of course. For example, Pamela's love for Mr. B., although unconscious on her part until he releases her from imprisonment, is clear to the reader early on, and although Clarissa's love for Lovelace is "imputed to her" rather than obvious (cf. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa 134 n. 141), the question of what love – or 'prepossession' – may make a woman do is ever-present in that novel. However, what is new in *Grandison* is the depiction of a woman's conscious struggle to control her love for a worthy and virtuous character. Harriet does not have to fend off seduction – none of the threatening male figures are remotely attractive to her. Instead, she is faced with the problem of managing a love which seems equally based on 'virtue' and 'desire'. Other women have conquered love because the man turned out to be unworthy, and because their female friends helped them to analyse their own feelings – this is the case with Anna Howe and Harriet's cousin Lucy. However, this strategy is useless in *Harriet's* case, for, as she argues, there is nothing in Sir Charles that makes him unworthy of love. Over the pages of the novel, Harriet is proven both right and wrong: right in that she is rewarded with the hero, and wrong in that some of the central debates in the last two volumes emphasize that desire is conquerable.

167 The German writer Christoph Martin Wieland, for example, adapted a play from Clementina's story, *Clementina von Porretta* (1760; for a summary, see Doody, *A Natural Passion* 326).

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This axiom, however, is undermined through Clementina. At the end of the novel, her 'destiny' is left open; while she has a suitor whose worth she acknowledges, she persists, for the moment, in her determination of not marrying. Readers were divided on whether or not Clementina should go on to marry; Richardson himself indicates that she would, but does not go so far as actually stating it as a fact. Perhaps more interesting than her abiding love for the hero is the sheer violence of her passion. Harriet pines, but Clementina goes mad; although she remains gentle even during her insanity, she is as expressive and outgoing as is compatible with virtue, dressing, for example, in gaudy colours. In *Clarissa*, the heroine's madness may be due to the drugs she was given, to the shock of violence and dishonour, or to a combination of both. Clementina's madness, in contrast, is triggered entirely by the conflict between her religion and her love. Harriet admires her for this conflict – yet it is not immediately apparent why it should be so strong. If passion is 'conquerable', Clementina's love should not have the power to drive her mad, and her religion is not obviously threatened. Love and religion can, in principle, go hand in hand; this is suggested by Mr. B.'s allusion to the Bible when he says the unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife, and by Lovelace's outraged image of himself as Clarissa's "penitent of her own making". Clementina is afraid, however, that her own conviction in the rightness of her religion will fail in her marriage to Sir Charles. The conflict between love and religion emphasises the foundation of Clementina's love in desire rather than a generalized Christian charity, illustrating Richardson's statement that the love of young people is mostly "body" (cf. 1.5). Clementina, however much she may say to the contrary (and she, like several family members, does), is overwhelmed by a passion for Sir Charles which, although not incompatible with religion, is clearly distinct from it. Rivero reads the attack on romance in the final volume of *Grandison* as an attempt to "exorcise 'the amiable enthusiast' from his own narrative" (210). I argue slightly differently: if the debate about romance shows what women ought to do, Clementina demonstrates that this course of action is actually heroic.

Love, in all three of Richardson's novels, has been presented as a mere prepossession, something that must be indulged before it can grow strong.[168]

168 See, for example, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* (584). Another lengthy discussion of love occurs in *Grandison*, where Mrs. Shirley recounts how her friend Mrs. Eggleton argued her out of her fear that she might fall in love with another man after her marriage – an idea perhaps induced by reading Mme de Lafayette's *Princess of Cleves*. Mrs. Eggleton asserts that the eponymous heroine "was a silly woman", who succumbed to a passion that was "a chimera of her own creating" (3:400). Richardson has chosen his bad example well: although the princess of Cleves never commits adultery, her efforts are concerned solely with staying technically chaste, not with regulating her feelings.

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At the same time, most characters insist that women should prefer their future husband to any other man. This demand is limiting in a world where women should marry but have to wait to be chosen. However, it has also a liberating potential, for "if women were to choose their husbands, they were obviously excused from unwavering deference to their fathers" (Jones 4). According to *this* logic, Clarissa could have refused Solmes simply on the basis of her dislike for him. This is precisely what Mulso thought – all women, she claimed, should be allowed to reject a suitor, regardless of their particular situation:

> Therefore I must insist, that *every* woman, whether of equal prudence with Clarissa, or not, whether the man proposed be *quite* as odious as Solmes, or not, whether she have an absolute aversion to him, or only be *indifferent,* or rather averse to him, whether she be in love with some other, or not, and whether that other be a proper match for her, or not, every woman, I say, has a right to a negative; and is guilty of no sinful disobedience in refusing to marry the man her parents propose, provided she do not marry herself without their consent; since the giving away her person, her fortune, and even her affections, is an action in which her free will is essentially concerned; and, as a rational creature, she must have a right to refuse to shackle her conscience with a vow, if she does not choose it. (245)

Nevertheless, the demand to prefer one's husband to all other men is almost impossible to fulfil in a world where women must wait for proposals and where Sir Charles outshines all other men. The meaning of 'preference' must therefore include very calm feelings of approval, and the debate about love in the last volume of *Grandison* concludes with wise Mrs. Shirley and the young women around her agreeing that esteem is a good basis for marriage, and that love is controllable; for good measure, this is followed up by Charlotte's ridicule on anyone "not convinced by the solid arguments of Mrs. Shirley" (3:404).

Clementina puts this theory in question. While Pamela and Clarissa control their feelings so successfully that the extent of their love may remain uncertain to the end, Clementina is conquered by her own passion. Accepting her love as 'natural' and 'just', in fact, subtly undermines the whole theory of morality winding through the novels. Although Clementina is not a 'fallen' woman – unlike Olivia, she never lets Sir Charles be the only one who takes care of her honour – the passion of love seems to be checked, in her, by other kinds of passion: that for "glory" and religion. In the light of the various strictures against indulging 'prepossession' in a woman, or the hero's admission that he would not

Instead, she nurses her passion, for example by commissioning paintings which remind her of her lover (cf. Lafayette 144). Compared to this French heroine, Emily is heroic indeed.

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want to marry a widow (2:43),[169] it is striking that Clementina through all this never loses her attractiveness to either men or women. The open ending entails the possibility, not indeed of a 'double love' for two persons at the same time, but of a woman's loving one man passionately, recovering from that love and going on to marry another – a rare case in novels.[170] The other possibility – that she may remain single – however, would demonstrate the power of love and further undermine the argument that passion can be conquered. In either case, Clementina embodies a strong female desire which can be related to, but is not automatically compatible with, virtue. Her madness serves as a demonstration that the moral teachings disseminated and accepted in the novel must remain subject to adaptation in individual cases.

"Madness", Doody has argued, "may be peculiarly helpful to the individual who has suffered from repression and suppression, but it is a dangerous remedy" ("Identity and Character" 113). Clementina's madness leads, at first, to restraint and torment at the hands of her heartless cousin Laurana, but it paves the way for her future 'glory' and the exertion of her free will. She has the chance of recovery because of the many positive forces alive within her patriarchal society. Her family love her so much that they would rather marry her to a Protestant than risk her health again. Sir Charles proposes to her partly to establish her sanity, partly out of genuine love, and he is ready to renounce her when she wishes him to do so. The count of Belvedere continues his suit in the hope that she will recover, but does not wish force to be used to gain her. Paradoxically, all this deference to Clementina's wishes is called forth through her weakness. Through it, she gains what she could not 'legitimately' achieve through strength. Within the system of duty, she would have little bargaining power concerning her fate. The general kindness of her family, the importance of religion, and the real worth of the Count of Belvedere give her little 'good' reason not to concur with her family's wishes to marry a Catholic (rather than marrying Sir

169 This may suggest that a "divided love" is a real weakness on his part. While he may, as his sister suggests, have preserved his virginity, he – like a widow – cannot offer Harriet his first and only love.

170 A similar situation occurs in Aphra Behn's *The History of the Nun*, but the heroine's flexibility in love directly leads to her punishment for the first vow she broke (that of being a nun). The eponymous heroine of Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* is on the point of falling in love for the second time when that second man's unreliability appears; Belinda's flexibility met with the disapproval of the *Monthly Review* (Kirkpatrick xxi). Finally, Jane Austen allows one of her heroines to love passionately and then marry another man – but the case of Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* is part of a didactic purpose, and there is an element of punishment in her second attachment. Moreover, her first love, in contrast to Clementina's (or indeed Belinda's) is placed on a man thoroughly unworthy of her.

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Charles or entering a convent). The heroine of *Clarissa* is painfully aware that, if a woman can accommodate her own wishes to those of her family, she ought to. Clementina is aware of this, too. If she denies being in love as long as possible, this can be read as her effort to adapt her mind to what is demanded of it by her family and by her religion. Had she succeeded, she would have had to follow her parents' wishes (one suspects that, with a husband like Belvedere, she would have had a reasonable chance of happiness – Richardson, at any rate, did not want to rule out this possibility). Her madness makes her freer: strong enough to struggle to be dutiful, and weak enough to suffer from the struggle, she is shown to be worthy of the indulgence of all around her. Moreover, whenever she strays from the 'path of duty', this can be excused with reference to her unstable mind.

Ironically, Clementina, who fails to follow her duty implicitly in a case which seems far easier than Clarissa's, receives a similar amount of praise, and has a good chance of being rewarded even on earth. Clementina, more than any other of Richardson's heroines, is concerned with "glory" (it seems telling that both she and her family prefer this word to 'reputation'). Most people around her agree that she is deserving of it. Yet, paradoxically, she proves this by surrendering her sanity in her struggle for virtue. This proof is only possible because she is unable to subdue her love for Sir Charles entirely – because, in fact, she fails to do what is so often demanded of women not only in *Clarissa*, but also in the debates at the end of *Grandison*. This leads back to the problem of interiority. If a good woman marries a good man according to the wishes of her family, how can her successful inner struggle be known and rewarded? Clementina's (partial) failure to succeed thus stands in for the hidden struggle of other virtuous women. It also highlights the bitterness of Harriet's efforts to overcome her love of Sir Charles far enough to wish her rival well and to remain a cheerful and useful member of society. Clementina, then, represents the strength both of passion and of virtue in women. Her passion for Sir Charles shows the strength of (worthy) love, while her refusal to marry him – even after her madness – shows the even superior strength of her virtue. Her madness externalises the conflict which should ideally be fought and resolved within each individual's mind, exemplifying women's potential for heroism even within the quotidian world. At the same time, the depiction of the potential cost of such heroism seems to open up ever so little space for those who fail to attain the ideal of virtue.

However, this challenge to the moral system cannot be voiced openly. Clementina's madness as well as her frequent expressions of 'duty' against the evidence of her actions are necessary to make her covert resistance palatable.

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The effect of passion without virtue (or its pretence) is demonstrated in Clementina's 'darker' double Lady Olivia, who is connected to Clementina through being Italian and through their mutual contempt (as Harriet is connected to Clementina through the hero's admiration of both women). Olivia would have given up her religion and even her chastity in order to satisfy her desire for Sir Charles, and her journey to England is undertaken in order to either win the hero or kill him in revenge. Olivia's active and aggressive scheming provides a contrast to Clementina's more passive, thus feminine, desire to retire from the world into a convent. In addition, Clementina masks her inner conflict with almost theatrical displays of 'duty'. For example, when she is in conversation with Sir Charles, who tries to find out the cause for her changed behaviour before her love for him is revealed, she breaks free from him in order to beg her parents' blessing (which she ordinarily does every day, 2:150). Ultimately, her family's position proves to have little influence on her actions, as she rejects the man of their choice, craves the convent which is forbidden her, and both loves and rejects Sir Charles independently without reference to them (ironically, her family is for a time inclined to pressure her into marrying Sir Charles after she rejects him). Nevertheless, she maintains the outward signs of filial duty even while breaking through most of the obligations which Clarissa endorses. Her virtue in these respects is, clearly, 'policy' – yet, given her ultimate choice of religion over love and the limited access to her inner life, it must be accepted as policy directed to the attainment of 'true' virtue. Rather than hypocritically 'pretending' virtue, Clementina pretends *to* it, performing, as long as she can, the outward signs of dutifulness in order to preserve its essence.

The final negotiations concerning Clementina's fate take the form of a contract with her parents. The happy resolution of her conflict with her family exemplifies many of the issues which, as shown in the preceding chapters, pervade *Grandison.* It is also a fascinating instance of a combination of different structures of relationship – the systems of duty, gift giving, and contract. At first, it seems that the last structure can provide a solution for the deadlock between parent and child. After the Porrettas have urged their authority and their daughter's generosity in vain, they consent to sign "articles" with her, and Clementina frequently reminds everyone of these articles in support of her own will. Ultimately, however, discourse is directed away from contract. It is the Italian heroine herself who rejects it in favour of duty and generosity, and this is what establishes her greatness.

After Clementina recovers from her madness and rejects Sir Charles, her family try to persuade her to marry the count of Belvedere for a variety of reasons. Her marriage would be a guarantee that she does not enter a

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convent, which would not only entail leaving her family and disregarding her grandfather's will, but would lead to her cruel cousin inheriting a fortune intended for Clementina. Moreover, they hope that marriage will improve her mental health. Although Sir Charles has warned them not to pressure her, their loving but unceasing insistence that she ought to marry is, as she points out and Harriet confirms, compulsion. The conflict culminates in Clementina's flight to England, which in turn leads to the greater part of her family following her. Hearing of their imminent arrival, Clementina almost runs away once more, but is persuaded to stay by Harriet and Sir Charles, now Harriet's husband. In his home, Sir Charles negotiates a contract which will oblige all the Porrettas to observe a compromise. Clementina must renounce her wish of becoming a nun, while her family are prohibited from even trying to persuade her with earnestness to marry anyone. They are, moreover, required to leave her her freedom with regard to her place of residence and her choice of servants (the last is, in part, included to ensure that the servants who helped her escape to England are not punished).

It is not clear whether this contract between parents and their child can have any validity (nor does Richardson show any interest in Italian laws). Nevertheless, after attempts at gentle persuasion on either side have proved destructive, a Lockean contract seems an adequate solution. However, once Sir Charles has successfully negotiated this, Clementina takes a surprising step:

> The articles signed and witnessed, were put into Lady Clementina's hand, and a pen given her, that she might write her name, in the presence of all her surrounding friends here.
> Never woman appeared with more dignity in her air and manner. She was charmingly dressed, and became her dress. A truly lovely woman! But every one by looks seemed concerned at her solemnity. She signed her name; but tore off, deliberately their names; and, kissing the torn bit, put it in her bosom: Then, throwing herself on her knees to her father and mother, who stood together, and presenting the paper to the former; Never let it be said, that your child, your Clementina, has presumed to article in form with the dearest of parents. *My* name stands. It will be a witness against me, if I break the articles which I have signed. But in your forgiveness, my Lord, in yours, madam, and in a thousand acts of indulgence, I have too much experienced your past, to doubt your future, goodness to me. Your intention, my ever honoured parents, is your act. I pray to God to enable your Clementina to be all you wish her to be. In the single Life only indulge me. Your word is all the assurance I wish for. I will have no other. (3:390)

The same Clementina who almost fled her English protectors from fear of 'persuasion' now deliberately rejects the contract intended to safeguard her

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from it. The articles are a "presumption" in a daughter; the document which provides evidence for it must thus be destroyed. The contract stipulated for reciprocity; each party was bound to give up their dearest desire, and each received something in return. By tearing the paper in two, Clementina divides her own guarantees from those of her family. She herself is bound by "the articles which I have signed"; the rules of contract form a second-order defence of her 'duty' and gratitude. Her parents, in contrast, are released from the contract. Clementina will trust in their "goodness" – a quality which the Porrettas have indeed long demonstrated – following Richardson's optimism that most parents love their children too much to be cruel. Clementina's decision, moreover, returns from a discourse of contract to one of gift giving. Her parents' refraining from pressure is now an "indulgence", something freely given – but they are free rather than constrained to be indulgent precisely because their daughter has relinquished the rights stipulated for her in the contract.

Soon after, Clementina herself, whose situation forms a strong plea for the necessity of free will, shifts from the stance that persuasion is compulsion to envisage her now *free* choice as an expression of her 'duty'. The system of duty, then, is not finally challenged; rather, room is given for deviation and limited freedom. How crucial this freedom is in Clementina's case is emphasised by Sir Charles himself. In a conversation about the Italian heroine's possible future, he tells his wife:

> Let *her* lead; let *us* only follow—Persuasion against avowed inclination, you and I, my Harriet, have always condemned as a degree of compulsion. Had the admirable Lady been *entreated* to take the noble measure she fell upon, when she rejected me, however great the motives, she would not have been so happy, as she was, when she found herself absolute mistress of the question, and could astonish and surprise us all by her magnanimity. (3:424)

Clementina's case invests in the trust given to the virtuous individual to find her own way to do her duty (rather than obey under pressure). The combination of similarity and difference of the "sister-excellencies", moreover, helps open a spectrum, a continuum of virtuous women which breaks up the dichotomy of good and bad which underlies much of the literature of the time, as well as the rakish characters' assumptions. As different types of women are introduced and valued, the legitimacy of categorizing women is implicitly questioned. At the same time, *standards* of goodness need not be examined, since all women are praised in relation to a similar standard.

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3.7 Paradise Regained – the utopia of Grandison Hall

So spake our sire and by his count'nance seemed
Ent'ring on studious thoughts abstruse, which Eve
Perceiving where she sat retired in sight
With lowliness majestic from her seat
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose and went forth among her fruits and flow'rs
To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
Her nursery. They at her coming sprung
And touched by her fair tendance gladlier grew.
Yet went she not as not with such discourse
Delighted or not capable her ear
Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress:
Her husband the relater she preferred
Before the angel and of him to ask
Chose rather. He, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions and solve high dispute
With conjugal caresses (from his lip
Not words alone pleased her). O when meet now
Such pairs in love and mutual honor joined?
(Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. XVIII, ll.39–58)

The beginning of Genesis, and in particular Milton's version of it, is a powerful if subtle intertext to Richardson's novels.[171] As has been shown above, the ideal of Milton's "first pair" is not uncontested. Harriet remarks that the first Adam's gallantry is faulty, although it is simultaneously more reassuring to women than perfect dutifulness to God could be. It is also Harriet who reminds the reader that Sir Charles's citation of lines from Adam's wooing of Eve is incomplete, and that his omissions lead to a perception of Eve as more coquettish than Milton's original formulations warrant (cf. Latimer, *Making Gender* 136).

The values of *Paradise Lost* cannot be assumed to be identical with those of *Grandison.* Nevertheless, the epic resembles Richardson's novel in pondering the question of how hierarchy between the sexes can be preserved in an 'unfallen' state, before Eve's transgression condemned her to subservience. The epigraph to this chapter is taken from Raphael's visit to Adam and Eve. The latter has stayed to hear the archangel's relation of Satan's fall and the creation of the

171 Sir Charles, for example, reads *Paradise Lost* with Clementina (2:144).

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earth. However, now, when Adam ponders "studious thoughts abstruse" – he has just asked about the purpose of the other planets – Eve leaves for her "nursery" of flowers. Milton takes pains to emphasize the voluntary nature of her withdrawal: it is she who "chooses" to go, while those who see her "wish her stay", although it is precisely her grace in leaving which engenders such a wish. Moreover, Eve is not oblivious to the importance of this "high" discourse, or incapable of understanding it. Nevertheless, by preferring to hear it from her husband, she removes such knowledge into the most private, domestic space possible, and, at the same time, eroticises it: "from his lip / Not words alone pleased her". Adam, unfallen, refrains from all commands (after the fall, Eve blames him that he did not compel her to stay always within his sight), and Eve, in her original state, "with lowliness majestic" leaves to him the gaining of "abstruse" knowledge and the power of transmitting it to her. Hierarchy and free will, "high discourse" and erotic pleasure, coexist peacefully in the confines of the Garden of Eden.

Grandison constructs a similar ideal in its final pages, albeit one which accommodates a large and increasing group of family and friends, rather than being confined to one pair. When Harriet imagines Sir Charles as a better Adam who refuses to share his wife's sin, she is therefore not merely expressing her anxiety at being replaceable, or regretting a mode of gallantry which prizes love above moral duties. By imagining a better Adam, she 'undoes' the fall of mankind and thus, in imagination, restores Paradise. And, indeed, this is the effect of Sir Charles on almost everyone he meets: to bring mankind closer to paradise by improving morals through giving gifts. Harriet might have taken her parallel further: with Sir Charles as Adam, Eve might never have sinned, for, as Caroline L. observes, with enough Sir Charleses, "there would not be a single woman, and hardly a bad one, in the kingdom" (1:291). Emily concurs: "my guardian's goodness makes every-body good" (2:421). This may explain why Richardson ultimately did not act upon his friend Skelton's suggestion that he should introduce a truly bad woman.

Doody has remarked that "the Grandison house is an earthly paradise, an example of what humanity can attain if man uses reason in accord with nature" (*A Natural Passion* 351). Indeed, the park is a happy combination of the labour of generations and the judicious improvements of the present owner. Profiting from the foresight of his "ancestors" who planted the trees on the grounds, he "open[s] and enlarge[s] many fine prospects" (3:272). Ironically, he "thinks it a kind of impiety to fell a tree, that was planted by his father" (3:273), apparently preferring to sacrifice to new and "fine prospects" trees planted by forefathers who may, for all the reader knows, have been worthier than his father (indeed, it seems

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that the hero's grandfather saved rather than wasted his money). Productive as well as aesthetically pleasing, the park includes a stream "abounding with trout and other fish" (3:272), "sheep for [i.e. as] gardeners", and abundance of fruit; the "orangery is flourishing; every-thing indeed is, that belongs to Sir Charles Grandison" (2:273). For Harriet, as well as for her visiting relations, the Edenic family seat is a physical extension of Sir Charles's mind: "The gardens and lawn *seem* from the windows of this spacious house to be as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance" (3:272; emphasis mine). Harriet's words are truer than she knows, for the "sunk fences" (3:273) which in fact *do* bound the estate, although invisible, are nevertheless boundaries. Just as "the eye is carried to views that have no bounds" (3:273) while being actually confined to the safety of a well-managed estate, so are the women (and men) in Sir Charles's vicinity subject to his benign control.

The plenty and order of the grounds correspond to the same values within the house, although here, more emphasis is placed on order and less on freedom. As Harriet is gradually shown the entire house, she is struck with its completeness. After having been shown the grander rooms, she writes,

> We went thro' all the Offices, the lowest not excepted. The very servants live in paradise. There is room for every thing to be in order: Every-thing *is* in order. The Offices so distinct, yet so conveniently communicating—Charmingly contrived!—The low servants, men and women, have Laws, which at their own request, were drawn up, by Mrs. Curzon, for the observance of the minutest of their respective duties; with little mulcts, that at first *only* there was occasion to exact. It is a house of harmony, to my hand. Dear madam! What do good people leave to good people to do? Nothing! (3:285)

In contrast to Pamela, who was able to reform what was missing in her husband's generally well-managed household, Harriet can show her worth only by recognising the excellence of her husband's "order" (cf. Latimer, *Making Gender* 144). Despite Sir Charles's assurance that, Harriet remembers, "I parted with power to have it returned me with augmentation" (3:277), she finds that such power is perfectly needless. Pamela had to labour to improve her husband's household and his mind, slowly gaining moral and actual authority. Harriet can prove her right to authority only by doing nothing. Surpassing Milton's Eve as Sir Charles does Milton's Adam, she is content without suggesting any improvements for the management of their household.[172] If Pamela and Clarissa had to fight for the exercise of their duty, Harriet must struggle to give up her

172 In contrast, Eve is alone, and therefore unprotected, when Satan tempts her only because she suggested that Adam and she "divide [their] labors" so that they can work more efficiently (Bk. IX, l.214).

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husband to the claims of others: “Harriet realizes she must constrain *herself* for the good of the community at large” (Chaber, “*Sir Charles*” 199). The threat to the system of duty is no longer situated in selfish authority figures, but in the potential selfishness of the heroine’s own heart.

The earthly paradise of Grandison Hall provides a counter-site to the Harlowes’ home. Whereas Clarissa had eloped with Lovelace only to find that, in leaving her father’s house, she had become another Eve, Clementina flies *to* Grandison Hall to be healed (not, however, from her father’s house – she escapes while she is travelling through Italy, without her family but with their permission (3:325)). In Doody’s view, “Grandison Hall and the life there are meant to be established as the earthly paradise, where the free spirit can find virtue and happiness without losing freedom. Clementina’s flight to London and eventually to Grandison Hall is justified in the event, as here she can be herself” (*A Natural Passion* 364). As should have become clear, this is an ‘optimistic’ reading. After all, the servants living in “paradise” have cooperated in its establishment by requesting rules, not freedom, and Clementina finally finds back to her ‘duty’ precisely in the “boundless” confines of Grandison Hall.[173] This is only superficially a contradiction – in the world of *Grandison*, to be “herself” *does* mean to be dutiful.

Just as Clementina’s flight from her father’s country to an earthly paradise restores her to innocence, so does it restore family harmony. Early in *Clarissa*, the heroine ponders her relations’ desire to acquire lands to which, in her view, others have a better claim: “And yet, in my opinion, the world is but one great family” (62). In *Grandison*, hero and heroine work together to re-establish this “one great family”, crossing even national and religious boundaries (cf. also Zionkowski, *Women and Gift Exchange* 84). The relationship to the Porrettas, which at first was envisaged as the consequence of a marriage between Sir Charles and Clementina, can now be established on the basis of gratitude and mutual esteem. Under the guidance and protection of the hero, then, the structuring principles of network and hierarchy can be united. The contemporary image of this was the “great chain of being” which Harriet invokes at the beginning of the novel: “Poor and rich, wise and unwise, we are all links of the same great chain” (1:44). All, that is, are connected to each other and to God. This connection calls for solidarity, for mutual support and respect. However, the links of a chain are also fixed – “poor and rich, wise and unwise” should remain in their proper place. Sir Charles, who is in charge of the “chain” in this

173 Richardson might have resolved this paradox, however, by a reference to Locke, who states that “*where there is no Law, there is no Freedom*” (324; II § 57).

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novel, is not just *a* good man, but precisely the kind of good man who can keep the system of duty running, showing how it should work and neutralising its problematic aspects.

At the close of this section, I would like to take a detour to a scene which, at first sight, may seem to have little connection to the well-ordered patriarchal household just described: the debate on gender roles in the final volume. This debate on "[m]an's usurpation, and woman's natural independency" (3:242) takes place in the aftermath of Harriet's wedding, so that most of the English characters of any importance in the novel are present. Now that most of the festivities are over, there is room for one of the many 'conversation pieces' of the novel. This one is remarkable not only for its topic, but also for its informal formality – and for its falseness.

The debate is "brought on by some of uncle Selby's good-natured particularities; for he will always have something to say against women" (3:242). Charlotte, who relates the debate, decides to "enter the lists with Mr. Selby" as women's champion against all the men present – except for her brother, for whose "neutrality" she conditions. This condition undermines the debate from the outset. By excluding, as she intends, the arguments of the man who is best qualified to contradict her – both on the grounds of his morals and thanks to his rhetorical skill – she paradoxically insures that her winning the debate cannot really prove "woman's natural independency". She is, moreover, unable to keep her brother truly "neutral". Despite their agreement,

> [n]ow-and-then a sly hint, popt out by my brother, half-disconcerted me; but I called him to order, and he was silent: Yet once he had like to have put me out—Wrapping his arms about himself, with inimitable humour—O my Charlotte, said he, how I love my Country! England is the *only* spot in the world, in which this argument *can* be properly debated! (3:242)

Sir Charles intrudes on the debate just enough to indicate that it is not Charlotte who is in charge of it, but he himself (cf. also Latimer, *Making Gender* 134). She may "call him to order", but in actuality it is he who silently, and "with inimitable humour", presides over their debate (just as he presides over the presentation of the family group; cf. Shepherd 224–5). Just as England, the land of liberty, offers space for such a debate to take place – and allows women full scope to develop the necessary talents to conduct it – so Sir Charles generously allows this discussion to take its course, quietly embodying rather than uttering the

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novel's best argument for men's superiority and natural authority.[174] Had the debate stopped here, it might be questionable to whom the 'victory' belonged.

This, however, is only the beginning. After Charlotte "had half-established our Sex's superiority on the ruin of that of the sorry fellows" i. e. her antagonists (3:242), the debate is referred to Mrs. Shirley, the novel's embodiment of female wisdom. In contrast to Charlotte's playfully aggressive argument (whose seriousness is undercut by her presentation of harmless Mr. Selby as a domestic tyrant), Harriet's grandmother makes more moderate, but also more serious claims; her statement apparently was "an essay contributed by Miss Elizabeth Carter" (3:480, note to p. 3:243). If so, Carter, both domestically useful and unquestionably learned, was an apt spokesperson on women's behalf; indeed, Richardson once described her as "the *meek-eyed Goddess of Wisdom*, our British Minerva" (*Selected Letters* 312; 21 Aug. 1754, to Hester Mulso).[175] "I think, said the venerable Lady, women are generally too much considered as a species apart" (3:243). While they should not try to usurp the proper sphere of men, they should be allowed to participate "in common intercourse and conversation" on the same basis as men; this will be profitable for both sexes, as only intelligent women are "fit companions for men of sense", a common argument in favour of women's education. She continues with an argument which hovers between acceptance of women's inferiority and the claim that this inferiority is due to nurture rather than nature:

> No person of sense, man or woman, will venture to launch out on a subject with which they are not well acquainted. The *lesser* degree of knowledge will give place to the *greater*. This will secure subordination enough. For the advantages of education which men must necessarily have over women, if they have made the proper use of them, will have set them so forward on the race, that we can never overtake them. But then don't let them despise us for this, as if their superiority were entirely founded on a natural difference of capacity! Despise us *as* women, and value themselves merely

174 Even Mulso did not argue directly that men and women are equal, although she *did* emphasise that "surely it may be granted us, that one of the *best* of *women* may be superior to one of the *worst* and *lowest of men*" (237).
For England as the land of liberty, especially for women, cf. Duncombe's *Feminiad* ll.49–50. The same idea can be found in German literature (la Roche 29; cf. also Friedrich Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* or W.A. Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*).

175 He had already described Harriet as a "meek-eyed Goddess of Wisdom"; Shepherd notes the connection (Shepherd 218; *Grandison* 3:213). In the above-quoted letter to Mulso, Richardson also expresses his hopes that Carter would contribute letters by Mrs. Shirley and Sir Charles to a continuation of *Grandison*. Whether or not he was serious in his plans for a collaborative sequel, his coupling of Carter, Mrs. Shirley and Sir Charles indicates his respect both for the real and the imagined woman.

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as men: For it is not the hat or cap which covers the head, that decides of the merit of it. (3:243)

Sir Charles, who has "made the proper use" of his advantages as rich and male, has indeed secured to himself women's (and men's) "subordination". However, once again, the debate is not closed.

Mrs. Shirley ends her contribution by stating that even among men, not all professions allow the same opportunities for learning; Richardson may be supposed to have concurred with her argument that it is the mark of pedantry to "despise a sensible [man] of these professions" (3:244). The point is confirmed by Lady W., who contributes a speech made by "an East-India officer, to a pedant" (3:244). The debate now seems to shift ground; instead of gender, learning becomes the topic, and Sir Charles takes the opportunity to chime in. Among other things, he gently corrects some of Harriet's opinions concerning classical learning which she expressed in the first volume of the novel. At the same time, however, he seems to agree with Mrs. Shirley's point that there is "a degree of knowledge very compatible with [women's] duties" (3:243), for he defends learning through the examples of learned women like Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth: "can it be supposed, that the natural genius's of those Ladies were more confined, or limited, for their knowledge of Latin and Greek?" (3:246). The positive terms he uses with reference to learned women carry some weight at a time when authors like Fielding and Smollett used the figure of the learned lady for comic relief. Richardson's generally rather positive references to learned women in his novels (Clarissa, for example, had begun to learn Latin before her elopement, 1468), and his approval of learned women in general, deserve to be emphasized.[176] Furthermore, it is significant that he depicts a *male* learned pedant who is discomfited, not a caricature of a learned woman.

Sir Charles's simultaneous defence of learning and learned women allows him to participate in the gender debate after all. Charlotte herself now asks him, with a determination equal to Hester Mulso's in the debate with Richardson: "Do you think that there is a natural inferiority in the faculties of the one Sex? A natural superiority in those of the other?" (3:246). Sir Charles now performs a rhetorical trick (cf. Latimer, *Making Gender* 134). Instead of immediately answering himself, he refers himself to the other men: "Who will answer this question for me?" As the others excuse themselves, he concludes: "You would, if you could, answer it in the Ladies favour" (3:246). At this point in the debate,

176 Richardson also defended learned women against female friends like Lady Bradshaigh (cf. Taylor, *Reason and Religion* 84). For a discussion of Richardson's last novel with reference to the learned and generally admired Elizabeth Carter, see Clery.

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everyone seems to have forgotten that all the men initially agreed to argue on the *men*'s side. Their silence enables Sir Charles to enlist them on the women's side instead. Through this masterstroke, he manages not only to suggest that no argument can be brought in the women's favour (or the other men would have given it), but also to present himself as a superior rhetorician (he could, undoubtedly, have made some defence of women's "faculties"),[177] and, finally, to further destabilise the premises of the initial debate. If all the other men are so gallant that they would immediately defend women's natural equality, perhaps Charlotte's earlier triumph was due not to the strength of her arguments, but to the complaisance of her antagonists?

The debate now firmly in his hands, Sir Charles proceeds to present his arguments (Charlotte's, we note, take up less than half a page before Mrs. Shirley is called in). First, he suggests that the differences in men's and women's bodies are a strong indication of other differences. Next, he remarks how "odious" are "a masculine woman, and an effeminate man" (3:247), including, among the women, those "who are so kind as to take the reins out of their husbands hands". Although he mentions no names in this place, the inference is clear, all the more since several women – especially Mrs. Selby and Charlotte, whom he has singled out a little before – are apt to control their husbands on the basis of their own superior sense. Charlotte, who has previously been associated with rakes and whose beauty is of a comparatively masculine style, is the most obvious target. The women are properly shamed.

Once they are aware of the danger of appearing too strong and therefore too 'masculine', Sir Charles continues with an *ad personam* argument: Harriet "is, in my notion, what all women should be—But wants she not a protector?" (3:248). Glossing over the fact that all her real dangers have proceeded from abusive men, he suggests that she has needed his comfort after suffering from anxious dreams. Harriet – who had previously always objected to all women being judged for the faults of one – immediately agrees. Charlotte is now reduced to single combat with her brother, although Mrs. Shirley's earlier arguments are allowed to stand, since Sir Charles "disapprove[s] not" of them (3:248). Some of the arguments which pass back and forth now are reminiscent of Mulso's exchange of letters with Richardson. There, Mulso had countered Richardson's examples of ungrateful children with instances of cruel parents (230–1). Now, Richardson is able to turn the tables on her:

177 A little later, he asks his friend Beauchamp to judge between himself and Harriet concerning their views on learning. Repeatedly stating that "You know, better than I", he effectually tells his 'judge' what arguments he should use and what decisions he should arrive at (3:249).

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> It was in vain to argue the tyranny of some husbands, when he could turn upon us the follies of some wives; and that wives and daughters were never more faulty, more undomestic, than at present; and when we were before a judge, that, tho' he could not be absolutely unpolite, would not flatter us, nor spare our foibles. (3:249)

Significantly, this debate remains without consequences for the plot – another way in which it can be called 'false', or a mock-debate. Sir Charles gallantly refuses to bring his best arguments, for "we are only, for pleasantry-sake, skimming over the surface of the argument. [...] I, for my part, would only contend, that we men should have power and right given us to protect and serve your Sex" (3:248). This, as Charlotte argues, is itself a false argument, masking misogyny as gallantry (3:250; cf. also Latimer, *Making Gender* 135). However, despite this astute assessment, Charlotte herself is complicit in her brother's victory, for it is she who describes the entire debate – she who assigns less than half a page to her own "triumph", while describing Sir Charles's word for word. At the same time, the development of the debate is emblematic of the novel's general strategy. As Taylor observes, Richardson was anxious that readers should understand *Clarissa* correctly, but in *Grandison*, debate is "the point" (*Reason and Religion* 60). This is possible because the *basic* rules of morality are uncontested here, and because these rules do not pose an imminent threat to any character's happiness. This opens room for negotiation and a degree of deviation – within (invisible) bounds. As Sir Charles says, in a final statement of the debate:

> *Could* I point out the boundaries [of allowable knowledge for women], Charlotte, it might not to *some* spirits be so proper: The limit might be treated as the one prohibited tree in the garden. But let me say, That genius, whether in man or woman, will push itself into light. [...] I would not, by any means, have it limited. (3: 251)

His statement is another, not-so-subtle reference to Genesis, reminding women of their role in the fall of mankind. At the same time, it is a cautious admission that even Sir Charles cannot frame rules for every individual woman.[178]

Typically, the debate reaches its end by two roads. On the one hand, the hero's dominance demonstrates the superiority of men at length. On the other hand, this superiority is framed as service and protection. Just as the novel as a whole tells a double narrative, one of women's self-fulfilment and one of the consolidation of patriarchy (partly through female agency, although ultimately under male leadership), so does this debate stipulate both for women's inferiority and

178 For a relatively detailed and generally positive assessment of this debate, see also Clery 160–2.

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for their worth. After all, their souls are equal to men's. It is women's bodies – which also gain them admirers – that lead to their inferiority on earth; in heaven, Sir Charles admits, difference will vanish: "When Sex ceases, inequality of Souls will cease; and women will certainly be on a foot with men, as to intellectuals, in Heaven" (3:250). His assessment provides a synthesis of Lovelace's dichotomy of "woman" (= seducable body) and "angel".

The ending of *Grandison* is jarring. Richardson's novels, apparently despite himself, had demonstrated that it was next to impossible for a woman to be both virtuous and happy as long as a bad man had any 'lawful' authority over her. His 'solution', "the consummate patriarchal presence" Sir Charles, does not truly contain this problem (Beasley 36). Indeed, Richardson himself seems to recognize, in the last volume, that this paragon is a true solution only if "men [were] to form themselves by *his* example", and if women refrain from overly romantic wishes to wait with marriage until they meet such a perfect man (3:396). Mrs. Selby aptly summarises the problem when she explains the consequences of too great expectations for married love: "as there is but *one* Sir Charles Grandison in the world, were his scheme of Protestant Nunneries put in execution, all the rest of womankind, who had seen him with distinction, might retire into cloisters" (3:396).

What is this scheme of Protestant Nunneries? In an earlier conversation piece, shortly after Charlotte's marriage, Mrs. Reeves notes the plight of women who submit to a miserable marriage simply because they have no other option, a fate they might avoid "if the state of a single woman were not here so peculiarly unprovided and helpless" (2:355). Sir Charles agrees with her diagnosis and responds by outlining a scheme wished for by both himself and Dr. Bartlett:

> We want to see established in every county, *Protestant Nunneries*; in which single women of small or no fortunes might live with all manner of freedom, under such regulations as it would be a disgrace for a modest or good woman not to comply with, were she absolutely on her own hands; and to be allowed to quit it whenever they pleased. (2:355)

The two men quickly proceed to specify that this scheme does not oppose, but rather complements, marriage, the 'natural' destination for a woman. The newly-married Charlotte is, according to her brother, "still better provided for" than if she were "Lady Abbess" there, as she says she wishes she were (2:355). Such a "nunnery" would be "a seminary for good wives" (2:355) as well as an asylum for genteel women of small fortunes and for widows (2:356) – a specification which women writers like Sarah Scott also used to justify related schemes. Nonetheless, despite all these limitations, the acknowledged necessity

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of a respectable and agreeable asylum for those who are unable to find a place in the 'natural' scheme for women is also an acknowledgment that women are more than mere chattels and tools, of value only as long as they minister to men's wants. Women are worthy of dignity and esteem; however much they may be required to suffer patiently at the hand of those with 'rightful' authority, this does not negate their worth and importance as individuals.[179]

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179 Pamela writes about women's intellectual capacity, and the need for educating and respecting them, in a somewhat similar vein, albeit more radically. She argues that apart from Mr. B., there are few men who surpass, or even equal, the many good and clever women she knows. In addition, she emphasizes that educated women make better wives, while the wide-spread contempt for women produces libertinism (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 545).

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4. Conclusion: the double narrative of *Sir Charles Grandison*

Grandison has, despite the known appreciation of writers like Jane Austen and George Eliot (cf. Doody, *A Natural Passion* 349, 375), long been seen as Richardson's least accessible novel (if one ignores the sequel to *Pamela*). Indeed, Mullan has declared it "a text now scarcely readable, a text for which *aficionados* of Richardson often tend to apologize" (86) – although to read a 1500-page text and then term it unreadable seems something of an oxymoron. In a similar vein, Keymer concludes his analysis of the intricacies of *Clarissa* by noting that

> in *Grandison*, disappointingly though by no means coincidentally, little is at stake – least of all the order or chaos of 'the Moral and Intellectual World'. Meanings are left for the reader to make out, certainly; but it would take some very ingenious re-reading indeed to make these meanings matter very much. Richardson, it is clear, was now playing safe. He would never return to investigate themes of the vexedness and urgency of *Clarissa*'s. (*Richardson's* Clarissa 248)

More recent criticism challenges this perception of the novel. Richardson may indeed have tried to "play safe"; at least, as has been shown, he was trying to enforce, once more, the moral rules which some readers then and now have found oppressive. Samuel Johnson observed after having read the last volume of the novel that "you have a trick of laying yourself open to objections, in the first part of your work, and crushing them in subsequent parts" (Schellenberg, *Correspondence* 200; 28 Mar. 1754). In the context of Richardson's *oeuvre*, the remark is applicable to *Grandison* as a whole. Even readers who have not considered their objections to his moral assumptions "crushed" tend to see Richardson's efforts to do so in his third novel. However, if *Grandison* avoids the "vexedness and urgency" of *Clarissa*, the text remains complex and innovative, and – as recent analyses have shown – its meanings do, after all, "matter very much".

What Keymer has suggested of *Clarissa* – that it is remarkably difficult to read (cf. *Richardson's* Clarissa 56–7) – is now true of Richardson's novels in general. Perhaps more than any other canonical eighteenth-century novel, they confront the modern reader with a mixture of the familiar and the strange, the sympathetic and the repulsive. *Grandison*, perhaps, has elicited so many analyses of covert coercion because its female characters – complex, intelligent, and very much alive – are so close to a modern (self-)image of women. Their

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intelligence and their determination to do right by others (and, if possible, by themselves) we can now recognize to be the natural basis of gender equality. We feel that Richardson is tampering with the evidence, constructing 'good patriarchy' based on materials which should, on the contrary, lead to an open struggle for emancipation. Instead, he embeds his attractive, virtuous women in a narrative which endorses patriarchy in its broadest sense of the rule of man over woman, old over young, rich over poor, as well as father over child. This is more jarring in his novels than it would be in a narrative where the female protagonists seem less capable of fending for themselves, or where the importance of free will is not discussed. Furthermore, through the insistent presence of moral dilemmas it becomes all the more obvious that women, no matter how intelligent and virtuous they are, have almost no power of defending either themselves or others. Although they are shown capable of resistance when pushed to commit immoral actions, they may not transgress the rules of the system of duty even when their antagonists do.

Despite all this, Richardson saw himself, and was seen, as a friend and defender of women, and it would be a mistake simply to dismiss this perspective. This view was recognized by intelligent women around him, even when they argued against some of his ideas, and it was recognized implicitly by those women writers who adapted themes from his novels. Indeed, Richardson's vision of a perfect patriarchy implicitly acknowledges, through its second narrative of female wish-fulfilment, the importance of women's happiness and self-determination. The elaborate *building* of such a patriarchy almost from scratch testifies to the need for justifying the system of duty. He could not, or would not, see that patriarchy as envisaged by him worked against the probability of women's happiness, but he was able to recognize the injustice of suffering when it occurred, and he tried to envisage a remedy. The fact that his story of an ideal state recreated is a fiction (in more than one sense of the word) does not mean that this fiction is not powerful, and that this power works only against women – it shows women's potential and denounces male cruelty, implying that male authority should be earned.

How complex the question of the significance of any element of these novels is can be illustrated, for example, by the episode of Charlotte who is surprised by her husband while nursing her child. Chaber links Lord G.'s behaviour to that of Mr. B. and Lovelace in the earlier novels. Lord G.'s "rapture" and "the emphasis on nakedness" are read by her as "unwittingly ironic echoes of typically Lovelacean behaviour" ("'This Affecting Subject'" 245). And although Mr. B. prohibits his wife from breast-feeding while Lord G. endorses it, Chaber insists that in both cases, the husband seizes control from women in matters

usually regarded as feminine. For her, the scene "literally fulfil[s] [William] Cadogan's advice 'to every Father to have his Child nursed under his own Eye'" (244).

It should be noted, however, that, in contrast to Mr. B., Lord G. has not indicated his wishes, far less uttered commands, concerning the matter of nursing. Indeed, Charlotte claims she nursed her child secretly, according to her own determination. What, then, does this scene signify? For Charlotte, at this precise moment, it means that she has her wish of nursing her daughter granted. For the marriage as a whole, Chaber suggests, it symbolizes a "resubjugation" (244), as Charlotte's rebelliousness is lost in maternity and she gives up her claims on privacy, "submit[ting] to [her husband's] approving gaze" (245). By extension, it stands for patriarchal structures seizing control from women. I wish to complicate this (and similar) arguments. I began this paper with two basic questions, the first of which was how those without power can be good and find happiness. Seen from that perspective, what matters is not whether Charlotte has any say about nursing her child, but whether she is willing and permitted to do so. She is both. The first testifies to her own goodness, the second to her husband's. Both do what they should, and open contests like the one between Mr. B. and Pamela are avoided.

The second question was to what degree agency is possible for truly virtuous women. Here, nursing is Charlotte's own choice. Although it depends on her husband's agreement, the *process* of decision making is hers alone, and she remains in charge of her own self-presentation. She does indeed "submit" to her role as a wife now, but this is a less disappointing outcome if one keeps in mind that agency does not equal hostile action. Agency (the ability to act) is, in modern readings of eighteenth-century texts, often privileged over moral choice; anti-heroines like Jane Austen's Lady Susan can appear attractive simply because they impose their will on their environment. However, Lady Susan, who neglects her own daughter's education and would force her into a repugnant marriage, is hardly a satisfying 'feminist'. Charlotte's ability to assess the limits of her own power, take compassion on her distressed husband, and lovingly nurse her baby daughter, is surely at least equally valid as a 'proto-feminist' model.

Does all this provide a satisfying answer to the point from which this paper started? Does it in any way solve the dilemma of the good woman (or, for that matter, the dilemma of the good but powerless man) when confronted with injustice? In some sense, the answer must be 'no'. Even for readers who may find the happy ending of *Grandison* emotionally satisfying, the question of what to do in the face of oppression remains largely open. Judging, moreover, from

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my experience of BA students who read texts by 18th-century 'proto-feminists', most of the 'advanced' positions of the day now seem backward and restrictive. Such a feeling is not confined to students. Taylor points to the disillusionment of critics who, after initial enthusiasm over the liberating potential of Richardson's novels, came to recognize that they also have an opposite potential of restraining women's power (*Reason and Religion* 90). Is *Grandison* merely a gilding to a bitter pill – an elaborate attempt to 'naturalize' women's subordination? Clearly, this question must also be answered in the negative. This novel, like Richardson's earlier ones, highlights the beneficial effects which good women can and should have on their environment – an influence which culminates in Lady Grandison's education of the perfect patriarch Sir Charles.

In our time (at least, within Western European culture), the rights of the individual tend to be in focus, while duties appear as the logical counterpart of these rights, if they are acknowledged at all. Compared to this, Richardson's guarded approval of the importance of the individual must fall short. The happiest community, he suggests, develops when good characters are granted their "free-will". Yet he withholds his sanction from those who would enforce this "free-will" against those already in power. Similarly, he is ready to grant, in the person of his hero, the equality of all souls, male and female. At the same time, however, the female body ensures – literally *embodies* – the inferiority, and justifies the subordination, of women to men in this life. Such a statement has the potential to disgust even many of those who, as compared to *today*'s academic climate, occupy the position of conservatives and misogynists. At the same time, Richardson's characters, especially his women, continue to appeal to modern readers. They do so through their charm, intelligence and 'aliveness', the very qualities which won them admiring readers in the 18th century. Whatever may be disturbing about the ideas of subordination propagated in these novels, the powerful presence of the female characters provides a fictional example of virtuous women who may, possibly, need protection, but certainly not control.

The force of example is sometimes doubted. Yet numerous (albeit controversial) modern examples can be adduced for attempts to influence people this way. Hence the call for female role-models in 'masculine' jobs, or for films depicting 'minorities' in a positive light. If there is any force in example, surely *Grandison* deserves some credit. Similarly, the gentle pressure applied to both male and female characters to cooperate finds its modern equivalent in 'nudging'. Health insurance companies develop apps to motivate customers to do more sports, promising (somewhat implausibly) that they hold out benefits to the healthy but refrain from punishing those who will not take advantage of these apps. *Grandison* ignores, and tries to obscure, the dangers of power

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imbalance inherent in the moral system underlying it. Nevertheless, it offers a (highly, if only partially) attractive vision of how this system could work beneficially even in an imperfect world. In doing this, it strengthens the position of all those who recognize, and strive to enhance or reward, goodness in women. *Grandison* demonstrates the possibility of female happiness – and the happiness of others occupying a low position, be it because of their birth or because of their unassertive or foolish character.

The study of Richardson's novels raises the question of flexibility within a system of thought. Despite his and Hester Mulso's theoretical disagreements over filial duty, they meet in imaginative contemplation of the practical consequences of this same duty. As Doody has observed, whenever Richardson really plays out a situation, he becomes unconventional and able to propose individual, 'real' solutions for problems which the system of duty cannot solve. And, as the examples she has collected show, he was able to touch the many readers who disliked his fictional characters, his own character, or both. On the other hand, he is unwilling to transcend this system. He uses the individual case to endorse or reform the system, not to question it.

Many of the critics who have made *Grandison* the special object of their study have remarked on the ways in which this novel limits women's agency. Latimer's reading, for one, is more optimistic: her emphasis is on strategies of empowerment whereby women can prove misogynist stereotypes wrong. Her analysis, however, also highlights the hero's misogyny; indeed, her analysis of Harriet as a 'feminist' is based, in part, on the interpretation that she challenges Sir Charles's views. In many ways, my own reading follows and complements these studies. Nevertheless, to end a study of Richardson's novels simply with an emphasis on his patriarchal outlook would not do justice to his texts. Rather, they bear an affinity to optical illusions, to the duck/rabbit effect, where either animal can be detected, but never both together (German *Vexierbild*). For women, they offer as much empowerment as subordination, and vice versa. If Richardson is conservative in many ways and constructs his novels accordingly, this conservative attitude entailed, among other things, perspectives on women's education which few other authors endorsed (e. g. Pamela and Clarissa learning Latin). Moreover, his last novel especially contains germs of 'feminism' which would be developed by later writers – the plausible (if not probable) depiction of a present-day, local utopia; the depiction of women's friendship with women; the fullness of characterisation of women; the importance of small-scale agency. As Michael McKeon describes it in a summing-up of Richardson's first novel, "what is most remarkable about *Pamela*'s utopian achievement is precisely the

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image it provides of real empowerment under conditions that seem somehow to be unaltered" (381).

The limited space for agency open to Richardson's heroines has led many of those critics who recognized that his texts are not 'feminist' in the modern sense to focus on the reverse (and perhaps to condemn the hero of his last novel as a misogynist in proxy for the author). However, if his heroines do not have much outward agency, they compensate for this restraint with a fullness of personality and attention to detail which is more familiar from – and valued in – the work of Jane Austen (notable also for the absence of responsible father figures – apparently a state of affairs which is still propitious for female agency by the early 19th century). It is now a truth universally acknowledged that Richardson's novels had a seminal influence on her style and plot. The variety of her heroines' personalities, moreover, – reaching from naïve Catherine Morland to rational, considerate Elinor Dashwood to clever but self-willed and immature Emma Woodhouse – differ from but build on Richardson's gallery of memorable women like occasionally waspish, but kind Pamela, naïve Emily Jervois, or unruly Charlotte Grandison.

Building on the improved reputation of novels after the mid-eighteenth century, as well as on stylistic developments, Austen can take for granted the importance of her heroines' small-scale agency and interiority. Moreover, although the explicit piety of Richardson's novels is absent from Austen's, it can re-appear when her subject warrants it (as it does in *Mansfield Park*). The apparent secularity of her stories is based, in part, on the assumption that heroines and readers alike share the basic tenets of Christian morality. At the same time, a new angle in the perception of moral responsibilities minimizes the gap between our own and 'Austen's' values. Whereas Clarissa struggles for space to be virtuous, Austen's heroines can concentrate on the pursuit of happiness. They acknowledge, where appropriate, the ties of "duty, honour, and gratitude". However, where these are not in question, they can declare, in Elizabeth Bennet's words to Lady Catherine: "I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness" (*Pride and Prejudice* 338).

Surprisingly, the affordances of Richardson's novels extend to present-day literature and criticism. Thus, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* has been read "as a challenge to the canonical depiction of the heroine in eighteenth-century novels like Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*" (Denny 251). Apryl Denny has built on this juxtaposition to compare Walker's novel not to *Clarissa*, but to *Pamela.* If the former has been perceived to exemplify the male author's control of the woman's perspective, or as a denunciation of patriarchy (251–2), the latter

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contains, if only in embryo, "the possibilities of a world without 'domination'" (252): "In reinventing the male-identified, working-class, women depicted in *Pamela*, Walker creates a network of Womanist characters who guide her novel's heroine toward a personal growth that leads to social transformation" (253).

Interestingly, if *The Color Purple* is a revision of *Pamela*, *Grandison* may claim a place in-between. Although (legitimate) male authority is more present in Richardson's last than in his first novel, the bonds among women who are different in character but united in friendship and mutual guidance make an important part of *Grandison*. There, as in Walker's novel, it is shown "that women might unite to gain control of themselves rather than compete with each other to be the best commodity on the male-owned market" (Denny 257). The personal growth of Walker's protagonist, stimulated by a supportive network of female friends, also has a beneficial effect on the men, who become less threatening as antagonists and, in some cases, can even become friends. In the same way, Richardson's Pamela reforms Mr. B., Clarissa reforms Belford, and Lady Grandison educates a son who is able to reform others.

In *The Color Purple*, women's teaching and the surmounting of rivalry leads not only to a community which is centered around women, but also to a new spirituality, where an oblivious, male white God is replaced by an ungendered, all-encompassing divinity. Such a step is unthinkable within the framework of morality which underlies Richardson's fiction. Nevertheless, through creating women capable of guiding, and being guided by, each other, as well as willing to support each other, he helped to pave the way for the 'womanist' community depicted in this 20th-century novel. In *Pamela*, "women's relationships with each other exist only as a function of Mr. B.'s attempts to control Pamela, and once this catalyst is removed, the women have little or nothing to do with one another. Female relationships are formed […] only in response to male power" (Denny 270). In *Grandison*, the hero partly acts as a catalyst, as well, but the bonds between the women are not only lasting (as, incidentally, they are in *Pamela*), but continue to take a central place in the narrative. The networks of relationships they build are still relevant today, as are other issues which the female protagonists confront: social accommodation vs. free agency, full truth vs. a 'functioning' re-presentation of it, and the fine borderline between victimization and individual empowerment.

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