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BEYOND WORDS:  
THE LANGUAGE OF CLARISSA

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## ABSTRACT

For Samuel Richardson, language is the means by which he tells the story of Clarissa but, more importantly, it is his symbol within the novel of the deceptions of the world. It is language that leads the heroine away from herself and from everything that she holds dear; it is language that frustrates her and Lovelace's attempts to reach an understanding; and it is language, finally, that must be abandoned by Clarissa as she prepares herself for death. Through a close study of the language of Clarissa, this paper attempts to define the heroine's relationship to the words she and the other characters use and to trace Richardson's involvement with this theme. It is argued that Richardson emphasizes Clarissa's attitude towards language through the use of imagery, imagery which is especially noticeable and important towards the end of the novel when the heroine rejects ordinary words in favour of sacred language.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Samuel Richardson is aware that language is deceptive and even dangerous. As an author, he repeatedly chooses a certain word, places it in a particular context and then passes the finished work to the reader in the hope that he will see the significance of having that word in that place. He has little confidence in his reader's ability to interpret correctly; the creator of a work and its reader have not even the years of close association that *Clarissa* shares with her family to aid them in their efforts to communicate and interpret. Considerations of this sort no doubt determined the inordinate length of Clarissa. Richardson worried about its size but could accept few of the abridgements that were attempted, either by himself or by others;<sup>1</sup> perhaps something more than vanity was involved in these refusals, and clarity would certainly be a compelling reason for them. The endless revisions to which he subjected the novel, both before and after its initial publication, and the editorial comments he inserted may also have arisen from the same desire.<sup>2</sup> A glance at almost any page of Clarissa shows how the author stresses significant words, phrases, or whole sentences by printing them in italics, while his growing frustration with inattentive readers is revealed in the testy tone and wording

of some of the footnotes.<sup>3</sup> Richardson may be a user of language, but he certainly does not trust it; it is a thing born of man and is, therefore, subject to human frailties.

Richardson's suspicion of language also colours his attitude towards the familiar letter. While there are passages in his correspondence<sup>4</sup> that appear to substantiate Malvin R. Zirker's argument that Richardson assumes that familiar letters are sincere, artless and uncalculated,<sup>5</sup> Richardson carefully qualifies his praise of personal correspondences. They must take place between "friendly and undesigning hearts", styles are only "generally beyond the power of disguise", a letter is preferable to conversation "because of the deliberation it allows, from the very preparation to, and action of writing" and, finally, young ladies should write primarily to their own sex "since ours is hardly ever void of design, and makes a correspondence dangerous".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it is not unimportant that Richardson's praise of familiar letter-writing grows out of his efforts to persuade young ladies to correspond with him, even though he is a man, because he has a good character and honourable intentions.<sup>7</sup> The assumptions he makes about letters apply to ideal situations, while the setting of Clarissa is far from ideal: young ladies eagerly correspond with each other, it is true, but one of them also writes to a man who does not have a good character, the other prefers "wit, rather than strict justice" (I, 133), and a rake successfully imitates many different styles. Clarissa may be the best of her world,

but she is not perfect, and her letters are tainted with human imperfection.

It would appear, as well, that Richardson recognizes the temptation to create a new self that is held out to the writer of familiar letters. His teasing, probing letters to young ladies and his epistolary romance with Lady Bradshaigh suggest that his letters gave him the opportunity to substitute a daring, flirtatious personality for his shy, respectable self.<sup>8</sup> When he describes himself to Susanna Highmore and Lady Bradshaigh, he self-consciously calls himself "grotesque" and "odd" and emphasizes his peculiarities<sup>9</sup>, as if he is only too aware of the gap between his fictional and real selves. If the contrast between the figure he makes in public and the self he creates in his letters is strong enough to keep him from confusing his two identities, it is arguable that he understands how seductive the fictional self is.

Richardson's attitudes towards language and letter-writing reveal themselves in Clarissa. He makes one of Clarissa's major failings the continuance of her prohibited correspondence (I, 486); allows her to be deluded by Lovelace's assumed plain style (I, 368); emphasizes the effect of Anna's letters upon Lovelace (II, 361-362); bases several key turns of the plot on late or stolen letters, and manipulates styles to reveal character and emotion. In addition, Clarissa is endowed with a sensitivity to language that makes her vulnerable

to its encroachments on her selfhood. She is matched with a man who shares her weakness, and they are led into a conclusion in which their attitudes towards language signal the quality of their eternal lives. After words all but destroy Clarissa and Lovelace by pushing them into a violent situation, Richardson imitates Clarissa by modifying his own language usage. He, like his heroine, employs it less to debate, argue, rationalize or explore, and more as a tool with which to conceptualize Christian verities. As Clarissa dies, Richardson tries to escape the deceptions of language by creating striking imagery<sup>10</sup> to describe her journey beyond words.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 206-211.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 213, 310-311, 315-316.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Richardson, Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Everyman's Library, 1932), I, 501; n. 1, II, 33<sup>n.1</sup>, 35 n.1, 156, n. 1, 313-314, n. 1, III, 374, n. 1; IV 551, n. 1. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>4</sup>John Carroll, ed., Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson, intro. by John Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 64-67, 67-69, 166-167.

<sup>5</sup>Malvin R. Zirker, Jr., "Richardson's Correspondence: The Personal Letter as Private Experience" in Howard Anderson, Philip B. Daghljian and Irvin Ehrenpreis, eds., The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), p. 77.

<sup>6</sup>Carroll, pp. 64, 65, 66.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 66, 68-69, 166.

<sup>8</sup>Zirker, pp. 83-84, 87-89.

<sup>9</sup>Carroll, pp. 88, 135-136.

<sup>10</sup>Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 217-218, 218-219, 220, 222-231, 232-236. Margaret Anne Doody implicitly recognizes that the most striking images in Clarissa are clustered towards the end of the novel by using the penknife, prison and deathbed scenes, the picture of St. Cecilia and Lovelace's descriptions and dream to support the argument of the chapter entitled "The Visual Image in Clarissa". In addition, she notes, pp. 188, 214, that the other main type of imagery in the novel, that of the house, which is found throughout the book, is so unobtrusive that it can easily be missed.

CHAPTER II  
THE SEDUCTION OF CLARISSA

Clarissa's use of language undergoes several perceptible changes before she leaves Harlowe Place, but her first letters reveal her as she has been for most of her eighteen years. Until the time of her return to her home, after her visit to the Howes', she is engaged in struggle, but her spirits are high and her self-confidence is manifest. Her mother supports her against James and Arabella (I, 22, 25) and, just before she leaves for the Howes', it is clear that only her brother and sister believe her to be faulty (I, 24, 26-27). There is an edge to Clarissa's narrative in these early letters, which is attributable to her resentment at being turned into a scapegoat (I, 4) but, nevertheless, with Anna's assurance that everyone thinks she is "blamed at home for the faults of others" (I, 2), she is certain that she is little more than a scapegoat. She can, therefore, afford to take a fairly tolerant view of the situation and write freely and confidently.

The Clarissa who emerges from the letters she writes in January is self-assured and witty. It is never clearer than in these pages how the lively Miss Howe and the sober Miss Harlowe could have formed such a close friendship, for in her early letters Clarissa displays a sprightly and ironic sense of humour. Visible in the heroine's first letter (I, 3-8), from

the adroitness with which she teasingly returns Anna's compliments to the caustic wit which informs her sketch of Bella, is the writer's delight in her powers of communication and interpretation. Having promised to "recite facts only" (I, 4), Clarissa launches into a highly subjective account of her sister's behaviour and excuses her lapse by reminding Anna of her injunction to transmit "the air and manner in which things are spoken that are to be taken notice of ...[since] air and manner often express more than the accompanying words" (I, 5). In fact, the description of air and manner, which appears to be a convention in the correspondence of the two girls, is bound to temper the objectivity of the report. Judging another person's air and manner is a subjective activity; what is called reserve in a friend may be termed coldness or arrogance in an enemy or a stranger. If Clarissa were as morally bound to objective narrative as she is sometimes thought to be<sup>1</sup> she would eschew the description of air and manner. Instead, she accepts it and the licence it gives her to have fun with and, perhaps, vent some frustrations on those who have offended her. The girls' adoption of this type of description has less to do with truth than with pleasure, and Clarissa's skill in employing it suggests that she enjoys it no less than her friend.

While Clarissa's guilty need to apologize for being so "particular" (I, 5) about her sister indicates that her attitude to language is essentially serious, it does not necessarily follow that she is exclusively, or even usually,

concerned to give her narratives the appearance of "neutral reportage".<sup>2</sup> Nor does Richardson try to mislead his readers into accepting her accounts as "facts only" (I, 4). Clarissa's full promise is to "recite facts only; and leave you to judge of the truth of the report raised that the younger sister has robbed the elder" (I, 4). The ironic tone alone is a signal that the "facts" may be coloured by rancour but, more importantly, the concluding words refer the reader back to Clarissa's reason for writing this letter. Anna has requested of Clarissa a detailed report that can be used to justify her actions, if the need arises, and which can be opposed to the rumours that are circulating, including the insinuation that Clarissa has stolen Bella's lover (I, 2). By reminding the reader of Anna's request, and of the state of fervent admiration that exists between the two girls, Richardson warns that, while sincerity may be present, scrupulous objectivity is not to be expected from either Anna or Clarissa.

The warnings continue in Clarissa's first letter where the style of an objective report is, in fact, parodied. Clarissa initially describes her family as "strangely discomposed", only to notice the evasive politeness of the phrase and replace it with the more expressive "tumults" (I, 3). The inhabitants of Harlowe Place have not merely been upset, they have been rioting, and she deliberately chooses the word that conveys her feelings about her family's unreasonableness and lack of self-control. Her wishes that she had died in her last

fever or, at least, that her grandfather had not singled her out for favour are also interesting for she regrets, not the fact that she has been involved, however unwillingly, in the furor, but that she has lost everyone's love and respect while she is forced to defend them and bear the blame herself (I, 4). In these opening paragraphs of Clarissa's letter, she makes it clear that the whole situation is so mad that no rational person cares to be part of it. Since, however, the results of the affair have somehow been attached to her she will do her best to tell the truth of "the little history" (I, 4), with all of the wry detachment of the only person to have kept her head while all about her have been losing theirs. This is objectivity of a sort, but only of a sort, for the teller of the tale has a sense of her own superiority which, when it is coupled with the convention of giving the air and manner as well as the words, lays the foundation for an ironic narrative. When the same narrator has also been encouraged to justify herself to a warmly receptive audience, the question of her bias is no longer a question but a fact.

The condescending attitude that Clarissa has towards her family, her delight in her abilities with language and her disinclination to give Anna a neutral description of the affair all testify to an aspect of her character that is rarely mentioned:<sup>3</sup> her youth. Clarissa may be an example to her sex and the possessor of wisdom and prudence far beyond her years, but she is still just eighteen years old, and she has many of

the characteristics of the precocious child. In her, intellectual and emotional maturity have not kept pace; conscious of her intellectual superiority to her family, she is still emotionally tied to them, while they both admire and fear her. Mature enough to admire objectivity, magnanimity and self-control, and practice them in public, but young enough to give into spite in a private correspondence, Clarissa resists classification as either a cunning manipulator or a serious young saint. Of Clarissa's behaviour in this part of the novel, it is perhaps fairest to stress the childlike part of her nature that cannot resist the temptation to turn serious things, like courtship and language, into games. The connoisseur's eye with which she appraises Bella's strategies against Lovelace, her praise of her sister's "good encouraging denial" and "consenting negatives" (I, 8) and her casual reference to three rejected suitors of her own (I, 24) suggest that her interest in the ritual of courtship is not the projected marriage, but the interesting encounters that lead up to the proposal. Courtship, in her experience, can be a game because she knows that it will end with her refusal (I, 13). Language also can be a game to this "mistress of persuasion" (I, 9) because she is quite sure that she can direct the conversation, or letter, to achieve her own ends. At this point in the novel, when the wounding of her brother and the accusations levelled against her have shown that the games can have serious repercussions, she still retains her faith that

language, at least, can make the affair manageable. The clandestine correspondence with Lovelace is undertaken in order to "prevent the impending mischief on one side" (I, 20), while the letters to Anna endeavour to place things in their proper perspective: jealousy and a hot temper, fuelled by one ridiculous and one undeclared courtship, provoke a duel which is followed by a minor wound, more senseless violence and finally, intransigence. Used to having her own way, with the approval of all (as various members of her family and Clarissa herself point out) (I, 78-79, 217, 4) she expects to be able to control this situation, as she has others.

That she has been able to control other affairs of a like, if not quite as explosive, nature is demonstrated by her portrait of Bella in love (I, 4-9) and by the account she gives of the interview with her family (I, 26,27). William Beatty Warner calls attention to the fact that Bella and Clarissa give very different versions of what it was like to live at Harlowe Place before Lovelace entered upon the scene;<sup>4</sup> according to Bella, it was to be constantly overshadowed by her younger sister and the victim of her "saucy meekness" (I, 215-217), while Clarissa remembers only how she was loved by her parents and uncles and respected by everyone (I, 167). Mr. Warner claims that it is a "mistake" to try to choose between the two stories since both are coloured by the struggle in which the sisters are engaged,<sup>5</sup> but it may be more helpful to point out that no choice is possible because both versions are essentially

true. Clarissa, the favourite child, may love her brother and sister but she has little reason to respect them. The youngest of them all, she is more intelligent than James (I, 54), more attractive than Bella (I, 5) and better humoured than either (I, 7,15). James and Bella fight frequently with each other (I, 22) and Bella is also estranged from Clarissa because she is jealous of her younger sister and is unable to share her interests (I, 156). At least, this is what Clarissa believes. In Bella's defence, it is only necessary to think of her position. Outshone at every turn by Clarissa, who possesses not only a sense of her own superiority but an acid wit and a subtle tongue, Bella has few options open to her. She could gladly suffer her own inferiority in a saintlike manner; she could place herself in direct opposition to her sister and face a disapproving family and Clarissa's cool insults; she could accept Clarissa's kindnesses to her and plot revenge. That she chooses the last option is not especially surprising, and neither is it astonishing that Clarissa knows that her sister dislikes her and seeks to control Bella's vindictiveness.

The animosity expressed in Clarissa's portrait of Bella has been enflamed by her present resentment, but the observations that fuel it are of long standing. It is only, for example, Bella's good humour on being courted by Lovelace that makes her profess love for Clarissa (I, 5), a profession which implies not only that Clarissa is not loved by her now, but that Bella's love for her sister has always been dependent



on Bella's disposition. Since Bella "is not naturally good-humoured" (I, 7), Clarissa probably knows very well that her sister has never liked her. Furthermore, when Bella makes "a virtue of necessity" (I, 9) and deprecates the man who has left her, Clarissa notes that she is not "wanting to herself on this occasion" (I, 9). This last comment, especially, suggests that Clarissa understands Bella's position in the family. Bad-tempered Bella usually must make "a virtue of necessity" and pretend to feelings of love, admiration and humility that she does not feel. Clarissa does not trust her hypocritical sister and engages in several verbal strategies to control her.

One strategy, perhaps, is that which Bella later deems her "saucy meekness" (I, 217). The eye and ear which notice all the ridiculous details of Bella's actions and words at the time of her courtship with Lovelace belong to the Clarissa who supposedly has no special reason to resent her at that point. By her own account, Clarissa fails to respond to Bella's request for flattery and only congratulates her "upon her prospects" (I, 5). Perhaps Clarissa is mistress enough of herself to banish any hint of amusement at her sister's infatuation and vanity as she listens and replies; it is possible, however, that a laughing eye accompanies the congratulation and that the omitted compliment on Bella's appearance is not simply an omission but a comment. Bella's "self-complacency" (I, 5), if it is not punctured by her sister, is certainly not encouraged by her.

Clarissa's other method of controlling her sister is properly described as a written strategy. It does not exert pressure directly on Bella; instead, it exposes her to the talkative Miss Howe, which may have some social repercussions for Bella, and it allows Clarissa to vent her hostility towards her sister without openly arguing with her. That Clarissa is used to relating stories of Bella's and the others' foolishness is indicated by her apology to Anna that "I never was thus particular before; no, not to you" (I, 5), which suggests that Anna has heard many stories about the Harlowe family, even if the communication of January 13 is more detailed than usual. The style employed in the sketch of Bella has been studied by A.R. Humphreys who calls it the "free indirect style" and notes that it is dramatic and ironic, and a sophisticated narrative technique.<sup>6</sup> It is also a technique which is suited to Clarissa, who reserves it almost solely for occasions when she wishes to convey contempt for another person's foolishness or mean-spiritedness. She seems to use the style when she feels in control of a situation: it slips into her description of Solmes' stuttering when she realizes that "cowardice in a foe begets courage in one's self" (I, 377), but vanishes again after he gains more confidence. It reappears much later on, midway through Clarissa's account of the events leading up to the rape when, after an indignant outburst against the imposters who pretended to be Lady Betty and Miss Montague (III, 355), she uses it to emphasize the charming hypocrisy

with which she was deceived (III, 357-364). It seems that it is, in fact, judging from its very noticeable presence in the second and third letters of the first volume (I, 5-10), a style which has been honed to perfection by Clarissa, the favoured and precocious younger daughter of the Harlowe family. It is dramatic, seductive, funny and yet subtle; it caricatures its subject but is not demonstrably untruthful. It is, in short, what Clarissa may be supposed to have been at Harlowe Place before the tumults began: lively and ironic, but still decorous and precise. A controlled way to vent hostility, this style also hints at a gift of Clarissa's that is of more practical value in controlling her family. As Betty Barnes tells Clarissa later, she has the ability to "say very cutting words in a cool manner, and yet not call names" (I, 321). The art of the indirect insult is useful, especially to an exemplary young woman, and Clarissa's sketch of Bella shows that she has mastered it.

Clarissa's "saucy meekness" (I, 217) and indirect irony allow her to deflect her sister's jealousy, to protect herself from becoming embroiled in open conflicts with her and perhaps even to modify Bella's behaviour without losing her family's love and respect. The same techniques may also be effective with her brother, but her parents and uncles have to be dealt with more carefully, both because of their authority over her and because of her sincere affection for them. The way in which she manages them is illustrated in the scene that

concludes Letter VI (I, 26-27). Two things are going on in her account of the family's giving its formal permission for her to visit Anna: her skill in controlling her brother, defending her innocence and promising less than her father demands is revealed; no less importantly, her intentions regarding the freedoms she is to be allowed at the Howes' are subtly communicated to Anna.

Clarissa relates the conversation in terse sentences which express the scene's uncomfortable and rather foolish formality. Of all the participants in the interview, only James is described with any thoroughness, so that the rest seem like unwilling puppets of this rude, manipulative, dictatorial and sneering (I, 26) young man. The account gives the impression that the scene is little more than a farce; everyone but James and Bella loves Clarissa and trusts in her judgement and, therefore, anything that she feels is proper must be right. What she feels is proper, of course, is to shift the blame onto James' shoulders (I, 26), and to reserve to herself the right to see Lovelace at the Howes' if she cannot "properly" (I, 27) avoid him. If she does meet him, she will not encourage him (although it is noteworthy that she does not engage to discourage him) (I, 27). She asks Anna to promise "that the hated man shall not come near your house" (I, 27), only to cancel the request immediately by pointing out the foolish inconsistency of it: how can Anna prevent him from visiting when Clarissa is being sent to the Howes' to draw him

away from Harlowe Place (I, 27)? The only thing that she does ask Anna to do is not to leave them alone together "if he does come" (I, 27). The letter establishes, almost beyond doubt, that Lovelace will come and that Clarissa will see him, against the express command of her father, because "her prudence may be trusted to" (I, 27) and because Anna cannot be expected to keep him away.

Clarissa's written manipulation of the scene should not, however, conceal the verbal manipulations of everyone involved in it. If Clarissa refuses to consider the question of her attraction to Lovelace, and sidesteps the injunction against seeing him at all, then the Harlowes accept her equivocation and refuse to look more closely at the problem because of their own fear of Lovelace (I, 24). If he must come to see Clarissa, "'tis better there than here" (I, 27) as Uncle Antony says, so they protect themselves by sending Clarissa away. They leave to her the problem of how to avoid, without provoking, him. Whether or not Mrs. Howe and Anna can, or will, forbid him their house, or how Clarissa is to refuse to see him, if his visits are permitted, without inflaming him, are questions that are avoided. Clarissa's promise to her father brings them out into the open; the hasty conclusion of the interview after her words, and the reiterated charge laid to her prudence testify to the family's unwillingness to attend to the problem (I, 27). The terms of the prohibition and the phrasing of Clarissa's promise do not

converge because everyone is satisfied with the lack of agreement. Clarissa is pleased because she seems to have won a verbal victory over her family. Not only is she able to go to Anna's, but she has not been forced to relinquish her pride in her prudence and her social skills by agreeing to avoid Lovelace at all costs; perhaps some secret pleasure at the prospect of his visits is involved too. The Harlowes, meanwhile, do not have to worry about more violence taking place on their property and have, as well, the assurance that Clarissa will do as they wish. The whole exchange rests on the word "prudence". In agreeing that Clarissa's prudence will solve the problem, the Harlowes and Clarissa are toying with an ambiguous word. Prudence is defined by the OED as the "ability to discern the most suitable, politic, or profitable course of action, especially as regards conduct". Prudent action to the Harlowes at this point means that which will rid them of that "vile libertine" (I, 26); to Clarissa, who is far from agreeing with her family about Lovelace's character or his role in the affair, prudent behaviour means that which will not seriously offend Lovelace, the Harlowes or the rules of decorum. Clarissa and her family both benefit by coming to an agreement without really exchanging ideas.

Clarissa's techniques for controlling her family, then, are dependent on their willingness to be controlled. Just as Bella has little choice but to suffer her younger sister's superiority, so the Harlowes find it more convenient to allow

Clarissa to direct a situation which frightens them. It is Clarissa's misplaced faith in her powers of communication and interpretation that leads to her downfall for she has been led to believe that agreements can be made and understandings reached through language. In fact, her "powers of moving" (I, 70), of which her family is wary, rest in her emotions and not her intellect. As she eventually discovers, and as Richardson shows the reader in the course of the novel, language is deceptive, not only in itself but for the user of it. Clarissa, talented enough to be called a "mistress of persuasion" (I, 9), and young enough to delight in the title, is already seduced by its subtleties and by the illusory power over others it offers.

The formal interview that marks Clarissa's departure from Harlowe Place is immediately followed by and contrasted with her description of the reception she meets with on her return to her family. Clarissa is clearly shocked by her welcome. "I was struck all of a heap" upon entering the great parlour, she writes (I, 28), and her uncharacteristic use of a colloquialism emphasizes how unsettling the experience was to her and, in retrospect, still is. Richardson excised many colloquialisms from the second and third editions of Clarissa<sup>7</sup> but allowed this one to remain in order, it seems, to indicate the changes wrought upon his heroine by the altered manner of the Harlowes. Clarissa loses her self-confidence and her self-control because she is met with the two things that terrify her:

mass hostility and violence. Her character and her actions, until this point, have been governed by her assurance that she is respected by all of her family and loved by her parents and uncles, and by her belief that she can control, or at least moderate, the violence of their natures. Suddenly, she discovers that her words are ignored and that the anger and dislike usually visible in James' face now appear on everyone's countenance. James may still be her primary antagonist, but the danger he represents is no longer confined to himself; it clouds the room and makes Clarissa unsure of everyone in it, including herself. To an objective observer, the Harlowes' hostility is understandable, for Clarissa has openly consorted with the man they have forbidden her to see because he has wounded her brother. Clarissa's shock stems from her belief that she has persuaded her family to accept her point of view, when in fact words have only hidden their real intentions from each other.

The threatening atmosphere of the conference contrasts strongly with the comic air of its predecessor. James is no longer the only one whose expression and tone of voice are described; the uncles "mutteringly" whisper (I, 29), Bella holds up her hands (I, 29) and swells with anger (I, 30), her mother is cold (I, 28) and her father shows his passions in his voice and actions (I, 30). The Harlowes are no longer the unwilling puppets of James but are, to some extent, reflections of him. Clarissa is immediately put at a



disadvantage, for the self-pitying appeals and pleas for justice with which she has defended herself against James in the past are useless when she has no supporter to whom they may be directed. More important is the fact that Clarissa, the favoured child, can see but few marks of favour; she stands alone against the people upon whose love she has depended. Her shock is translated into the many references she makes to her own feelings, thoughts, air and manner, references which are rarely, and only indirectly, made in the earlier scene. Here, she is not only "struck all of a heap" (I, 28), but her heart is so full that she must turn away and cry (I, 29), she is astonished and wonders what is to happen next (I, 30) and later, at tea, she is not yet recovered (I, 31) and looks at her mother "with eyes appealing for pity" and at Solmes "with disgust little short of affrightment" (I, 32). The threat she feels all around her makes her shrink back into herself; in the first interview her words spoke for her, but in this conference her emotions and thoughts are more important because they tell of her distress.

If the mass hostility of her family disconcerts Clarissa, then what she perceives as their violence (I, 103) dumbfounds her. She overcomes her uneasiness to give a coherent defence of her behaviour at the Howes' (I, 29-30). When she finishes, however, the usual reconciliation is not forthcoming, although she finds that the behaviour of everyone except James points towards it (I, 30). Instead, James signals the

beginning of the new rule of violence by swearing, an event so startling to Clarissa that she repeats the news and stresses the fact that her father does not reprove him for it at all (I, 30). The emphasis arises from more than maidenly modesty; it is caused by fear. Not only is Clarissa genuinely terrified by violence (I, 19), but she knows that when her brother's vehemence is acceptable to the Harlowes, her own weapons against them all are ineffective. To insult James indirectly is to risk provoking him to even greater violence, and there is no one to whom she may confidently make her supplications for protection from him. Nor can Clarissa stoop to arguing openly with him, at least not yet. Clarissa, of course, knows that her family is trying to intimidate her into abandoning all resistance to their project (I, 30), yet the knowledge does her little good. They attack her on a visceral level and she responds on the same level; her emotions overpower her intellect and stop her tongue.

When she comes back downstairs for tea she has recovered enough to undercut James with her "pretty meekness" (I, 31), but is quickly silenced when her mother "politically" puts obedient words into her mouth (I, 31). This fresh evidence of the change in her family restricts her meaningful conversation to what she can say with her eyes to the only two people who may still respond to her, her mother and Solmes (I, 32). The style of her letter hints that her recovery is far from complete. The memory of the threatening atmosphere

and of her own fear is pervasive and there is evidence that her emotions are very close to the surface. Apart from her use of the colloquialism, there is her direct insult on Bella's appearance which she excuses by asking "how can one be such a reptile as not to turn when trampled upon?" (I, 30), which implies that she is, even in thinking back on the scene, acting more out of instinct than reason. She is not in control of herself or the situation, for although she thinks that she sees through their plot she cannot understand why the change has come about, nor why Solmes is the chosen man. The games have become very serious; this courtship is not to be refused, by command of her father (I, 30), and verbal battles now are fraught with violence, which terrifies her and invalidates her language skills.

Clarissa's loss of emotional control and her faith in language are the keys to her later behaviour. Her family intends to shock her into compliance with their will, but Clarissa, whose greatest distinction has been her "command of [her] passions" (I, 200), resists giving into her feelings and searches for a way to convince them that she cannot marry Solmes. In the process, she becomes so entangled in the words and styles of which she was once mistress that she loses herself. Her loss of freedom and loss of self are dependent on each other; the more she is restricted the more she changes, and the more she changes the more her family feels that she must be confined.

Initially, she is forbidden to leave the house, correspond with anyone outside of it or have visitors (I, 34). She cannot see her parents privately and is in James' charge (I, 32); on one occasion when she is left alone with her father he refuses to hear any "protestations", "whimsies", "words", "hopes", defences (I, 36), "expostulations", "buts" or "qualifying" (I, 37), any hint, in fact, of Clarissa's usual manner of speaking, or any words at all that signify less than complete obedience to his will. The family finds only "subtlety and cunning" (I, 37) in everything she says that does not conform to their will, while they consistently misunderstand her attempts to convince them of her aversion to Solmes. Mark Kinkead-Weekes points out how frustrating their misinterpretation of her speech is. "She can make no move to meet them without having it construed into capitulation", he writes, and, therefore, if she insists that she is not in love with Lovelace they understand her to mean that she is refusing Solmes only out of stubbornness.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, if she wishes to be excused from meeting Solmes her family assumes that her modesty makes her shy; if she protests that her modesty is not involved, then she cannot expect to be excused from his visit.<sup>9</sup> "Will you not, can you not, speak as I would have you speak?", Mrs. Harlowe asks Clarissa (I, 96). If she cannot, then she should be silent; these are the alternatives open to Clarissa (I, 96).

Since the Harlowes are usually seen through the eyes of Clarissa and her friends, it is difficult to feel anything but distaste for their methods or objectives. Yet there are some clues that they are not governed solely by jealousy and greed, as Clarissa believes (I, 58), but are trying to rectify what they understand as a situation that threatens their existence as a family. Clarissa has not only been unused to opposition from her family (I, 78), but has enjoyed quite a bit of power over them. She, and not her mother, has run the household (I, 77) but, more importantly, she has displaced not only her brother and sister but her father and uncles in her grandfather's affections (I, 21). Although she allows her father to manage her estate, an "act of duty" (I, 55) which in itself gives her a moral victory over her family, she still has the right to assert her independence from them. Her autonomy disturbs the principle of subordination that was believed by many in the eighteenth century to be the proper pattern of family government;<sup>10</sup> instead of being the least important member of the family, as she should be according to her age and sex, she ranks with her father and uncles and has, moreover, a special status as her grandfather's favourite. This is a situation which is unpleasant for her family, but tolerable as long as she conforms to her father's wishes. Unfortunately, Clarissa is not totally submissive. Before giving up her estate, she had proposed to live there with Mrs. Norton (I, 66); she has refused six or seven suitors (I, 72); and, finally, she has continued to write

to and see Lovelace. Her family, shocked by the recent bloodshed and upheavals, feels its very existence threatened and tries to put Clarissa in her place. They are reacting not only to Clarissa but against their age, a time when, according to Lawrence Stone, the old patriarchal system was giving way to a more liberal type of family;<sup>11</sup> the instability of domestic patriarchy at Harlowe Place is illustrated by the fact that James can easily substitute his authority for that of his father.

It is also probable that they see little wrong with the man they have chosen or the methods they use to bend Clarissa to their will. Anna Howe, although she can hardly be called an objective observer, is able to see the situation more dispassionately than Clarissa and she points out that the Harlowes probably cannot see anything objectionable in Solmes because he is on their own level (I, 64). It is therefore likely that the choice of Solmes is viewed by them as the perfect solution to a dangerous problem. James' and Bella's instigations and Solmes' financial offers notwithstanding, if Clarissa marries Solmes she will be under the control of a respectable husband, her fortune will be secure, and the family will be settled. Aware of Clarissa's readiness to engage them in long, possibly confusing, arguments, they refuse to let her speak unless she says what they want to hear; determined that they will have their way, they are only too ready to construe her words into compliance. They speak to her of authority and obedience, but she hears greed

and sacrifice. In turn, when she speaks of aversion and compromise, they hear prepossession and disobedience. "The language of the family now", is that Clarissa is "to be as dependent upon [her] father's will as a daughter ought to be who knows not what is good for herself" (I, 58). James' greed, Bella's jealousy and the family's narrow-mindedness help create the situation at Harlowe Place, but it also grows out of Clarissa's character and the Harlowes' fears for their family.

If the Harlowes have devised a way to muffle Clarissa's speech, they also employ more subtle methods to destroy her self-confidence and sense of security. A. R. Humphreys has shown how the family's use of language changes their contacts with Clarissa. Orders like "It has been signified to me that it will be acceptable if I do not think of going to church next Sunday" (I, 33), he points out, imply "that Mr. Harlowe's desire is conveyed through an agent (who remains a cipher), that the forms are preserved (but hurtfully), that acquiescence will not earn praise (it will be 'acceptable'), and that obedience will involve not only absence from church but also the annulment of wish".<sup>12</sup> Similarly, "I had signification made me" (I, 34), "till licence obtained" (I, 34) or "I am to tell you that it will be taken well if you avoid ..." (I, 34) all suggest that Clarissa is facing "mechanical inhumanity".<sup>13</sup> Not only is Clarissa denied her usual way of life, but the people who are around her are like robots. The fact that they used to be lively and affectionate beings, who made Clarissa the focus of their attention, only makes it worse for Clarissa who is

reminded in every encounter with them of the way they used to behave towards her. Nor do the Harlowes tire of telling her that they will love her "as well as ever" (I, 31) as soon as she agrees to marry Solmes. The stiff forms of address to which Clarissa is subjected emphasize her isolation not only from her friends, but from the past and future. With one word she can escape from her limbo of uncertainty and rejection back into the world of certainties where she can be sure of love, respect and her own identity as an obedient, meek, and honest daughter. If she refuses to speak that word she can expect only a sense of growing disorientation.

A feeling of "hallucinatory realism" characterizes Clarissa's use of language in, for example, the few short paragraphs that lead up to the moment when her keys are taken away from her (I, 108), where frequent passive verbs and sharp, sudden statements convey how she is intensely involved in, and yet nerve-wrackingly isolated from, the discussion that is taking place downstairs.<sup>14</sup> Her disorientation is also hinted at in phrases like "I am willing to construe it" (I, 35) and "she was so good as to lend me her arm" (I, 107), where will and the forms of politeness replace spontaneity and sincerity; she forces herself to find a favourable meaning in her mother's glances and Mrs. Harlowe does not, in fact, respond kindly to her daughter's distress.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Clarissa's employment of double and, on occasion, triple negatives (I, 33) suggests her profound uncertainty.<sup>16</sup> The rules of etiquette and her



own strong will enable her to go on, but she repeatedly finds that she is unable to control herself, or is in a kind of dream world: "I am as one stupid" (I, 33), she writes to Anna; her feet move "of themselves" (I, 108); she leaves her mother "hardly knowing that I did, or how I stood or walked" (I, 90-91); she intends to kneel before her father but is "overawed" by his sternness (I, 36); she is always aware that her heart is about to overflow (I, 36, 37, 71, 81, 97, 108, 112) and, at one point she notes that "sobs [were] still my only language" (I, 70). Traces of the old Clarissa are still evident, most notably in her account of the reasons behind her family's choice of Solmes, which includes a sketch of James done in the free indirect style (I, 53-62), and in the letter, in her "gravest style" (I, 91), which refutes Anna's contention that she will be forced to marry Solmes (I, 93-95). Her self-assurance, however, only appears briefly because fear (I, 63), frustration (I, 94) and uneasiness (I, 95) quickly regain their hold on her.

The hallucinatory quality of Clarissa's life at Harlowe Place makes her more dependent on the letters she sends and receives. In her letters to Anna she can explain her situation frankly, vent her anger and frustration and discuss her alternatives; in return, she receives love, respect, information, support and advice. Her correspondence with Lovelace is hidden from the reader but, judging from her reports of it, he offers the same things as Miss Howe only in

a much warmer vein (I, 123). Their letters supply the emotional and intellectual freedom that is wanting at Harlowe Place, and that Clarissa so desperately needs. At a time when she is uncertain of who she is and what she must do she turns to language in an effort to create a self that is rational, consistent and whole.<sup>17</sup> If her family refuses, however, to let her speak and misinterprets what she does say, then her correspondents read her so attentively that they launch her into another struggle for understanding. They attack her refuge and in response she allows more and more of her energy to be drawn away from her real self and towards the self she has constructed in her letters.

Anna is more important than Lovelace, at this point, in destroying Clarissa's personal stronghold. Lovelace finds "imaginary favours" in her letters to him, and contradictorily asserts at other times that she is too cold, but Clarissa believes that the inconsistencies he finds are in his own mind and not hers (I, 124). However, when Anna, her closest friend and confidante, suggests that Clarissa has betrayed her love for Lovelace, Clarissa reacts passionately. The remarks that Anna chides her for are tentative and confused. Instead of writing that she is not attracted to Lovelace, she says that her "regards are not so much engaged [upon my word they are not; I know not myself if they be] to another person as some of my friends suppose" (I, 39). The bracketed interpolation begins defensively, as if Clarissa is anticipating an

objection, but ends ambiguously for "I know not myself if they be" could mean either that she is staking her reputation on her declaration or that she is confessing that she is completely unaware of it if she does love him. "I cannot tell what turn my mind had taken to dictate so oddly to my pen" (I, 47), she writes in apology to Anna, only make several more slips in the same letter by willing herself not to love Lovelace (I, 47), by binding herself to her vows by her word and her honour (I, 46,48) and by finding it unbearable that Anna should "construe common gratitude into love" (I, 47-48).

Clarissa is defensive and almost desperate in her denials; she equates her word with her honour (I, 48) and then demonstrates the importance of the equation by quibbling about the words over which she and Anna disagree. Irwin Gopnik points out that two significant verbal motifs, involving the words "throbs", "glow" (I, 46) and "curiosity" (I, 122) run through this part of the novel and lead directly into a third, focussing on "a conditional kind of liking" (I, 135).<sup>18</sup> Clarissa's words, it seems, are bound up not only with her honour but with her self. Anna's "agreeable raillery" on certain passages in her letter (I, 47) prompts Clarissa to make a "close examination" of herself (I, 46), but the result is confusion. She "cannot own any of the glow, any of the throbs" Anna has mentioned and yet neither can she explain how the admittedly remarkable passages crept into her last letter (I, 46-47). She knows she has been inconsistent, but her

response is to will the possibility of love away (I, 47) and to resolve to conduct herself perfectly (I, 48). Conflicts between the will and the emotions are pointed out by the words Clarissa stresses and repeats. She repeats "throbs" and "glow", in different combinations, three times (I, 46,47,48), italicizing the words to mark her distaste for them and for the kind of emotional upheaval they denote. That kind of passionate fluttering does not belong to her; she lives by her word (I, 46,48) and by her honour (I, 48). Clarissa is so determined to clarify the image of herself in her letters that she ignores the chance to probe the mystery of her real inconsistency. The problem, she seems to imply, lies in the words and how they are interpreted, and not in herself. If she can destroy, through mockery, the words that are inappropriate and explain the ones that have been misconstrued, then she has behaved satisfactorily.

Anna, who knows that it is a rare woman who can "turn that lion, Love, at her own pleasure, into a lap-dog" (I, 49), is not convinced and as her probings continue Clarissa becomes more reticent and defensive about her feelings for Lovelace. Her praise of his generosity is hedged with her claim that "I had no throbs, no glows upon it!--upon my word, I had not" (I, 57). For the most part she refrains from talking about him and her letters concentrate on her efforts to reason with her family. She is still being polite and restrained in conversation with Solmes and her family (I, 33), but two

lapses warn that she is losing control even of her outward manner. She shocks her mother by calling Solmes a "monster" (I, 79-80), and later horrifies the entire family by continuing her plea to be allowed to refuse Solmes when he enters the room (I, 105).

The breaking point is reached when Hannah is dismissed and Clarissa receives the letter ordering her to confine herself to her rooms (I, 112,114). She writes once more to her mother (I, 116) and to her father in order to satisfy herself that she has done everything possible to regain his favour (I, 120). Merely to satisfy her "curosimy", she asks Anna to discover the opinion Lovelace's family has of her; the request is once again followed by an ironic reference to Anna's "questionable throbs" (I, 122). Predictably, Anna brings out the sexual connotations of "curiosity" in her next letter and makes lavish use of the word (I, 126,128,130). Clarissa is so stung that she writes back immediately, touching only on the points that have offended her (I, 135). She is "very angry" for the freedoms Anna has taken with the Harlowes and with Mrs. Howe, ostensibly because they make her regret the liberties she has taken, and encouraged in her friend (I, 132). Yet Anna has never spared her mother or Clarissa's family; in earlier letters she has called the Harlowes greedy (I, 41-42) and absurd (I, 42), her own mother coy and flirtatious (I, 44) and Clarissa's parents unreasonable and narrow-minded (I, 64). As Clarissa continues to upbraid her friend it becomes clear that what she is really objecting to is

Anna's lack of verisimilitude (I, 133). Anna pays more attention to wit than to "strict justice" (I, 133) and this habit, agreeable as it may be to Clarissa at some times (I, 134) is particularly unbearable when it distorts Clarissa's feelings about Lovelace (I, 135). Clarissa ends the letter in some confusion, after accusing Anna of having betrayed their friendship by implying that she is "a silly, love-sick creature" (I, 135). She admits, moreover, that there is a possibility that she may be driven into "a conditional kind of liking, or so" for Lovelace, even if that liking should not be called love because that word has "no pretty sound with it" (I, 135). Here indeed is equivocation and anger born of defensiveness, and here too begins Clarissa's ill-judged attempt to turn herself into what her family believes her to be.

It is a curious fact that the change in style that Clarissa engineers at this point (I, 135) confirms the worst opinions that the Harlowes have of her. She admits her love for Lovelace and threatens to run away with him (I, 137, 154), thereby justifying both their charge of hypocrisy and their imprisonment of her. Similarly, the "freedom" (I, 138) of her letters to James and Bella, and the reflections she makes in them upon their behaviour in the past (I, 137, 139-40), are pert and condescending, while the attempts she makes to play upon Uncle John's affections (I, 152) and Uncle Antony's "regard for plain-dealing and sincerity" (I, 158) are subtle and even cunning. The reasons she gives for the change are

also puzzling. Does she really think that she will be treated more leniently if they think that she is not obstinate, but in love with the man they hate? Is it possible that her situation will not deteriorate if she defends Lovelace and alarms them by threatening to run away with him (I, 136)? Both questions can be, and eventually are, answered in the negative. Clarissa's new style is the result, not of a carefully reasoned strategy, but of anger, frustration and a loss of identity. Leo Braudy has argued along these lines in "Penetration and Impenetrability in Clarissa", in which he points out that Clarissa has been used to defining herself through reason, law, religion and the family; when these definitions fail her she turns to the principles found within herself to construct a new identity which is supported by language.<sup>19</sup> It is by no means certain, however, that this new identity is as secure as Braudy says it is.<sup>20</sup> Instead, it seems that Anna's attacks on the language that is its mainstay weaken Clarissa's understanding of herself and actually obliterate her identity, leaving her prey to what other people think of her. It is true that the self she shapes on paper is her identity, but that self is neither consistent nor true; it is one of a series of masks that Clarissa dons in order to meet the changing demands of her situation.

Clarissa's imprisonment and the loss of her one confidante at Harlowe place motivate her, therefore, to adopt consciously Anna's pugnacious spirit (I, 136) and to conform unconsciously to the Harlowes' image of their rebellious

younger daughter. Her strategy is irrational precisely because it is based on an emotional premise: she will try to intimidate them just as they have tried to intimidate her. Her attempt is facilitated by the order confining her to her rooms because it forces her to write her threats rather than speak them. In a letter she can be forceful and articulate; her words are not swallowed by sobs and her defiance is not diminished by remorse.

Clarissa's letters to her brother, sister and two uncles are surprising in their boldness. They are naked attempts to penetrate others and cause them pain;<sup>21</sup> Clarissa is no longer circumspect and she is more than merely witty at her family's expense. Under the thinnest veneer of civility, she accuses James of being a bully, a hypocrite, a schemer and a barbarian (I, 137). He is a brother in name only and is impolite, unjust, inferior in reasoning power and self-control to Clarissa, and known to be hot-tempered (I, 138). The style of the letter conveys all too well her opinion of him. The short, pithy sentences are heavily accented with italicized words and pointed questions, which give the general impression that the letter is being written by someone who is trying to make things as clear as possible to a person who is intellectually and morally her inferior; the precise tone could range from forcefulness to haughtiness, depending on the prejudice of the reader. Bella fares little better than James. There are fewer questions and italics, but Clarissa carefully



organizes the letter around the theme of unwomanliness (I, 139) which is, no doubt, a painful subject for the unpopular Bella. Everything in the letter is designed to point out how unfeminine Arabella is; her hard-heartedness resembles James' "masculine passions" (I, 139) and that "is not pretty" (I, 140), and there are two references to Bella's embarrassing inability to hold Lovelace's affections (I, 139,140). The gentle tone and the parenthetical remark that Clarissa would behave differently if their positions were reversed (I, 139) make it clear which sister is more womanly and thus able to decide for herself whom she will, and will not, marry.

The letters to her two uncles are sweeter but still forceful. To Uncle John she is forthright and questioning but very affectionate. Reminding him that he is her "honoured second papa" (I, 152), she plays upon his love for her by stressing her youth and by painting a grim picture of the miserable life she may expect as Mrs. Solmes (I, 152-153). There is something childlike in her use of the terms "mama" and "papa" (I, 152-153), especially since she usually employs the more formal "mother" and "father",<sup>22</sup> and the phrasing and rhythm of a childish threat are exactly reproduced in her vow that "the matter may be too far pushed. Indeed it may. And then, perhaps, every one will be sorry for their parts in it" (I, 154). In order to gain the support of her loving Uncle John, she becomes a little girl again, a girl too young to be married and taken away from her family (I, 152-153), a girl who is depending on her Uncle John to rescue her. She appeals

to John Harlowe, but she also threatens him, for if he does not respond to her plea then she may be driven to do something rash for which he and the others will be responsible.

The letter to Uncle Antony is remarkable because it parodies his style. Like a merchant sitting over a ledger, Clarissa first weighs the relative merits of Lovelace and Solmes (I, 155-156), then reviews Solmes' case, compares him to herself (I, 156-157), assesses her own value and that of the settlements (I, 157), and concludes with a close examination of Solmes' character (I, 158-159). Like Uncle Antony, she uses an appropriate, if double-edged, proverb (I, 156), is quite forthright about the importance of money (I, 157) and often refers to her own plainspokenness and vehemence, attributing them to her sincerity and determination (I, 157, 158, 159). These characteristics of Antony's style are tucked neatly into Clarissa's graceful and well-proportioned prose, as if to illustrate that while she can communicate on his level she is still far above it, and thus above him and one of his "select friends" (I, 155). Without being openly rude, she reproves him for his avarice (I, 156, 157), reminds him of her intellectual gifts (I, 156-157) (and hence of his deficiencies in that area) and stresses the importance of his commitment to "plain-dealing and sincerity" (I, 158). He not only has no right to tell her what to do, but should look to his own sins before judging her faulty. Presumably, as Uncle Antony suspects (I, 162), she hopes that he will show her letter to Solmes, for

her message is equally applicable to him and might scare him away.

Antony is too clever, however, to show the letter to Solmes and so she directs a letter to her unwanted suitor. He, too, is attacked on his two weakest points: his claim to be a gentleman and his assertion that he truly loves her (I, 167). Her arguments against both are cogent, but less important than the form they take. Briefly contrasting the past with the present and the future, Clarissa uses every opportunity to stress Solmes' direct involvement in her distress. To the man who has been content to stay in the background and let the Harlowes take the responsibility for the wooing of her, and its consequences, (I, 33), Clarissa points out that it is he who has "robbed" her of her peace of mind and "deprived" her of her family's love (I, 167) and he who has the power to restore both to her (I, 168). She avoids using the passive voice in order to impress upon him his culpability; he has the leading role in this affair and it is up to him whether it ends happily or tragically. She simultaneously attacks his meanness and hypocrisy and his moral cowardice, hoping that the subtlety of the assault on the latter will accomplish what open condemnation cannot provoke.

The letters to Solmes, James, Bella and Uncles John and Antony try to intimidate them all into withdrawing from a question which should be resolved between Clarissa and her parents. They fail because, however mortifying they may be to

their recipients, they confirm the bad impression the Harlowes have of Clarissa's character, with the result that their "embattled phalanx" (I, 154) becomes even more solid. In addition, these letters set up a comparison that alienates Clarissa from her family and draws her towards Lovelace. The Harlowes' decision to isolate themselves from Clarissa limits their communication with her to their weakest, and Lovelace's strongest, point: letter-writing. A letter is a precarious way of speaking to another person. In a letter, softened eyes cannot balance a harsh command and the touch of a hand cannot influence the reception of a plea. Reduced to language alone, the Harlowes are at a disadvantage for they are ill at ease with the letter form while Lovelace is an acknowledged master of it (I, 12). Richardson emphasizes the contrast between the Harlowes and Lovelace by placing the first three of his letters to Belford in the midst of their five replies to Clarissa, where his lightness and good humour contrasts strongly with their heavy-handed cruelty. Richardson makes Lovelace's style even more attractive by removing the suspicion that he is trying to make a good impression; his letters are to his best friend, not to Clarissa, and there are enough indiscretions in them to assure the reader that this is the real Lovelace, blemishes and all.

Lovelace's first letter is inserted after those of James and Bella, who can hardly be said to have prose styles, so immersed are they in sneering and name calling. Their letters are stiff with anger and arrogance; neither can meet Clarissa's

arguments and so James takes refuge in misogynistic (I, 138), Bella in melodramatic (I, 141), statements. In contrast, Lovelace's self-mockery is delightful for he can laugh at himself and invite the reader to laugh with him (I, 145). His reliance on dashes, rhetorical questions and dramatic asides ("--what shall I call it?--'tis not scorn: 'tis not pride: 'tis not the insolence of an adored beauty--but 'tis ... virtue") (I, 144) creates an exuberant style which seems to reveal his thoughts and feelings as they pass through his mind. His vocabulary, too, is different from Clarissa's or the Harlowes'; celestial imagery (I, 145), references to classical and contemporary literature (I, 145, 147) and coined words like "quality-jilt" (I, 145) suggest that he has an intellectually daring and romantic spirit. His summary of the situation is what the reader would like to believe it to be: according to him, the whole affair is a romance in which the hero and heroine must suffer only until the obstacles to the inevitable happy ending are removed (I, 149). The obstacles, of course, are the Harlowes, but he maintains that Clarissa's struggle with her family will end when she overcomes her "cradle prejudices" for them (I, 148). To the reader who has been suffering along with Clarissa, this explanation has enough truth in it to be not only funny, but attractive.

Before Lovelace's next two letters, there are samples from Uncle John, Uncle Antony, Solmes and, once again, James. Uncle John's style is the least exceptional but also, perhaps,

the most disappointing in its abruptness. The uncle for whom Clarissa has special affection takes refuge, rather proudly, in the "embattled phalanx" (I, 154) and avoids emotional issues. His style is uneven. Clauses, separated by colons and semicolons, pile awkwardly on top of one another instead of flowing together (I, 155), and raise the suspicion, which is later confirmed (I, 304-306), that he is writing against his inclination. For the moment, however, it is only a suspicion which is overshadowed by the tone of impersonal finality.

If Uncle John's reply is disappointing, then Uncle Antony's is both funny and frightening. His pious reliance on proverbs and biblical quotations (I, 159, 160, 163, 165) is ironically undercut by his coarseness (I, 160) and his defence of miserliness (I, 160, 163) and avarice (I, 161). The clumsiness of individual sentences like "And too besides, this is all in your power, as the rest" (I, 161) is matched by the general inefficiency of his prose; the irrelevant expressions "Hey-day!", "O brave!", and, of course, "mind that" (I, 161) break up what little natural rhythm there is, while the ubiquitous exclamation points testify to Antony's inability to build in emphasis -- or to judge where it will be most effective. The distressing part of his style, however, collides constantly with its humorous aspects. He replies to Clarissa's objections, but only by taking her words out of context and using them as excuses for tirades that parade his prejudices in favour of money and against women. Clarissa's contention that she and Solmes are intellectually incompatible, for example, only prompts

Uncle Antony to argue that women should not be educated (I, 161) and that Solmes will be able to teach her how to obey (I, 162). Then, struck by a practical consideration, he points out that her talent for writing will enable her to be a good economist and accountant, and he finally wanders into digressions on dishonest stewards, lazy wives and Lovelace's prodigality (I, 162). The narrow-mindedness which keep him from understanding anything except his own likes and dislikes is ugly because it seems that he only loves money. He is a man obsessed, and he is frightening because he is so pleased with himself; he thinks that his argument is irrefutable and does not appear to find anything disturbing in the fact that he began his hymn to money on Sunday and has written steadily since then, with pauses only for "church time, or the like of that" (I, 166).

Solmes' note, whether or not it is his composition (I, 166), gives little hint of his character for it is simply bland and correct (I, 168-169). It appears to be the note of a lover, but its unimpassioned style is odd for a man who has just been told by his lady that he is ungentlemanly, hypocritical, selfish, cruel and utterly incapable of winning her love. It is, in short, like a letter in an instruction manual, complete with manufactured emotions and sincerity. It is unexceptional, but its deficiencies are obvious when it is compared to Lovelace's letters, which follow. Only James' scolding letter intervenes, and it accomplishes little except to demonstrate his ability to call names and to threaten (I, 169). Once more, then, Lovelace is visible and his

second letter only adds to the impression he has already made, for in it he tells the story of Rosebud. Lovelace's reason for sparing her may be that his pride is satisfied by the grandmother's humility (I, 170), but he also claims that his rule has been "never to ruin a poor girl whose simplicity and innocence was all she had to trust to" (I, 171). In addition, he is clearly touched by the innocent love that Rosebud and her Johnny share, and revels in their happiness (I, 171-172). His joyous acceptance of emotion reflects back on the Harlowes' repression of their feelings, just as his first letter cast shadows forward. John's stiffness, Antony's uncouthness and Solmes' unimpassioned style might be less noticeable if the reader did not remember Lovelace's expansiveness (I, 145), easy familiarity with literature (I, 145, 147, 150) and ecstatic declarations of love and hate (I, 146-147). Conversely, the memory of the Harlowes' laboured styles and twisted logic favours the reception of Lovelace's third letter. His scheme to make Clarissa's family even more suspicious of her (I, 173-174), his casual reference to rape, his acknowledgement that revenge and love "are uppermost by turns" and his devious plans to win Clarissa's confidence (I, 175) are all unsettling. Yet they are not as disturbing as they should be because they are admitted so casually and honestly. Clarissa's lover is willing to hurt her and to coerce her into doing what he wants, but so is her family. The only difference between the Harlowes and Lovelace appears to be that they are heavy, dull and cruel



while he is effervescent, witty and loving; the reader's moral judgement is suspended as he is charmed by Lovelace's style.

If the reader is swayed by these glimpses of an uninhibited Lovelace, it is probable that Clarissa, who is reading letters designed to win her heart, is also drawn towards her forbidden lover. The letters of her uncles, brother, sister and Solmes are unattractive and, at worst, repellent. Her parents rarely correspond with her and do not help matters when they do. Her father writes in a harsh, staccato manner and cannot control his anger (I, 120). As befits a man who sees life in terms of authority and obedience, he favours simple sentences and does not ask questions (I, 210-211). Mrs. Harlowe's letters illustrate so clearly what it is like to act against one's principles that they only stiffen Clarissa's resistance. Dishonesty and fear are the hallmarks of her style. Instructions telling Clarissa how to send a letter to Lovelace are interrupted by the contradictory claim that Mrs. Harlowe's assistance does not give Clarissa "licence" to write (I, 119); an acknowledgement that she married for love is followed by a self-conscious admonition that her daughter should not expect the same right (I, 208). Her ability "to anaesthetise moral distinctions"<sup>23</sup> enables her to tell Clarissa that it will be enough if she acquiesces with the appearance of sincerity, but the warnings, desperate endearments and self-pitying appeals that precede her statement

invalidate it by demonstrating the pain and fear that are the lot of the emotionally dishonest (I, 209). She cannot hope to move her daughter when, as Clarissa remarks, her own inner struggle reveals itself in the conflict between her subject matter and her style (I, 209).

Clarissa's involvement with language eventually erodes her ability to act outside of her letters. Alternating between anger and despair, she sends pert replies to her parents (I, 211), argues bitterly with Bella (I, 212-221, 225-227, 230-232, 235-237), and, threatened with removal to Uncle Antony's, writes openly insulting letters to James (I, 257-258, 260-261, 267-270), including one which artfully (I, 261) addresses her mother and father. Another change of style (I, 268) is provoked by a conversation Clarissa overhears between James, Bella and Solmes (I, 266-267), but it is only another step in the same direction for in it she confirms their opinions of her willingness to assert her independence (I, 267), as well as of her argumentativeness (I, 267-268) and insolence (I, 268-269). Involved in a round of proposals and counter-proposals, receiving letters alternately kind and cruel (I, 300-314), Clarissa becomes less willing and less able to act. When her hope of refuge at the Howes' is dashed (I, 416), she argues herself into a state of paralysis which seems to be due in equal parts to fear (I, 422), concern for Anna's reputation (I, 420) as well as her own (I, 421), rationalization (I, 423-424) and moral and religious principles (I, 424). Her letters,

like her reasoning, become oddly disjointed as lines of thought are interrupted by apprehension and despair (I, 411-413, 420-421). Her willingness to go to the Howes' is based on the fact that Mrs. Howe, her elder, would have to approve of the plan and, hence, of her. Her approval would be a vindication of Clarissa as an obedient, but wronged, child; any other alternative would prove Clarissa to be, not simply a disobedient child, but an independent adult. To Clarissa, who is unsure of her identity as a daughter, sister and niece, the prospect of forging a new identity as an adult is so terrifying that she refuses to consider it as a possibility.

She is vulnerable to Lovelace's plot to seduce her away from Harlowe Place for several reasons. Their respective letters move her away from her family and towards Lovelace, but his attractiveness is partly countered by her glimpses of the real Lovelace. It is notable that she is only able to appraise Lovelace dispassionately and discuss her feelings towards him immediately after he has surprised her in the garden (I, 198-203). In person, although she is generally impressed by his behaviour (as he intends her to be) (I, 175), he nevertheless angers (I, 179) and frightens her (I, 183). She is also repulsed by the ferocity of the unguarded letter he writes to her after she fails to keep their appointment (I, 326-327). These impressions linger and make her uneasy, but are overcome by time, by his style and, particularly, by the story of Rosebud (I, 356).

If the cumulative effect of his letters attracts her to him, their correspondence is not enough to make her decide to run away with him. The threat of forced marriage, which she fears because she feels that she will lose control of herself completely (I, 439) and be married while she is ill or unconscious (I, 440), almost maddens her, but her immediate resolution is to force a confrontation with her father (I, 430). On her way to find him, however, she once again overhears her brother and sister exulting over her, saying, "Now must she be what we would have her be" (I, 430); her temper becomes "vindictive" (I, 430) and she returns to her room and writes to accept the protection of Lovelace's aunts (I, 431). Clarissa may be unsure of herself but she is certain that she will not be James' and Bella's puppet. Their words cut through her determination to plead with her father, the one course of action that might have been effective with him as it later turns out (II, 162-163), and divert her resolution to act towards her attractive correspondent. Ironically, her decision to accept his aid does turn her into what her family claims her to be: a foolish girl who plans to run away with a rake. Clarissa once again is trapped by words into asserting a personality that is foreign to her and contrary to her best interests.

Language, finally, pushes her into a position where she is at Lovelace's mercy. She confirms her decision to leave with him because of his style; just before she composes

her consenting letter, she writes that "he renews all his vows and promises ... in so earnest and so solemn a manner that (his own interest, and his family's honour, and their favour for me, co-operating) I can have no room to doubt of his sincerity" (I, 443). Even after she has changed her mind she feels bound to meet him to explain and to avert any evil consequences that may arise out of his frustrated hopes (I, 462), thereby signalling again her belief in the power of language. If she adheres to her "written mind" nothing else will be necessary, she believes (I, 470). Yet nothing, as it turns out, and as the action of the first volume of Clarissa illustrates, is more difficult. Clarissa leaves Harlowe Place, still believing in language, but betrayed by it.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> William Beatty Warner, Reading 'Clarissa': The Struggles of Interpretation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> The exception is Mark Kinkead-Weeks, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist (London: Methuen & co. Ltd., 1973) p. 233. Mr. Kinkead-Weekes, however, finds that Clarissa's youthfulness is only visible in the fragmented letters she writes immediately after the rape.

<sup>4</sup> Warner, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> A.R. Humphreys, "Richardson's Novels: Words and the 'Movements Within'", Essays and Studies, new ser., XXIII (1970), 47.

<sup>7</sup> Shirley Van Marter, "Richardson's Revisions of Clarissa in the Second Edition", Studies in Bibliography, XXVI (1973), 114-115 and "Richardson's Revisions of Clarissa in the Third and Fourth Editions", Studies in Bibliography XXVIII (1975), 142.

<sup>8</sup> Kinkead-Weekes, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), pp. 656-657.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 657-658.

<sup>12</sup> Humphreys, 48-49.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>17</sup>Leo Braudy, "Penetration and Impenetrability in Clarissa" in Phillip Harth, ed., New Approaches to Eighteenth Century Literature: Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 202.

<sup>18</sup>Irwin Gopnik, A Theory of Style and Richardson's 'Clarissa', (The Hague: Mouton & Co. N.V., Publishers, 1970), pp. 81-84, 86-89.

<sup>19</sup>Braudy, pp. 187-188, 202.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>22</sup>Van Marter, "Second Edition", 112; "Third and Fourth Editions", 141. Richardson may have tried to elevate Clarissa's speech by having her call her parents "mother" and "father", as Van Marter suggests, but Stone, p. 414, points out that those terms were identified in the eighteenth century as belonging to the more authoritarian and patriarchal types of families, which could also explain Richardson's changes.

<sup>23</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, p. 136.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTILIO

Clarissa leaves her family on the evening of Monday, April 10 (I, 471). Two days earlier, Anna Howes' cautionary letter (I, 447-452) initiates a theme which influences Clarissa's behaviour after she leaves Harlowe Place. Twice, Anna calls Clarissa "too punctilious" in refusing to accept Anna's aid in quitting her home (I, 448, 449) and concludes by reminding her that

Punctilio is out of doors the moment you are out of your father's house. I know how justly severe you have been upon those inexcusable creatures whose giddiness, and even want of decency, have made them, in the same hour as I ~~may~~ say, leap from a parent's window to a husband's bed. But, considering Lovelace's character, I repeat my opinion that your reputation in the eye of the world requires that no delay be made in this point when once you are in his power (I, 450).

Anna's warning has the desired effect; Clarissa replies that her wavering resolution to stay is confirmed by Anna's words, "added to the still more cogent considerations of duty and reputation" (I, 464). When she does leave, it is hardly surprising that punctilio becomes a major consideration in the way she chooses to meet her new situation.

Irwin Gopnik finds that verbal motifs focussing on "punctilio", "ceremony" and "delicacy" are prominent in the novel from just before Clarissa's departure from home to about



the time when Lovelace reads Anna's letters.<sup>1</sup> Usually, Anna and Lovelace find Clarissa too punctilious (II, 155-156, 177, 140, 339), while Clarissa either resents the loss of "a multitude of punctilios and decorums" (I, 504) or defends those that she cannot give up (II, 176, 181). Perversely, Clarissa's regard for small formalities and rather petty details of conduct grows instead of lessens when she is with Lovelace, until there is reason to call her, as Morris Golden does, "superhumanly punctilious".<sup>2</sup> Her excessive decorum is all the more puzzling because she has shown her willingness to break through it many times in the past, convincing her family in the process that they have held too high an opinion of her delicacy (I, 207). Nor is Clarissa's explanation that Lovelace's deviousness forces her to be "jealous and vigilant" against her will (II, 11) always convincing, for there are times, most notably in the second proposal scene, when his sincerity makes her scruples inexplicable (II, 176, 184). Clarissa's conduct is frustrating to the reader and to Lovelace because it is exaggerated; she may have integrity,<sup>3</sup> she may be inflexible<sup>4</sup> and delicate (II, 156 n. 1), but these characteristics still cannot satisfactorily account for the larger than life figure Clarissa turns into outside of the walls of Harlowe Place.

The key to Clarissa's behaviour lies in Anna's discussion of punctilio and in Clarissa's reaction to the fact that "Clarissa Harlowe is gone off with a man!" (I, 471).

The phrasing of her announcement imitates the shocked, titillated voice of "the mouth of common fame" (I, 471), which is pertinent because Clarissa's greatest problem at the moment is reconciling her motives and intentions with the appearance of weakness, giddiness and infatuation her actions present to the world. Her next letters (I, 473-488, 495-510) show her struggle to understand what has happened to her. By the time she has concluded them, she has decided where the blame lies and how she will act in the future.

The passage in which she apportions the blame begins with her castigation of herself for presumptuously corresponding with Lovelace (I, 486). "This last evil", she writes, is "the remote yet sure consequence of my first--my prohibited correspondence! by a father early prohibited" (I, 486). Yet gradually, despite her lofty assertion that "your Clarissa's mind was ever above justifying her own failings by those of others" (I, 486), she lays less stress on her faults and more on Lovelace's. At first, his wickedness is balanced by her officiousness: he led "a young creature (too much indeed relying upon her own strength) from evil to evil" (I, 486). By the final paragraph of her tirade, however, Lovelace has become the "betrayers" who, with his "artifices" and "deluding arts", has tricked her out of herself and compelled her to do something she had decided against (I, 487). Having decided that Lovelace is responsible for her situation, and that she erred only in letting him prey on her weakness (I, 486), it is

easy for her to choose her course of action. By magnifying her delicacy, she can prove to the world that she is not a giddy, inconsiderate girl (I, 487). In many ways, the identity that Clarissa creates is a caricature of the feminine ideal. She is punctilious, virtuous and passive unless seriously threatened; as an unmarried woman, her first duty is to her family and she insists on being courted with due respect and ceremony. Since Lovelace, in her estimation, preys on weakness, she will try to be invulnerable, while he will be subjected to the closest examinations.

Clarissa's last letter in the first volume (I, 495-510) illustrates the working out of her new identity. She is "forced" to agree to Lovelace's lie that they are brother and sister (I, 496) and must also approve of his use of a spy (I, 509) because, in her situation, she is powerless to do otherwise. She cannot decide what to do or where to go (I, 496, 497), wants to be left alone (I, 497, 503, 505) and is definite about only three things: the sanctity of her family (I, 500-501, 502), the vile artfulness of Lovelace (I, 498, 499, 501, 503, 509) and the importance of punctilio (I, 504). She sums up her view of the affair by telling Lovelace that "here, sir, like the first pair (I, at least, driven out of my paradise), are we recriminating" (I, 502). She, clearly, is Eve, but Lovelace, since he has seduced her away from Eden, is cast in the dual role of Adam and Satan. Clarissa's recasting of the story of the Fall suggests that she is unconsciously

convinced that the new Adam and Eve will not be reconciled; they cannot, because "Adam" is a manifestation of Satan, rather than the first man. Clarissa sees herself as Woman, without being fully aware that the role makes her the victim of evil.

Clarissa's decision to protect herself behind punctilio affects her attitudes towards language. Aware that in her correspondence with Lovelace, words have been a factor in leading her astray, she resolves to distrust his language and to be very careful with her own. Lovelace's "extravagant volubility" (which he has hidden in his letters under an assumed plain style)<sup>5</sup> offends her, since "true respect, true value, ... lies not in words: words cannot express it: the silent awe, the humble, the doubting eye, and even the hesitating voice, better show it by much" (I, 509). Yet although, as she later writes, "we are both great watchers of each other's eyes" (II, 93), neither of them wants to form judgements based solely on the expression of an eye or the turn of a countenance. Language is the necessary complement of action and appearance since looks can be unfathomable (I, 509, II, 16). Clarissa wants, not inarticulate tokens of love and respect, but a perfect union of action and speech. She is least satisfied when Lovelace's humble words and bashful manner are contradicted by his confident eyes (II, 29); if the eye is linked to the heart (II, 277, III, 187, 187, n.1, 497) then, as Clarissa asks, "what are words, but the body and

dress of thought? And is not the mind strongly indicated by its outward dress?" (II, 226). Mind and heart should go together and she watches Lovelace closely for signs of emotional and intellectual unity, but denies him, as much as she can, any glimpses into her own heart. It is no wonder that, to him, she is "all mind" (II, 250), or that he tries so hard to break through her emotional reserves.

The single greatest problem in criticizing Clarissa's behaviour towards Lovelace is the man himself. Richardson insisted that her conduct was justifiable because freedoms on her part would have given Lovelace a victory over her (II, 314, n.1), but he also felt that "Lovelace should have something to say for himself to himself, tho' it could not have weight to acquit him with the rest of the World".<sup>6</sup> Recent arguments that Lovelace wants only to open out Clarissa to new possibilities of romance and happiness,<sup>7</sup> while valuable as correctives, nevertheless pose difficulties when they assume that he is a stable enough character to marry Clarissa and make her happy if she would only give him the chance.<sup>8</sup> Lovelace, above all, seems to be volatile and changeable and yet, paradoxically, he has the most consistent style in the novel. Clarissa, Anna and Belford all have slightly different styles at different times; anger and confusion disorder syntax and mutilate the writer's natural rhythm (II, 377, 437, III, 346-347, 196-197), while letters of sympathy are gentler in tone and more carefully phrased than ordinary correspondence (III, 384, IV, 79-

30, 273). Lovelace, in contrast, except when he is imitating someone else (III, 13, 94-98), preserves his style almost intact in all situations. His mad letter, for example, retains the vocabulary ("charmer", "damned mother", "hecatombs") (IV, 375, 377), the rhetorical questions and the dashes (IV, 376) characteristic of his usual style; the sole difference is that he uses "you" instead of "thee" (IV, 375-378) in the letter he writes when he is delirious. His letters to Clarissa, of course, are markedly different (IV, 90-91), but they too are a result of his conscious imitation of a plain style.<sup>9</sup> All of this suggests that, as William J. Farrell maintains, Lovelace's "courtly compliments and exclamations are ... a manifestation of his true self".<sup>10</sup> The only thing that is affected about his manner of writing is the "Roman style", which he drops in his mad letter and when he wants to prove to Belford that he is conscience-stricken (IV, 253).

His relative lack of stylistic variation is disturbing, however, because it tells of a man who is, in his letters, always "upon the ecstatic" (I, 509). Lovelace is naturally extravagant; as the comparison of his mad letter with his regular correspondence reveals, he is always uncomfortably close to the kind of unbridled passion that popularly characterizes madness. He is not, however, mad. He experiences and feels things more keenly than other people and is therefore, both more attractive and more dangerous than they are. As a soldier, a politician, even as a writer or lawyer, Lovelace's verbal skills and fiery passions, combined with his abilities to lead others and to formulate plots, could make

him a great man. The mutual attraction he and Clarissa have for each other is romantically appropriate for theirs is a potentially dazzling union of opposites; her steadiness would balance his impetuosity while his fire could encourage her wit and self-confidence. That they end, instead, as the destroyers of their own happiness is due in no small part to the one thing they do have in common, an acute sensitivity to language. Lovelace is a volatile character, but that volatility could work in Clarissa's favour, leading at least to a non-violent parting of the ways, if not to a happy ending. He does, indeed, have "something to say for himself to himself", especially in relation to what Clarissa says to him.

Lovelace, no less than Clarissa, is fascinated by language and, again like Clarissa, sees only the power it gives him over others<sup>11</sup> and not how it can control him. He shows time and time again that he is at the mercy of words, from his early declaration that his first abortive love affair had as much to do with "those confounded poets, with their serenely-celestial descriptions, ... [who] fired my imagination, and set me upon a desire to become a goddess-maker" as with the lady (I, 145), to his miserable obsession with Clarissa's words, will and posthumous letter (IV, 522-524). He loves everything involved in the interplay of words in discussion or argument and is minutely sensitive to the effect of a single word in a particular context. Once he has Clarissa with him, his love, for a while, nearly topples his desire for revenge;

the triumph of the latter is due to language.

Lovelace is affected by the language of both Clarissa and Belford. It is in reply to Belford's arguments, imagined and real, that Lovelace rises to what Mark Kinkead-Weekes singles out as two of his "most gaily cynical and brutal moments"<sup>12</sup> (II, 36, 187). Lovelace, almost from the beginning, pits himself against the words that he expects Belford to speak (I, 513-514), and glories in the verbal victories he wins over his friend (II, 185). As Lovelace's second-in-command, Belford seems to inspire Lovelace to do his worst when he contradicts him; there is an uncomfortably close correspondence between his statement that Lovelace has "the most plotting heart in the world" (II, 243), Lovelace's proud confirmation of it (II, 249), Belford's hope that he will not stoop to "unmanly artifices" (II, 254), and the schemes that are devised within the week (II, 267-269). Lovelace even hints that the act of replying (II, 490-498) to Belford's long letter of Tuesday, June 6 (II, 482-490) helped him to overcome his conscientious objections to the fire plot (II, 498). Lovelace is able to talk himself into things directly contrary to his will (II, 213) and it is very likely that his replies to Belford confirm decisions of which he is already half-convinced.

Jack Belford's inadvertent encouragement of his friend's attempt on Clarissa would matter less if the lady herself did not accidentally use language that cools Lovelace's love for her. The first genuine proposal scene (II, 137-138,



140-142) ends bitterly for him when Clarissa, embarrassed at allowing his embrace (II, 137), excuses herself (II, 138) by implying that her confusion arises from her grief over the Harlowes' intransigence (II, 138, 142); touched by the combination of sad words and tears, followed by the indignant "How now, sir!" and a "display of innocent confusion" (II, 141), Lovelace only recovers himself when she reinterprets the whole scene in favour of her family (II, 138, 142). Similarly, after the second proposal, Clarissa writes that "he presses me every hour ... for fresh tokens of my esteem for him, and confidence in him", but, as the phrasing of "some verbal concessions" and her lament that she is forced to accept his protection suggest (II, 175), whatever words she does give him are cold and self-pitying (II, 184). He immediately understands that he is "more indebted ... to her cruel relations, than to herself for her favour" (II, 184), and another moment is lost. In the third proposal scene, when Lovelace convinces himself that he wants to marry her as he goes along (II, 213), Clarissa, who is perhaps oppressed by his reference to Charlotte's delicacy (II, 212-213),<sup>13</sup> fails to reply although she knows she must "say something not wholly discouraging" (II, 210). Clarissa hesitates, Lovelace goes on talking and quickly persuades himself that it is best to delay (II, 210, 213). The exchange again hangs on a word, this time, ironically, an omitted one.

Clarissa's behaviour towards Lovelace is dictated by her concept of the feminine ideal. Lovelace remarks, just after the third proposal scene, that "this dear lady is prodigiously learned in theories: but as to practices, as to experimentals, must be, as you know from her tender years, a mere novice" (II, 218). Clarissa's theoretical ideal of womanly conduct includes punctilio, self-sufficiency and steadiness, but excludes openness and trust, even though they are natural to her (II, 11). Ironically, openness and trust are precisely what Lovelace is hoping to find in Clarissa, and he loathes the "self-dependent, thee-doubting watchfulness" (I, 171) that she assumes. Even though they are both looking for the same thing in each other, evidence of love admitted by the heart and the mind, neither one can be satisfied with the proofs they see because Clarissa recoils from her emotional displays and explains them away while Lovelace is too extravagant and ardent to suit her fastidious standards of genteel courtship. Without believing that Clarissa misses three sure chances to marry (Lovelace, after all, boasts that he could, with one word, provoke Clarissa into refusing him even at the altar) (II, 315), it is nevertheless true that she makes her life more difficult with her finely drawn theories. She feels that it is improper, for example, to own to her family that she was carried off against her will (II, 11-12), although she realizes that it is only reasonable for them to resent a premeditated flight (II, 9). Conversely, she allows

Lovelace to pass themselves off as a married couple and to spend the night at Mrs. Sinclair's because of her sense of her own helplessness (II, 196, 197, 198), her unwillingness to argue and her fear of appearing too punctilious (II, 198). Propriety and condescension may both be necessary, but Clarissa almost always inserts them in the wrong places; when she is right, as she is in refusing to let Miss Partington share her bed (II, 231-232), she puzzles over the fact that her action is inconsistent with her theories (II, 232). Clarissa's theories turn her into a prickly and sarcastic young woman (II, 76-80) who is ashamed to show her real feelings (II, 138) to the man who, ironically, finds them irresistible.

Each of Lovelace's stratagems is designed to break through to the woman underneath the brittle shell of decorum, and it is arguable that language is responsible for the fact that revenge finally becomes uppermost in his mind (II, 362). For about the first month that Lovelace and Clarissa are together, it seems that the most probable outcome of their relationship will be a psychological stalemate. Lovelace is puzzled by Clarissa's coldness, but is content to delay definitive action while he attempts to probe her emotions. As her reserves continue and grow, however, his early observation that Anna's letters have an adverse effect on her behaviour towards him (II, 97) convinces him that he will make better progress if he can obtain the letters (II, 269). It is only one of several

plots when it is conceived, but its result makes it more significant than any other. After reading the extracts, Lovelace is "too much disturbed in my mind to think of anything but revenge" (II, 361), and a sinister chain of events begins. The copies of Anna's letters are waiting for him when he and Clarissa return from the play Saturday night (II, 361-362), and the next day, Sunday, he terrifies her and kisses her hand "with such a savageness, that a redness remains upon it still" (II, 377). Clarissa reacts almost hysterically. After telling Anna of the episode, her style undergoes a brief transformation. Her language is direct and abrupt and several sentence fragments express her rage and disgust, as do the repeated negatives with which she peppers her clipped, inelegant sentences (II, 377); she concludes her outburst by admitting that "my temper, I believe, is changed" (II, 378). Lovelace subjects Clarissa to physical violence, not just the kind of intimidation practiced by the Harlowes, and their relationship is marred by it from this point forward.

As Mark Kinkead-Weekes points out, Lovelace is affected not only by the content but by the style of Anna's letters, for he assumes that Clarissa has been writing to Anna in the same manner (II, 362).<sup>14</sup> The letters confirm his suspicions that Clarissa does not care for him, suspects the worst of him and yet is willing to marry him (II, 365); they also give him proof "that the noblest of the sex mean nothing in the world by their shyness and distance, but to pound the

poor fellow they dislike not, when he comes into their purlieus" (II, 369). Anna's letters substantiate Lovelace's theories about women and spur his revenge, and the combination is deadly. Clarissa, in response to his violence, can only think that it arises from the freedoms she has allowed (II, 382) and withdraws even further behind the barrier of punctilio. Her change of temper immediately shows itself in her language. The day after he hurts her hand she uses, for the first time, what William J. Farrell calls her "'she-tragedy'" style.<sup>15</sup> "My soul is above thee, man! ... Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee! Thou hast, in mine, a proud, a too proud heart to contend with! Leave me, and leave me for ever! Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!" (II, 382-383), she tells an astonished Lovelace. Her new style is an amplification of the style she has been using with him, for the heroine of she-tragedy is ultra-feminine: noble, pure, pathetic and much larger than life.<sup>16</sup> Lovelace, however much he may be awed by her grand manner, finds in it confirmation of his idea of women. "She is a lion-hearted lady, in every case where her honour, her punctilio rather, calls for spirit", he tells Belford, and adds that the evidence of her passion feeds his hopes that she may be overcome (II, 384). As at Harlowe Place, Clarissa's change of style only confirms the opinion other people have of her.

From this point forward, the games between Lovelace and Clarissa become more desperate. Lovelace, afraid that she

will escape from him if he continues to frighten her (II, 384), resolves to soften her with kindness (II, 385). Another chance for reconciliation is ruined when Lovelace, who is about to make an honest declaration, is interrupted by a note from Dorcas informing him that there is "'a paper of importance to transcribe'" (II, 390); the scene is a dramatic illustration, and almost a parody, of the way in which words come between Clarissa and Lovelace, for the paper turns out to be her "affecting" answer to his proposed marriage settlements and he is moved by it (II, 393). For the most part, however, this period of artificial calm is filled with the hatching of new plots. Mrs. Fretchville is disposed of (II, 401), Charlotte Montague and Lord M. are solicited for letters (II, 403) and comply (II, 403-404, 408-413), the Tomlinson scheme is started (II, 406-407), the settlements are put into the hands of a lawyer (II, 413), the details of the project against Anna Howe and Hickman are worked out (II, 418-425) and, finally, the ipecacuanha plot is perfected (II, 426-428). Lovelace boasts of having hundreds of contrivances "still in embryo" (II, 413) and it is clear that, no matter how Clarissa behaves, he cares less for love now than for revenge. Thus, even though he is pleased with the results of the ipecacuanha plot, her display of feeling for him does not make him question his goals; instead, he looks forward to "many pleasanter expedients" (II, 437). In the early proposal scenes it was always possible, if never certain, that he would marry Clarissa, but that

possibility dies away soon after he has read Anna's letters and never returns.

Her "prayers and tears" (II, 506) in the fire scene, for example, do not move him to repentance or a sincere proposal. It should be noted that he does not intend to rape her in this scene (II, 492, 495). He tries to surprise her into acceptance and desists because he meets "a resistance so much in earnest: a resistance, in short, so irresistible" (II, 507). Her tragic style gains her a reprieve, but really accomplishes less than her emotional outbursts have earlier, partly because Lovelace is hardened against her, and partly because the style refers more to a fictional heroine than to the real Clarissa. There is some truth in William Warner's contention that Lovelace responds to Clarissa as an art object in this scene.<sup>17</sup> However, it is less certain that he always responds to her in the same way.<sup>18</sup> In the scenes at the Widow Sorling's (II, 141, 184), and on the three other occasions when he is close to being overcome by her (II, 213, 383, 390), his letters suggest that her involuntary emotional displays move him. In all five of these episodes she is genuinely confused (II, 141), depressed and ill (II, 184) or angry (II, 213, 382-383, 390) and Lovelace discovers his own weakness in relation to the depth of her passions. In the fire scene, even though her earnestness impresses him, he focusses on her body and actions, on her physical details rather than her emotional centre. She is half-dressed, her bosom heaves and her heart flutters (II, 501), and he keeps returning to praise "the sweet

discomposure" (II, 502) of her features and dress (II, 502, 503, 505, 506). He may be enjoying her as an art object, but there is some doubt as to whether he is really overcome by her.<sup>19</sup> When he pauses and thinks, "thou art, upon full proof, an angel and no woman", he continues to hold her tightly (II, 504) and refuses to leave until she has pardoned him, all the while "hoping she would not forgive me" (II, 505). There is an air of resignation about his words and actions and a sense that he is toying with her in his reminder that she is in his power (II, 505) and in his patronizing demands that she forgive him nicely (II, 505-506). Clarissa does not really win a victory in the fire scene. Lovelace, wearily recognizing that she cannot be surprised into taking him as her lover, allows himself to be talked into retiring. He does not rape her because he has been looking for "a yielding reluctance; without which I will be sworn, whatever rapes have been attempted, none ever were committed, one person to one person" (II, 495). It is only after he has left the room that he decides that he might as well "execute all my purposes" since he has already "sinned beyond cordial forgiveness" (II, 506). He feels he has been "a woman's fool" (II, 506) who has been "wrought upon" (II, 507) by tears and prayers, which implies that he gave in unwillingly to art and was not, as in the earlier scenes, swept away by his feelings for the lady.

Clarissa's escape to Hampstead is as shocking to the reader as it is to Lovelace, who have both become accustomed



to her passivity and to her fear of London. It is, in fact, her first independent action, other than her letters, in the novel and it hints at the strength that Clarissa really possesses when she does not argue it away or disguise it under a demure mask. Unfortunately, when she arrives at Hampstead she hesitates long enough for Lovelace to find her, and slips again into her feminine role when he appears.

Clarissa repeatedly fails to explain her situation to the people at Hampstead, from whom she might reasonably expect protection (III, 48, 49, 65-71, 77, 109). Although Lovelace could make things difficult for her by bringing forth his friends to testify that they are married (III, 43, n. 1), the witnesses' characters and early eighteenth-century marriage laws would both work against him. Marriages acknowledged before witnesses were legally binding only under special circumstances: promises to marry in the future could be broken if they were not followed by consummation, while explicit vows such as "I do take thee to my wife" had to be exchanged by both parties before the contract per verba de praesenti was recognized as a formal commitment.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the whores might find it difficult to convince people more experienced than Clarissa that they are trustworthy witnesses, while Lovelace's friends, and especially Belford, would very likely refuse to cooperate with him. Lovelace is counting on Clarissa's character rather than on any actual power given him by the law, and his trust in her is not betrayed.

There is a great deal of truth in John Traugott's observation that Clarissa does not tell the truth at Hampstead because she prefers her role as a tragedy heroine.<sup>21</sup> The girl who could not be shouted down by her brother and sister allows herself to be overborne by Lovelace (III, 48, 49), declaims "violent tragedy speech[es]" (III, 45, 71, 75, 76, 77) instead of making simple, clear statements, and refuses to explain her situation for the curious reason that she expects her stay at Hampstead to be brief while her story is long (III, 67, 78). At her most aggressive, she challenges Lovelace to affirm or deny their marriage (III, 70-71), but is eventually drawn away from her questioning into another violent tirade when he refers to her honour (III, 70) and reputation (III, 71). Clarissa's modesty and fear, the peril of her situation and the fact that she is waiting for Anna's advice do not explain why she denounces Lovelace only in abstract terms that support his version of their story. Caught up by her image of herself as a persecuted woman, which springs into even higher relief when Lovelace dramatically unmask himself in her rooms (III, 41, 43-44), Clarissa tries to rise above him and their relationship by pretending that she is not involved in it. She is lost and bewildered, but she has only erred once, in continuing a prohibited correspondence (III, 126); everything that has happened since then is up to Lovelace to explain as he sees fit.

Clarissa's posture of lofty disdain does not protect her from Lovelace's verbal arts. The man who has boasted of

his ability to "throw out a tub to the whale" when his partner in conversation is a lady (II, 14), demonstrates his skill at Hampstead with a Clarissa who is especially vulnerable to him because of her ultra-feminine role. With expert timing, he pushes her into a passion that makes Miss Rawlins and Mrs. Moore doubt her sanity (III, 45-46), subdues her with allusions to the reconciliation with her family (III, 49, 74), and finally moves her a little in his favour when he proposes the visit of Lady Betty (III, 122, 130). Meanwhile, Lovelace is being hardened by her language and manner, by Anna's letters (III, 1, 163) and even by the marriage licence (III, 179-181). There is evidence that Lovelace is increasingly able to see Clarissa as a thing instead of a person as she continues on in her grand style. He melodramatically confronts his own conscience (III, 145-147) and it argues the reality of Clarissa: "'if now she find thee a villain, thou mayst never more engage her attention, and she perhaps will refuse and abhor thee'" (III, 146). Even when his conscience is dead (III, 147), Lovelace yearns for the real Clarissa. "Bless me with the continuance of this affecting conversation ... Give me further cause to curse my heedless folly, by the continuance of this calm, but soul-penetrating conversation", he begs (III, 153), after she has haltingly confessed her confusion to him (III, 152-153). She refuses, however; breaks away from him (III, 153-154); and he is left to respond to her as a martyr (III, 176-177) and as a haughty beauty (III, 190). She rarely lets

him see the young, intelligent, distressed girl that she really is and so he is free to build a play around what she represents (III, 186-187) and to see her as virtue on trial or as an example of the folly of pride (III, 190). There is something mechanical about Clarissa in these scenes; dazed, immobile at times (III, 121, 141) and oppressed by her father's curse (III, 16, 71, 110, 126), she seems unable to face her situation squarely and takes refuge in tragic speeches and tears which Lovelace can manipulate almost at will.

When the bogus Lady Betty and Miss Montague arrive, Clarissa is most impressed by their language. Telling Anna of the charade later, she asks, in reference to Lady Betty's dramatic appeal to feminine virtue, "Could you have thought there was a woman in the world who could thus express herself, and yet be vile?" (III, 355). Although she has resolved to wait for Anna's letter (III, 356), is disappointed in the ladies' manner (III, 358) and is incensed by Lady Betty's denunciation of Mrs. Sinclair's house (III, 359-362), all is overshadowed by the "many agreeable things said" (III, 363), and she is also talked into accompanying the rest to town (III, 364). In an eerie return to the nightmarish unreality that characterized her imprisonment at Harlowe Place, Clarissa returns to the brothel and enters it, unable to resist the cajoling of people she trusts (III, 367); will and a sense of duty once again replace a spontaneous and sincere conviction.

Drugged as she is, Clarissa still manages, with her mute anguish, to make Lovelace hesitate (III, 193). He is probably telling the truth when he claims that he drugs her as an act of mercy (III, 201-202, 214) for he is genuinely shocked by her insensibility (III, 193). Even if he had not used the opiates, it is doubtful that he would have spared Clarissa. The appeals that she makes are simple and sincere (III, 193, 195, 371), as she is too terrified and disoriented to launch into tragic speeches, and Lovelace is "staggered" when he meets with "so unquestionable a repugnance" (III, 193), but he still proceeds. Although he blames the whores for encouraging him (III, 193), they are present precisely because he knows that he cannot do it alone, "one person to one person", without "yielding reluctance" on Clarissa's part (II, 495). Lovelace is, at this point, almost impervious to Clarissa's words and emotions because he is filled with the desire for revenge; the precautionary measures that surround the rape are designed less to silence her than to conquer his own natural distaste for the act.

With the rape, one of the two most eloquent characters in the novel becomes its most violent figure, while the other becomes the victim of his violence. Language has led both Clarissa and Lovelace out of themselves in ways that they do not fully comprehend because they blame each other and their circumstances for the changes they note in themselves (III, 152-153, 146). Yet the self-accusations and criticisms of each

other that they make are accurate enough to be ironic; Clarissa's problems do stem from her prohibited correspondences, but not just because Lovelace tricks her out of herself (I, 486) and although he behaves ecstatically, it is not purely because he has enticed her away from Harlowe Place (I, 509). Similarly, he is right in thinking that her reserves are the result of Miss Howe's advice (II, 269), though he errs in assigning too much importance to Anna's letters and too little to Clarissa's reaction to them, while his fear that he is becoming a machine, caught in his own contrivances (III, 146), is not so far from the truth that he is pushed by language into preferring revenge to love. The words surrounding Clarissa and Lovelace are never related exactly to the reality of their situation, but the hero and heroine always prefer the word to the reality; the violence of the rape is a dramatic demonstration of the kind of violence they have already done to themselves and to others.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Irwin Gopnik, A Theory of Style and Richardson's 'Clarissa', (The Hague: Mouton & Co. N. V., Publishers, 1970), pp. 85-86. Relevant references to "punctilio", I, 448, 449, 450, 464, 472, 504, II, 140, 155, 167, 176, 177, 339, 384, III, 269; "ceremony", II, 177, 181; "delicacy", II, 155-156.

<sup>2</sup>Morris Golden, Richardson's Characters, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1973), p. 185; Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 105; T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 284.

<sup>4</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, pp. 187-188.

<sup>5</sup>William J. Farrell, "The Style and the Action in Clarissa" in John Carroll, ed., Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 95.

<sup>6</sup>John Carroll, ed., Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson, intro. by John Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 88.

<sup>7</sup>William Beatty Warner, Reading 'Clarissa': The Struggles of Interpretation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 67.

<sup>8</sup>Eric Rothstein, review of William Beatty Warner, Reading 'Clarissa': The Struggles of Interpretation, Journal of English and German Philology LXXXIX, 2 (April 1980), 255.

<sup>9</sup>Farrell, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>11</sup>Leo Braudy, "Penetration and Impenetrability in Clarissa" in Phillip Harth, ed., New Approaches to Eighteenth Century Literature: Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 203, and p. 203, n. 22.

<sup>12</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, p. 187.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-206.

<sup>15</sup>Farrell, p. 101.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-101.

<sup>17</sup>Warner, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-47.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>20</sup>Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p. 32.

<sup>21</sup>John Traugott, "Clarissa's Richardson: An Essay to Find the Reader" in M.E. Novak, ed., English Literature in the Age of Disguise (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 189.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE WORD OF GOD

The first glimpse the reader has of Clarissa after the rape shows her trying to write herself back into an identity of some kind. The first two letters (III, 205-206) are attempts to redefine herself as Anna's friend (III, 205) and her father's daughter (III, 206), but both break off in anguished confusion. In the next four papers (III, 206-207), she looks back to see what she has been, as if that can help her to understand what she has become; she charges herself with acting "out of nature, out of character, at least" (III, 206) and with pride and conscious superiority (III, 206-207), while lingering wistfully over the admiration she had once inspired and thought she always would inspire. Finally, she turns to Lovelace, apostrophizes him as a "pernicious caterpillar" and a "fell blight" (III, 207), acknowledges her love for him and self-pityingly bemoans his lack of compassion for her (III, 208). She fills Paper X with snatches of poetry (III, 209) and concludes with the letter to Lovelace in which she asks to be sent to a private madhouse (III, 210-213). That Clarissa is not herself is shown by her style which is choppy and unusually colourful, as dashes, rhetorical questions, exclamations and metaphors fill the pages. The papers are also curiously devoid of spiritual consolation. The few references she makes to God

are either brief allusions to the Day of Judgement (III, 207-208, 209) or conventional protests like "God knows my heart" (III, 208), "God forbid they should be like you" and "God forgive you all" (III, 211), while the quotations which make up Paper X are drawn from the poets and not from sacred works. The absence of a spiritual dimension in these papers is not simply another sign of her madness, but a clue to something more important about Clarissa. When she searches out the bases of her identity, she accomplishes very little because she is caught up by worldly concerns. It appears as if her religious principles are scattered, for they almost disappear in the face of her bitter sorrow over the loss of her honour and reputation. She writes herself into, not an acceptance of her fate, but an acrid disgust with herself and with life. The images that she uses all refer to the destruction of the body: the "wicked cub" tears the lady to pieces (III, 206); the caterpillar and blight prey on the leaf and bud of the plant just as the moth "corruptest the fairest garment" (III, 207); and her body is like a fortified house that has been basely attacked at its one weak point (III, 210-211). Clarissa writes herself into a longing for death or banishment because her eloquence leads only to recrimination and questioning as her words coil back on themselves and on her. The desperate "eagerness and hurry" with which she turns to her writing (III, 204) suggests that she hopes to find comfort in it; when she does not, she chooses to die. Clarissa tries to write herself

back into the self that she thought she knew, but finds, to her distress (III, 204), that there are no signs of life within her. The self laid bare by madness is empty, and so are the words that circle around it; Clarissa despairingly reverts to her tragic role and longs for death.

When the confrontations between Lovelace and Clarissa begin, she is all solemnity, superiority and eloquence. Lovelace's guilt aids her. His early regrets (III, 199) soon give way to sincere remorse (III, 225, 229, 236) and shrill attempts to lay the blame for the rape on the drug (III, 218) or the whores (III, 204, 276). Expecting "high passions, raving, flying, tearing execration" (III, 220), he is shocked to see, instead, "her whole mind swallowed up ... by a grief so heavy, as, in her own words, to be beyond the power of speech to express" (III, 220-221). Yet he is so securely locked into his own misery by this time that he keeps mechanically formulating new plots because he does not know "what to do with her, or without her" (III, 229). Their charade continues, with Lovelace alternately buoyed up by optimistic hopes that she will relent and cast down by her invincibility, while Clarissa lectures, laments and makes numerous futile attempts at escape (III, 217, 226-228, 238, 256, 257, 268, 308-309). Lovelace, finally, tries to break the stalemate before leaving for M. Hall (III, 280) by proceeding with Clarissa's second trial, and the penknife scene is the result.

Clarissa's triumph in the penknife scene comes less from her "glorious power of innocence" (III, 287) than from the sincerity with which she threatens her own life. Her impressive figure and words do not keep Lovelace from "advancing towards her, with a fierce aspect, most cursedly vexed, and ashamed too" (III, 288); he halts only when he sees the penknife in her hand (III, 288-289). His second approach is stopped in the same fashion (III, 289). He is probably half-right when he guesses that his fright at her bloody nose suggested to her how she could overpower him (III, 292), but, more importantly, she can resolve to do something so out of character because of her unchristian yearning for death. Her suicidal desires are given extra force by the fact that she comes to the dining-room from the safety of her locked and bolted bedroom, knowing that the uproar is nothing but an excuse for a second rape (III, 287-288). Lovelace and the whores are, understandably, horrified by her resoluteness.

As sincere as her will to die is in this scene, there are also hints that Clarissa is aware, for the first time, of the artifices that they are all using. She mockingly praises her persecutors for their acting skills (III, 288) and threatens them, in turn, with punishments that are, on close examination, quite imaginary. Who, for example, are the friends to whose authority she will apply (III, 288)? What law, human or divine, will be her "resource" and "refuge" if she kills herself (III, 289)? The friends and the law she invokes are designed to strike terror into the whores, but they

bear little relevance to Clarissa's situation. They are part of her attempt to create a protective armour around herself, and they succeed. Her intention to kill herself is, as she notes, abhorrent to the principles of her heart; it, too, is something to which she is driven by Lovelace (III, 290).

Clarissa's most triumphant moment so far is also, paradoxically, the time of her lowest spiritual ebb for she acts knowingly against truth and her heart in a desperate effort to defend her honour (III, 291).

It is not insignificant that Clarissa's successful attempt at escape takes place when she disguises herself in Mabel's clothes (III, 311). Throughout Clarissa, the clothes of the heroine receive a great deal of attention and are connected with her state of mind and use of language, as if in illustration of her belief that "words [are] the body and dress of thought" (II, 226). The adoring, full-length verbal portrait of Clarissa in the garden of her father's house (I, 511-512), for example, is remarkable for its detailed description of her clothes. Passing over, briefly, her skin and hair, and all but ignoring her facial features, Lovelace lavishes three paragraphs on her adornments, from her headdress to her shoes. Her clothing is characterized by richness and unusual elegance. Diamonds sparkle in her ears, gold and silver gleam from her gown against a background of primrose yellow, embroidered with violet and green, and the dress is completed by her white headdress, ruffles and coat (I, 511-512).

Her ensemble speaks eloquently of Clarissa's skill and self-confidence; "she makes and gives fashions as she pleases", Lovelace notes, and she is responsible for the curious embroidery of her gown (I, 512). In short, the outfit corresponds to the Clarissa who has been the beloved younger daughter of the Harlowes. Innovative, yet tasteful, superior and arresting, even the gown's predominant colour of primrose yellow may testify to Clarissa's potential and exemplary status, for the word "primrose" was used to denote those very qualities up until the late seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> and Richardson would be acquainted with its figurative meanings.

Despite all of the glorious self-assurance of her dress, which proclaims her intention not to leave Harlowe Place because she wears neither hat nor hood against the weather (I, 511-512), the essential weakness of Clarissa is obvious. Her emotions dull her eyes, make her tremble and even push her into a fainting fit (I, 512) until, finally, her dress and her words notwithstanding, she fearfully flies "from her love to her love" (I, 513). Once with Lovelace, the disintegration of Clarissa's personal identity is reflected in her clothing. The silver-trimmed velvet hood and cloak he presents to her on their departure from St. Albans is clearly linked to his encroachments on her for he rewards himself for his thoughtfulness by kissing her (I, 505). The changes in Clarissa, however, are seen more in the dishevelment of her own clothes than in any alteration she makes in her costume, for the Harlowes

finally send her the clothes (II, 237) that she has so earnestly requested (II, 12, 62, 154). Her clothes not only mean independence to her (II, 9), they signify decorum both to her and to Lovelace; his complaint that in the morning she is always completely dressed before he is, stems from his belief that "full dress creates dignity, augments consciousness and compels distance", while careless attire promotes familiarity (II, 341). Yet the importance she attaches to proper clothing only encourages his attacks upon her (II, 341). She cannot bear to think of the new clothing that will be hers as Lovelace's bride (II, 414) (just as she abhorred the patterns that would have outfitted her as Solmes' wife) (I, 210), but bit by bit, her own clothes are torn away from her until she resembles the ravaged heroine of tragedy and Lovelace's dreams.

In a prelude to the fire scene, Lovelace draws away the handkerchief that covers her neck, exposing her breast (II, 476). In the fire scene, however, she has "nothing on but an under-petticoat, her lovely bosom [is] half open, and her feet [are] just slipped into her shoes" (II, 501). Her appearance contrasts strongly with the picture of her in the garden. Gone are the skillful embroideries, the rich fabrics, the sparkling ornaments and the subtle mixtures of colours. In their place are her disheveled tresses (II, 503), the "glossy beauties" of her neck and her "fine-turned limbs" (II, 502). Her emotions, this time, are matched by her dishabille. Her night headdress falls off in her struggle (II, 503) and she

loses a shoe (II, 506); she is reduced to a kind of emblem of woman in distress because she is bereft of the things that have made her an individual. Lovelace found her above comparison at Harlowe Place: her handkerchief concealed "inimitable beauties" (I, 512), her neck was "beautiful beyond description" and "the lily and the driven snow" could not be compared to her skin (I, 511). In the fire scene, even though she is still "inimitably fair and lovely" (II, 502), he finds it much easier to describe her in hackneyed terms: "lovely" (II, 501, 502, 503, 505), "charming" (II, 502, 503, 504, 505) and "sweet" (II, 501, 502, 505) occur with monotonous regularity, and the skin that was more illustrious than the lily is now like "polished ivory" (II, 506). Clarissa has become less uniquely herself, despite her resolute wearing of her old clothes, for they do not really belong to her anymore. Her heart and mind have changed, her language has changed with them and her dishabille is the most accurate reflection of her new self.

It is interesting that the attire in which she escapes to Hampstead is described in some detail for the sketch suggests that the escape is an action worthy of the real Clarissa. Her dress is of "brown lustring", ornamented with blue knots, and set off by a carnation-coloured petticoat, and she wears a beaver hat, a rose diamond ring and a black ribbon (II, 525). The promising start is not followed up, however. She reverts to her tragic role, apologizes to the pretend Lady Betty and Miss Montague for her everyday apparel (III, 354),



re-enters the brothel to pack her clothes (III, 366) and is engaged in that employment when they leave her (III, 368). When she finally realizes that she is forsaken she pulls off her headdress and rips her ruffles in pieces (III, 192, 371), actions that show, literally, her frenzied state while illustrating, symbolically, the complete loss of self that accompanies the rape.

For almost a week after the rape, Clarissa pays little attention to her clothes (III, 218). Resolved never to undress again in Mrs. Sinclair's house (III, 225-226, 264), she despairingly asserts that she cares nothing for her clothes, if she can only escape from Lovelace (III, 245). Determined as she is to escape or die, clothing becomes to her, like language, only a thing with which to protect herself. Thus, by offering Mabel what seems to be the same "brown lustring gown" in which she made her first escape (III, 310), she gets away by disguising herself in the servant's gown, petticoat, hood, cloak and apron (III, 311). The words she speaks and the clothes she wears no longer involve her pride or her sincerity. They are only means to an end, an end which she is certain is death.

Clarissa finds refuge at the Smith's, and immediately a stream of letters flows to and from the apartment above the glove shop. Clarissa escapes on the morning of Wednesday, June 28 (III, 306), and by the next day she has written no less than five letters, to Anna (III, 321-322), Hannah (III, 325) Mrs. Norton (III, 326-327), Lady Betty Lawrance (III,

331-332) and Mrs. Hodges, her Uncle John's housekeeper (III, 333-334). Most of the letters seek information about the plots with which Lovelace has deceived her, but to Anna she confesses her despair. "I, my best self, have not escaped", she writes, and pathetically tries to see an image of her "lost self" in Anna (III, 321). The language is religious, but it is all directed to Miss Howe who is pictured "conversing with saints and angels" and "whose mind, all robed in spotless white, charms and irradiates" (III, 321). Anna is a goddess, Clarissa a humble suppliant begging for permission to worship her from afar (III, 321). Clarissa's loss of her "best self" is accompanied by her loathing for the self that is left to her, a self which is bound up in her defiled body. She envies the saints and angels who "have shaken off the encumbrance of body" and can see no reason why she should not do the same thing herself, since, except for Lovelace, she hates nothing as much as "this vile, this hated self" (III, 321). Vaguely recognizing the confused identities that are hampering her efforts to be coherent ("Self, then, be banished from self one moment") (III, 321), she is not yet ready to search for her real self. In fact, the rambling style of this letter, with its dashes, exclamations, choppy rhythm and figurative language, should alert the reader that it is a continuation of her mad letters. The frenzy has never really disappeared, it has only been hidden under a mask of desperate composure, just as it is hidden again in the letters that are sent the next day. Like

the ghost in Hamlet, whose words, first quoted in the tenth of her mad letters (III, 209), are repeated here (III, 321), Clarissa is still living in a hell of anger and pain.

For a little more than two weeks, Clarissa busies herself with sorting out the details of her story, re-establishing herself with Anna (III, 350- 374, 375-378) and struggling, rather unsuccessfully, to absorb Mrs. Norton's "seasonable consolation" (III, 338). In the last letter she writes before she is arrested, there are signs that Mrs. Norton's teaching is bearing some fruit: Clarissa reveals that she has been to morning prayers four times (III, 386) and she hopes that Christian principles "will, in due time, and by due reflection, set me above the sense of all worldly disappointments" (III, 387). She is still disordered. Her head and heart have not been clear since the rape, and she ends her letter with the question, "what is now my self?" (III, 387). She finds the answer to that question in prison.

Clarissa spends four days at Rowland's (III, 420, 451, 455) and, remarkably, for those four days neither writes letters nor keeps memoranda, even though she is supplied with pen, paper and ink (III, 430). The shock of being seized in the street and locked up in the officer's wretched house (III, 436, 454) convinces her that her end is near (III, 454), and she practices self-mortification, refusing better accommodation (III, 431), all but the plainest food and drink (III, 436) and the temptation to write to her few remaining friends

(III, 430, 433), all with "a patience of spirit, as if she enjoyed her griefs" (III, 430). She does not die, however, and turns again to paper and pen, but this time with the Bible as her guide (III, 439). The result is at least one meditation, drawn from the Scriptures, in which she examines her situation (IV, 6-7). She substitutes holy words for her own language, while the title, "meditation", is a comment on her habit of self-examination. Clarissa has often explored her emotions with dubious results, but since the rape they have not been settled enough for her to examine. With the help of the Bible, she can meditate; the Scriptures provide an approach to her heart, the heart of which she has been ignorant for months.

Clarissa writes her meditation on Saturday (IV, 6), refuses to see anyone on Sunday (III, 443), and is found on Monday morning, asleep next to her paper and pens with her finger in the Bible (III, 445). The better part of two days, it seems, has been spent in her new occupation and, as Belford remarks, "she had not her Bible before her for nothing" (III, 454). Partly by chance and partly by choice, Clarissa is left without one of her usual supports; her letters, her friends, her clothes, even comfortable surroundings are denied her. Not knowing, as the reader does, that her imprisonment will be brief, Clarissa accepts her isolation and turns, wholeheartedly, to God. She finds herself in Him. The meditation of Saturday, July 15, unlike any of her mad papers, leads to consolation. Her grief and calamity are so heavy that

at first her "words are swallowed up" (IV, 6), but she can conclude that "God is mighty, and despiseth not any" (IV, 7) because she is using God's words and not her own. He leads her to search out and nurture what is part of herself, the religious principles which were inculcated in her as a child by the pious Mrs. Norton, and they, in turn, gradually open up more of the heart and mind of Clarissa Harlowe.

Striking imagery is used in the prison scene to emphasize its significance. Belford describes Clarissa's prison room in minute detail, lingering over the broken walls and mirror, the dilapidated furniture and the funeral bouquet which is composed of flowers signifying death, bitterness, dead love, remorse and regret (III, 444-445).<sup>2</sup> In the midst of this vision of disappointment and destruction kneels Clarissa in her white dress, and Belford meticulously notes that she has "the forefinger of her right hand in her Bible" (III, 445). She is pointing to the salvation she has found at her lowest ebb; the Bible is her guide now and she has already, in spirit, left the bitterness and the defeat symbolized by the room behind her. The last detailed account of her dress is also made in this scene. She wears the white damask gown that has been mentioned before (III, 218, 311); Belford stresses that it is "exceeding neat" (III, 445) and "beyond imagination white" (III, 446), but her stays have been cut and not replaced, her headdress is disordered (III, 445), her hair and handkerchief are both rumpled and she does

not wear a hoop (III, 446). Clarissa is not impossibly immaculate for she shows the effects of her ordeal in her appearance. The whiteness of her nun-like "flowing robes" (III, 446) suggests that her mind has been purified by her spiritual awakening, but it is not untroubled. Still, in comparison with her dishevelment in the fire scene, the ravages are minor, and she illuminates her "horrid corner" (III, 446) in Rowland's house.

The Clarissa who prepares to leave Rowland's demonstrates her new spiritual fortitude. A bitter denunciation of Lovelace is quickly followed by the dramatic, if not wholly forgiving, plea: "Give him, good God! repentance and amendment; that I may be the last poor creature who shall be ruined by him! And, in Thine own good time, receive to Thy mercy the poor wretch who had none on me!" (III, 453-454). More remarkable still, she overcomes her hatred of men and trusts Belford, accepting the arm of and apologizing to Lovelace's closest friend (III, 455). As Belford goes on to point out, she does not try to hide the fact of her imprisonment, an example of the "openness of heart" (III, 456) which she has always had trouble practicing, however much she may have praised it (III, 336). The girl who began her imprisonment huddled on the seat of her chair, crying "Carry me, carry me out of sight--cover me--cover me up-- for ever!" (III, 428), concludes it by calling out to her landlady, in front of a servant and a customer (III, 456), "O Mrs. Smith,

... did you not think I was run away? You don't know what I have suffered since I saw you. I have been in a prison!-- Arrested for debts I owe not! But, thank God, I am here!" (III, 455). People are, of course, normally more happy when they are released from prison than when they are arrested, but even the completely innocent do not usually broadcast their experiences so unconcernedly. In Clarissa's case, where the circumstances of her arrest are more than a little delicate, her freedom is a bold proof of her new self-confidence.

In the weeks following her arrest, there is a tension between Clarissa's growing consciousness of who she is and her determination to purify herself in preparation for death. It is, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes observes, a constant struggle for her to achieve the proper spirit of resignation and humility.<sup>3</sup> The struggle, however, is what makes Clarissa an interesting character right up to her death. Her efforts to remake herself in God's image contrast with her earlier, unconscious substitutions of language for self in that she is deliberately choosing to change herself according to what she has been taught to believe is the only acceptable model for human behaviour. God's word should guide the living, and it should especially guide those who are dying.

The reason for Clarissa's death is one of the most difficult problems in the novel, inspiring comments that range from William Beatty Warner's statement that "Clarissa dies so that she may produce the book that will guarantee her triumph"<sup>4</sup>

to Margaret Anne Doody's conclusion that she dies because she is "simply, too good for the world".<sup>5</sup> If Richardson never supplies a name for her fatal disease, Clarissa herself describes it. In the first long letter she is able to write to Anna after her release from prison, she says that "I am persuaded, as much as that I am now alive, that I shall not long live. The strong sense I have ever had of my fault, the loss of my reputation, my disappointments, the determined resentment of my friends, aiding the barbarous usage I have met with where I least deserved it, have seized upon my heart: seized upon it, before it was so well fortified by religious considerations as I hope it now is" (III, 522). The distinction is plainly made: Clarissa has, in the past, willed herself to die but now, under the influence of her spiritual renaissance, wishes neither to live nor die but only to bow to the will of God (III, 521). This seems to be the reason, then, why Clarissa can be an example of holy dying, for she conquers her longing for death only after she has regained her religious principles, by which time the damage has been done. Yet, as Richardson carefully points out in the same letter, Clarissa still has many reasons for preferring death and they sound suspiciously like those of a proud, exceptional eighteen year old girl who has been grievously disappointed with her life.

Acknowledging that her choice of death over marriage to Lovelace is influenced by some "considerations in which anger and disappointment have too great a share" (III, 519), she goes on to enumerate them in a list that is nearly two pages long:



she is too proud to be obliged to Lovelace's generosity by marrying such a profligate (III, 519-520); if she did marry him, she would be forced to spend her life skulking about in corners, the humiliated object of everyone's scorn; his immoralities might influence their children and herself, leading them all to damnation (III, 520). Finally, in a fit of passion, she declares that she despises him too much to ever think of spending her life with him (III, 520-521). A single life is also out of the question because her consciousness of her fault would doom her to morbid brooding; all the world would know why she lived hidden away and she would see reproach in everyone's eye; and she could hardly continue her program of good works for the poor since it would be impossible for her, without pain, to warn the girls against "the delusions of men" (III, 521). Refusing to marry the man who raped her on the grounds of undying hatred and possible damnation is sound enough, but the other reasons reflect too much of the pampered eighteen year old's horrified distaste for a life which promises to be a complete reversal of her past. Clarissa draws a picture of herself as the object of charity rather than the dispenser of it, as a former shining example reduced to looking to others for guidance, and as a guilt-stricken creature, ashamed to face the people among whom she had once passed with a consciousness of her own virtue. Confronted by this vision of her future she wishes for death, in spite of her strengthening religious principles.

Clarissa's youth and personality determine her choice of death over life; a maturer, less exceptional but still highly principled woman might find as much virtue in a humble, single life, devoted to charitable works. Clarissa knows enough about herself to realize that that kind of life will not suit her. She is being true to herself, then, in wishing for death because she senses that she can only get to her best self by preparing for it. Yet this is not a cynical act on Clarissa's part. It is, simply, the best that she can do. Ideally, Clarissa should be struck down from without, but, realistically, she cannot help looking forward to death even after she recognizes the sinfulness of self-murder. It is evil "purposely to run into the arms of death", she tells Anna, but plans to avoid the sin by taking physical, not psychological, measures (III, 522), even though Mr. Goddard believes that "her disorder [is] in her mind" and Dr. H. orders her "to do all in your power to be well; and you'll soon grow better" (III, 468). Her disease is not specified because it is an unnameable compound of human frailty and religious fervour.

It is fitting that the girl who has died to herself several times in the course of the novel should choose, finally, to stop living because she can no longer be what she once was. Religious principles and self-awareness grow together in Clarissa after her imprisonment and engage in a struggle for dominance. Christianity forbids suicide and despair, as the whores remind Clarissa (III, 430, 435, 439),

and so she resolves to eat, drink, take medicines and have faith in the future; if her future as a disgraced woman is unbearable to the loved and admired Miss Harlowe, she can still place her hope in eternal life. It is impossible to tell if her choice of death is motivated solely by her worldly disappointments, for Clarissa has a religious background that is speaking to her with renewed strength of the attractions of a life everlasting. Her motives may be mixed, but it seems as if she is moving towards God, as well as away from life; in a world dominated by lies and mean concerns, she is at least being true to herself while looking beyond the world to greater issues.

As Clarissa dies, imagery multiplies around her. Most of it has to do with what she is not; it represents the extremes which people see in her behaviour, extremes which are part of her but do not, by themselves, tell the whole truth about her. Opposed to them is the dominant image of the novel, Clarissa's coffin, which is her statement about herself. It is not surprising that Lovelace is responsible for the vividly contrasting pictures of Clarissa that refer to her, directly or indirectly, as a saint (III, 40, IV, 136) or as a number of ludicrous figures dying for foolish reasons (III, 316, 316-317, 494, IV, 252-253, 452) for he is trying desperately to understand her. The unkind pictures he draws of her as a "pretty little miss" dashing out "her pretty little brains" at the fair (III, 317), as an overfond lady wooing an ugly suitor (III, 494), as a "pious dame" kneeling on her own grave (III,

316), as a miser inconsolable after the loss of his gold (IV, 452) and as a grotesque "fat-flanked cupid" aspiring to heaven (IV, 253) are all too relevant to Clarissa's situation to be completely dismissed. They reflect her about as honestly, in fact, as the portrait of St. Cecilia (III, 40) and the form wrapped in the "azure robe (all stuck over with stars of embossed silver)" in Lovelace's dream (IV, 136) do. Religious love is, to a certain extent, a replacement for romantic love, and bad luck and hurt pride are both involved in causing her death, while some of her efforts to prepare herself for death do strike other people as embarrassingly awkward (IV, 179, 254-256, 258, 271, 289-290). Conversely, the happiness with which she looks forward to death, and the mystical assurances she has of life everlasting, suggest that she is on a higher spiritual plane than the rest of the world. While both sets of images reveal part of the truth about Clarissa, neither group represents her with total accuracy. Her coffin alone does that because it is her creation; it is what she, consciously and deliberately, makes of herself. Her coffin does not deny the sentimentality which colours her attitude towards death, but neither does it ignore the genuine religious fervour which inspires her.

The reader gets the most comprehensive view of Clarissa through Belford's eyes. Belford, even though he is, as a penitent, overawed by the lady's example, is the only correspondent who has continuous access to her in her last

months. He gives the account of the prison scene, narrates three death scenes in fulsome detail (IV, 165-170, 324-340, 345-348, 379-389) and briefly sketches two more (II, 489-490, III, 198, IV, 446-447), but, most importantly, he describes Clarissa's coffin and relates her words about it.

The coffin is the culmination of the novel's house and dress imagery. Clarissa, who begins as the owner of one house and estate and the virtual mistress of another, is confined first in the house of her father, then in the lodgings Lovelace provides for her, including the sponging house, and finally in her "palace" (IV, 257), the coffin in which, paradoxically, she is finally free.<sup>6</sup> The fact that she purchases her "house" (IV, 180) by selling her clothes (IV, 257) is usually seen as symbolic of her conquest of vanity,<sup>7</sup> but it may be that the coffin is not so much a victory over as a continuation of what her clothes have meant to her. Clarissa composes her coffin as carefully as she has written letters and co-ordinated outfits. The imaginative girl who once contrived unique "glove-like muffs" and the elegant embroidery that sparkled on the primrose gown (I, 512), now designs the devices for her coffin and excuses herself "on the score of her youth, and being used to draw for her needleworks, for having shown more fancy than would perhaps be thought suitable on so solemn an occasion" (IV, 257). She admits that it may show "too much solicitude...for this earthly part" (IV, 255) and that its costliness (IV, 257) proves that "pride left not

poor mortals to the last" (IV, 258), but explains that she was motivated by her love of independence (IV, 255) and her wish not to discredit her ancestors in the family vault (IV, 258), as well as by more pious reasons (IV, 256, 258). The coffin is Clarissa's last work of art, the last original creation, uniquely her own, that will dress her body.

After the rape, Clarissa is pictured repeatedly in white, the colour of innocence and purity: she wears it when she and Lovelace have their first confrontation following her madness (III, 218), Mabel's clothes are slipped on over a white damask gown (III, 311), she wears white in the prison scene (III, 445-446) and she dies "in her virgin white" (IV, 332). The white clothes are her signal to the world that her will is undefiled, despite the technical condition of her body, and the colour also figures prominently on the coffin. The coffin is covered with black cloth, but the lining is white satin (IV, 258), and the ornaments stand out against the black because they are etched on white metal (IV, 257). White and black bring together several major themes in the novel: the black of death and the white of the virgin bride are blended to signify the consummation Clarissa hopes to find in death, reversing and yet fulfilling Bella's gruesome suggestion that Clarissa should wear black velvet when she is married to Solmes (I, 236).<sup>8</sup> The idea of death as an ideal marriage is confirmed by Clarissa's view of her burial dress as her "wedding garments" (IV, 303), and by the perfumes (IV, 359)

and flowers that are strewn about her body (IV, 398). More than being, simply, her last work of art, the coffin and all its trimmings are chosen with the care a young woman lavishes on the preparations for her wedding day.

The coffin's decorations are the most intriguing things about it, just as the wedding gown's gold, silver and jewels attract more attention than the dress itself (IV, 303). Her manipulation of the emblems and inscriptions suggests that Clarissa is not influenced solely by unquestionable Christian motives. While the urn and winged hourglass are traditional symbols of the transitory nature of human life, the broken lily (IV, 257), despite its religious affiliations, does have a more personal meaning. Signifying fairness, whiteness and purity, or a beautiful woman who possesses all of these qualities, "lily" has been used by Lovelace to describe Clarissa. In a letter from which Clarissa has requested (IV, 74-75) and received extracts (IV, 76), he compares her fainting figure before the rape to "a half-broken-stalked lily, topheavy with the overcharging dews of the morning" (III, 193). Whether or not Clarissa sees this simile is unknown, for few of Belford's alterations and omissions are specified (IV, 80), but the common, even hackneyed, use of "lily" in connection with a pretty woman is testified to by Lovelace's scornful rejection of it as an apt comparison for Clarissa's skin (I, 511). The broken lily symbolizes her lost hope and defiled purity, and it retains those meanings even when it is

accompanied by Psalm 103. The sacred and the secular interpretations exist side by side, just as they both live within Clarissa's mind.

The quotations from the Psalms and Job also demonstrate this duality. Psalms 103 and 116 are hymns of praise to God for redeeming and protecting the soul, but the third chapter of Job recounts Job's impatient cry for death, well before he repents and humbly resigns himself to the will of God (IV, 257). It is from this chapter that Clarissa drew most of the verses that make up her first meditation (IV, 6-7), verses of despair that are finally overcome by words of comfort from Elihu in Job 36. The lines from Job 3 that appear on the coffin are Clarissa's admission that she, like Job, has wished for death because of worldly disappointments; their situation under the winged hourglass may also be a confession that the time allotted to her has been cut short partly by her own desire.

There is some truth in William Beatty Warner's observation that the coffin's "principal device,...a crowned serpent, with its tail in its mouth, forming a ring, the emblem of eternity" (IV, 257) represents Clarissa's triumph over Lovelace, the snake (IV, 276) who seduced her away from her paradise (I, 502).<sup>9</sup> The ringed serpent is also, of course, a symbol of eternity derived from Numbers 21: 9, but Clarissa and Anna have thought of Lovelace as Satan consistently enough for Clarissa to have it in mind when she chooses the device. The words it encloses also suggest that the serpent



is connected with her fall from grace, for her date of death is given as April 10, the day that she left Harlowe Place (IV, 257). The symbol and the date constitute a confession of the arrogance that led to her error (IV, 257), a warning to others not to make her mistake and a reproach to Lovelace and the Harlowes for their roles in provoking her flight. Still, the encircling serpent is a promise of eternity, and that promise, with the hope of forgiveness it implies, signifies Clarissa's wish to rise above the resentments she expresses.

The coffin is a work of art that is also Clarissa's final statement about herself. Seen clearly, and as a whole, it tells of a mind that is neither above the world nor of it, but a curious mixture of the flesh and the spirit. It is the coffin that resolves the conflicting images created by Lovelace to explain Clarissa, for spiritually and human frailty are united in it. Clarissa treats it honestly: it shows her independence, vanity and fancifulness; it does not disguise the worldly disappointments that have prompted her wish for death; and it hints at the pride and vengefulness that still live within her. It is a valuable emblem of her heart and mind because it can, even while acknowledging these failings, still speak convincingly of the religious impulse that transforms them.

If the good people around Clarissa are shocked by the fact that she orders her own coffin (IV, 254-255), they are horrified when she keeps it in her bedroom (IV, 255, 258, 271).

Having already replaced Clarissa's clothes and her home, the coffin also becomes what must be Clarissa's favourite piece of furniture, a writing desk (IV, 271), and is, as such, a sign of Clarissa's changing attitude towards language. The first long letter that Clarissa writes after her imprisonment, the one in which she explains why she prefers death over life (III, 517-523), is also the first to be noticeably influenced by religious language, correctly applied. It is studded with references to David and Jonathan (III, 517) and Job (III, 518, 522), and her descriptions of death (III, 521, 522-523) reflect the words of popular religious writers<sup>10</sup> and the Bible. One day later, Clarissa reproves herself for congratulating Mrs. Norton on having her son "out of danger" because the phrase "is one of those forms of common speech that proves the frailty and the presumption of poor mortals at the same time" (IV, 2). After coming into contact with the Bible, Clarissa tries to purify her own language. Although she and Belford both say that she writes constantly, as long as she is able (IV, 103 n. 1, 355), the number of her letters in the novel diminishes, and the ones that remain are generally brief. Clarissa's writing time is divided into three parts: she devotes some of it to organizing her correspondence and taking inventories (IV, 103 n. 1, 289), and some of it to her current correspondences, but the greatest amount of time is given to her religious writings, which include her will, meditations and posthumous letters. Yet language, even sacred

language, no longer exerts the same fascination for Clarissa. Tired with writing, tired with herself (IV, 103), Clarissa wearily confesses her distaste for reading and writing: "Book-learned and a scribbler, and looking at people as I saw them as visitors or visiting, I thought I knew a great deal of it. Pitiab!e ignorance! Alas! I knew nothing at all!" (IV, 103-104). Words, even those borrowed from the Bible, keep leading her away from the perfect humility and honesty she hopes to achieve. Her meditations may help her "control her feelings within the word and the design of God", particularly in response to her family's attacks upon her (IV, 120),<sup>11</sup> but their influence is minimal when she puts pen to paper. Caught up in a recreation of her situation at Harlowe Place, Clarissa begins meekly enough in her letters to her sister (IV, 3-4, 64-65), reflects, mildly, on Bella in her third letter (IV, 83-84) and finally loses control when she writes to her uncles (IV, 101-102, 105-107) and, once again, to her sister (IV, 189-190). The old tone of superiority re-surfaces: "and permit me to say" (IV, 101) could come out of one of her early letters to her brother, while her lofty reminder to her Uncle John that her parents, at least, will be sorry when she is dead (IV, 102) echoes a warning she made months before in a letter to this uncle (I, 154). Irony is visible again in her comment on Bella's pleasure in misinterpreting her motives (IV, 101) and in her italicized tributes to her sister's modesty (IV, 189) and kindness (IV, 190), and she lectures

(IV, 106-107) and reproves (IV, 101) her uncles as spiritedly as ever. The allegorical letter she sends to Lovelace (IV, 157) is also, as she fears, "not right" (IV, 212), even though it employs religious language, simply because it is duplicitous. While it is, under the circumstances, excusable, it is nonetheless another example of how language pulls Clarissa away from her best self, especially when she is in "a hurry of spirits" (IV, 212).

Even her will and posthumous letters, which try to transmit her sense of innocence and freedom while confronting and instructing the survivors, are not free of minor lapses; Bella meets with mild reproofs (IV, 363, 364), Clarissa has to remind herself of her intention "not to give pain" (IV, 362) in order to check her reflections on James (IV, 361), and there are some shadows of bitterness towards Lovelace (IV, 416-417), Uncle John (IV, 419), Bella (IV, 417, 422) and James (IV, 417) in her will. The use of the coffin as a writing desk may help temper the wording of her will and posthumous letters, which are completed soon after the coffin is placed in her bedroom (IV, 264, 289), but it is more important than any of the words that are written upon it because through it Clarissa can experience death imaginatively, emotionally and intellectually.<sup>12</sup> Clarissa's coffin encompasses her mortal and immortal selves, uniting them into an harmonious whole; her writings show the often unsuccessful struggle of the spirit to conquer the body.

While Clarissa tries to protect herself from the pitfalls of "common speech", the other characters in the novel involve themselves in a grim comedy which illustrates the nature of those pitfalls. Clarissa's "knack at writing" is still distrusted by her family (IV, 82); they are hardened by Anna Howe's well-meaning but sharp letters (III, 511-514, 525); and they detect too much partiality in Mrs. Norton's letter (IV, 50-51) to be moved by it. Instead, they rely on the report of the pedantic Brand (IV, 65-66), and his letter stands as a statement about the self-delusions of those who pride themselves on their verbal skills (IV, 241). Brand creates mystery where none exists in order, it seems, to justify the insertion of some favourite quotation or allusion. Thus the fact that Clarissa often attends morning prayers is seen as a "pretence and cover for private assignations", an unfounded supposition that, however, allows Brand to conclude his paragraph with a flourish by quoting "God never had a House of Pray'r/But Satan had a Chapel there" (IV, 238). The irony of Brand's misconceptions about Clarissa is climaxed when he complacently congratulates himself on knowing "what narrative, complex, and conversation letters ... require" (IV, 240-241), for he believes that they need a style that gives free rein to "a fertile imagination, and [a] rich fancy" (IV, 241). Brand is clearly more deluded by words than anyone else in the novel, but his clerical vocation and his appearance in the novel so close to Clarissa's death serve as reminders

that anyone, including the spiritual guides of society, can fall victim to Clarissa's passion for words.

Lovelace tends to drop out of the novel after Clarissa's release from prison. Fewer of his letters are seen because he has no subject; he yearns to write, but finds that he has little to say because, as he tells Belford, "having lost her, my whole soul is a blank: the whole creation round me, the elements above, beneath, and everything I behold (for nothing can I enjoy), are a blank without her!" (III, 388). The girl who has roused his two predominant passions, love and vengeance, to a feverish pitch is suddenly gone, and Lovelace is left in an emotional tangle, worsened by his guilt, that grows more confused as she withdraws further from him. It is entirely appropriate that his movements become jerky and purposeless,<sup>13</sup> for his "passions are so wound up" (IV, 42) that they keep him in mechanical motion (IV, 295-297), and erupt occasionally into pointless violence (III, 495, IV, 128, 130, 132, 343). Lovelace's emotional confusion is increased by the various trials he undergoes. His family (III, 392-411), Hickman (III, 485-496), Anna Howe (IV, 18-25), Mrs. Lovick (IV, 138-139), Colonel Morden (IV, 218-235) and Belford all expostulate with him, and yet all of them, at one time or another, agree with him that everything could be amended if Clarissa would consent to marry him. His verbal duels are less than challenging to him because everyone shares his belief that marriage is the remedy; his inquisitors simultaneously condemn his violence

and praise his love, and in doing so they encourage his notion that the demonstration of his love in marriage will cancel his guilt. As a result, Lovelace puts off dealing with his troubled emotions, secure in the belief that they will sort themselves out when he is wed.

With all of his hopes fastened upon Clarissa, Lovelace begins travelling a path that is opposite to hers, while concentrating upon her with an intensity that is greater than it ever has been in the past. Greater, because now he is dependent upon her to ward off the emotional devastation that threatens him. The promises to reform, which he has scattered about so freely, still flow, but with a new urgency; he is no more interested in thorough reformation than he ever was, but he does feel the need to reform in the sense of "regroup", and only Clarissa can help him do that. When he unaccountably falls ill of "a violent fever ... attended with odd and severe symptoms" (IV, 116), his behaviour illustrates his dependency. Lord M., convinced that he is dying, (although Lovelace's ability to write and Belford's hint that Lord M. is exaggerating suggest otherwise) (IV, 112-115, 116) brings a parson to pray over him (IV, 114). Lovelace, sick as he is, thinks not of death but of Clarissa when he sees the minister, and joyfully assumes that he is about to be married (IV, 114). Discovering his mistake, he jumps off the bed and, in what is almost a parody of the circumstances of Clarissa's spiritual breakthrough, pulls out of his pocket and reads his copy of one of

Clarissa's meditations (IV, 114). The witnesses, taking her words for his own, are most impressed (IV, 114-115). Yet this scene does more than illustrate the shallowness of Lovelace's religious convictions. More importantly, it demonstrates how automatically he thinks of Clarissa when he is in danger. He sees spiritual consolation through her, and his revived hope of marrying her, combined with the assurance of her existence found in the meditation, are enough to cure him of what seems to be an emotionally triggered illness (IV, 115). The meditation says that "Truly my hope is only in Thee" and concludes with the lines "The troubles of my heart are enlarged. O bring Thou me out of my distresses" (IV, 96); the lines are applicable to Lovelace, as he notes (IV, 114), and they are especially meaningful when it is realized that he is addressing Clarissa rather than God.

Lovelace is as devastated in his way as Clarissa is in hers, but the main difference between them is that Clarissa is stripped of everything that has defined her in the world, including her faith in language, while Lovelace is not. He moves freely, even glamourously, in society (IV, 23), is easily forgiven by his family (IV, 115) and owes at least part of his success in his various trials to his lawyer-like ability to make "a bad cause a good one at any time" (IV, 230). Language becomes a shield, one that both protects him and hides the truth from him. He finds some comfort by alluding to episodes in literature and history that persuade him that he is



excusable (IV, 30-31) and that Clarissa will not die (IV, 39-40), but he feels most secure when he can interpret Clarissa in ways acceptable to himself. It is no accident that most of the images of Clarissa spring from Lovelace's mind, nor is it coincidental that the positive images enter, unbidden, into his consciousness (III, 40, IV, 136), only to be dismissed or explained away (III, 40, IV, 158). Cut off from the woman on whom all his hopes depend, he tries to pin her down on paper as if that will make her accessible to him. As an intensely human figure, an amorous lady (III, 494), perhaps, or the foolish little girl at the fair (III, 317), Clarissa is well within his reach; as a girl who bears a resemblance to St. Cecilia (III, 40) or who is welcomed as an honoured guest of the angels (IV, 136), she is not. He tries always to bring her down to earth. He envies those who can see her and talk to her for that reason (IV, 33) and that is also why he tries so desperately to see her himself (IV, 122), desisting only because her efforts to avoid his visits hasten her decline (IV, 174, 252). He hopes she is pregnant because that would prove "the triumph of nature over principle" (IV, 38) and goes so far as to find some comfort in Sally's mimicry of Clarissa (IV, 134). Attracted by Mrs. Sinclair's description of a shy, new girl who needs courting, he is initially appalled to find Sally, but is soon drawn into an unwilling appreciation of her "crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, [and] fainting" (IV, 134). The counterfeit image is preferable to the fright-

ening reality, and Lovelace manufactures comfort for himself with words that touch only one part of Clarissa, the part that can be successfully imitated by Sally. Lovelace's last refuge is in language; unable to bear the word "death", he proposes that the dreadful news be hidden behind an order to take a trip to Paris (IV, 254). Belford complies, but the words cannot protect Lovelace from the truth (IV, 342).

Clarissa remains balanced between the frail mortal that Lovelace hopes she is and the full-fledged saint that he unconsciously thinks she is even in her death scene. As superior as her last hours are in comparison with Belton's (IV, 165-170), Mrs. Sinclair's (IV, 379-389) or Tomlinson's (IV, 446-447), there are hints in them that a young girl is the centre of attention. Elegantly dressed in a white satin nightgown (IV, 324), all of her efforts are directed towards maintaining her serenity. Belford quotes her as saying, some weeks earlier, that Lovelace "will not let me enter into my Maker's presence with the composure that is required in entering into the drawing-room of an earthly prince!" (IV, 308), and the insertion of this quotation into her death scene is a reminder that she does see death in these terms. There are "punctilios" connected with death, and she is determined to observe them all; the reappearance of the word "punctilio" is a signal that the exaggerated importance she has attached to petty details of conduct is now controlled to refer to "necessary preparation[s]" for death, like the coffin (IV, 272).

She does not want to see Lovelace (IV, 307) or even Colonel Morden (IV, 334) because she fears that they will discompose her (IV, 306, 334), and she also tries to hide her coffin from Morden because she "cannot bear chiding now" (IV, 335). She worriedly wonders if everything has been done (IV, 334), gives orders about her body and carefully removes from her bosom the miniature of Anna that is to go to Hickman (IV, 340), checking the time all the while (IV, 327, 334, 339, 346). Yet, despite all the faintly humorous details, innocently transmitted by the awe-struck Belford, Clarissa does die nobly. Romantic notions of death are easily overcome by the reality of its pain and loneliness, unless the individual has sincere convictions or real courage. Clarissa possesses both. It is one thing for a disappointed nineteen year old to wish for death, and quite another for her to die slowly and painfully, relying only on the strength she finds within herself (IV, 339). Some of the means by which Clarissa prepares herself for death are bizarre, but they are all consistent with her personality. They enable her to die bravely, and that is still a noteworthy feat.

Lovelace survives Clarissa by only a few months. His tightly-wound passions spring loose when he receives Belford's note and engulf him in madness. His mad letter shows him still trying to hold onto Clarissa; he will keep her heart and a lock of her hair (IV, 376), will even have her body embalmed so that the day of burial may be delayed (IV, 375-376), all in order to

prove to himself that he is her husband (IV, 376). Frightened by the loss of his senses, he wills himself into uncaring cheerfulness (IV, 443), but later reveals that he is as obsessed with her as ever (IV, 487). She is now, avowedly, his only hope, for through her will and posthumous letter he will prepare himself for reformation (IV, 487). Her words, however, do not have the desired effect; they only convince him that she was always far, far above him and right in all she did (IV, 522-524). Finally conquered by his passion for revenge, Lovelace dies with his mind firmly fixed on Clarissa, the object of his love and the cause of his guilt. His last words suggest that death brings a cessation of guilt (IV, 530), but his words, once again, do not correspond to the reality of either Clarissa or the situation. She has already forgiven him; his impatience, disappointment and fears indicate that he has not forgiven himself (IV, 530).

Clarissa's words survive her, but accomplish little. The duel is fought despite her repeated injunctions against it (IV, 251, 336, 362, 461-462); the will which she has tried to make absolutely clear (IV, 415) is disputed at its first reading (IV, 429-430); and even Anna fails to follow Clarissa's order not to wear mourning (IV, 421, 547). In short, everyone, with the exception of Belford, does precisely what he or she wants to do, as if Clarissa had had nothing to say to any of them. Belford alone manages to reform himself, but he has had both the warnings of Belton's, Tomlinson's, Mrs. Sinclair's

and Lovelace's deaths and the "lovely example" of Clarissa to help him (IV, 548-549); his experiences, rather than her words, change him. The others celebrate her as an angel (IV, 466, 498) and uncharitably rejoice when they hear of Lovelace's end (IV, 534), and the Harlowes use their treatment of her as an excuse for the misery they inflict on themselves (IV, 534, 535, 536).

It is interesting that very few of Clarissa's friends and relatives can absorb the message of the coffin. Besides Belford and the people at Clarissa's lodgings, only a few minor characters like Mr. Melvill, Wyerley, Mullins and Hickman can even look at it (IV, 409-410); Anna (IV, 403-404), Clarissa's parents, her brother and sister and Aunt Hervey (IV, 397, 399, 405) are all forced to turn away. They find it too affecting, too truthful, perhaps, to examine closely. Instead, they create a new Clarissa. Colonel Morden tells Belford how the family indulges itself in glorifying her character: in order "to raise her character, and torment themselves" (IV, 467), "incidents and graces, unheeded before, or passed over in the group of her numberless perfections, now [are] brought into notice, and dwelt upon" and the servants are encouraged to sing her praises (IV, 466). "How aggravating all this!" exclaims Morden (IV, 466), and while he could be referring to his distress over the family's grief (IV, 465), it seems that he, like most readers, is disgusted with the Harlowes' goddess-making. Anna's description of

Clarissa has the same fault (IV, 490-510). The woman who emerges is so perfect that she is rather repellent, and the reason for Anna's exaggeration is found in her confession that Clarissa was "so much what I wish to be, but never shall be!" (IV, 510). Anna has not only given little indication that she would like to be like Clarissa, she has found in the differences between them the reason for their close friendship (I, 128). Anna, like the Harlowes, is enjoying turning Clarissa into a saint; it is a kind of therapy that allows her to vent the anger (IV, 510) and guilt (IV, 403) she feels over the death of her friend, but it is not the truth. The truth lies in the Harlowes' family vault, all but forgotten in the flood of distorting words that flow from the mouths and pens of the living. The coffin which contains Clarissa rises above all the words that have been spoken by and about her. It shows the warning and the example, the failure and the success of Clarissa Harlowe.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>OED, "primrose", 3. a.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 217-218.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1973), pp. 257-258, 266-267.

<sup>4</sup>William Beatty Warner, Reading 'Clarissa': The Struggles of Interpretation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 76.

<sup>5</sup>Doody, pp. 171-172.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 188-189, 209-210.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>9</sup>Warner, pp. 261-263.

<sup>10</sup>Doody, p. 179.

<sup>11</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, p. 270

<sup>12</sup>Doody, p. 175.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Clarissa's will and posthumous letters are not the only words that she leaves behind her. The letters of both Clarissa and Lovelace are compiled, at her request, and made into the novel which bears her name. What is most remarkable about her book is not that Clarissa arranges to have all the letters collected, but that she refrains from writing her story herself. In a situation that recalls the beginning of Clarissa's trials almost seven months earlier, Anna asks her friend to clear her own name and satisfy the Howes' curiosity by composing a narrative of her adventures (III, 379-380), and Clarissa agrees (III, 381). After her imprisonment, however, Clarissa changes her mind (III, 519) and suggests, instead, that her story be told through Lovelace's letters (IV, 61). Clarissa has several reasons for her refusal: she does not have enough time (III, 519), she does not know all of Lovelace's schemes and she finds the task painful (IV, 61). More importantly, she knows that her attempts to justify herself will take her away from the perfect humility she is trying to achieve. "If I justify myself, mine own heart shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse", she says, and must immediately lay down her pen in order to calm herself (IV, 60). The appeal of self-justification is strong and she succumbs to



it, but with qualms. Quoting Job, she glories in the triumph that will be given to her by Lovelace's "book" (IV, 61-62), only to confess a little later that it might be better, more Christian in fact, if she and her story were both forgotten (IV, 63). The decision to compile her letters is a compromise she makes with herself, a compromise between the Clarissa who wants to have honour done to her memory and the Clarissa who knows she should be ignoring worldly concerns (IV, 79).

By choosing to have her story told, while refraining from telling it herself, Clarissa shows herself, once again, to be worthy of her Christian name. Ian Watt points out that "Clarissa" is a typical romance name which has "mingled overtones of fashionable gallantry, religious abnegation, and the pathos of an early and tragic death", while her surname "is the closest proper name to 'harlot'".<sup>1</sup> As Clarissa dies, she is very like the girl who is glimpsed at the beginning of the novel. Practical and yet fanciful, she is too independent to accept financial aid and yet is enough of a child to find "something paternal and maternal in every one" (III, 469); she looks after her affairs with the thoroughness of an experienced housekeeper, which she is; she is able, once again, to give solemn lectures to others and to be an example to them. At the same time, she strives to pattern herself on the word of God, and the result is a personality which is an odd mixture of youthful romanticism and disciplined spirituality. She escapes the connotations of "Harlowe" by

refusing, paradoxically, to substitute for it the name of Lovelace; she rises above her society to the extent that she alone understands that a marriage made for material gains is a form of prostitution. She never really rises above her given name, however; she simply exemplifies the contradictory qualities to which it alludes.

Clarissa's fall results from her passion for the apparent power language gives her over others. In this, she is a true Harlowe; every member of her family sacrifices his or her soul to a predominant passion, be it ambition, envy, pride, avarice or fear, and each receives an appropriate return. James and Bella find their ambition and cruelty amply rewarded in socially prestigious but miserable marriages; their father's pride in his family is destroyed by its public humiliation and the recriminations that finally rip the Harlowe family apart mock Mrs. Harlowe's cowardly love of peace (IV, 534, 536). Clarissa allows language to substitute for the duty she owes to her parents and to herself, the duties that are prescribed for men and women in the Bible, and language takes its revenge by seducing her away from herself. Language is a symbol, within the novel, of the deceptions of the world; the sophisticated rake uses it to convince the young girl of his honourable intentions, while the young girl, "book-learned and a scribbler", believes that the world is as it appears to be in her books and letters and learns too late that language disguises the world's reality,

just as fine clothes and polished manners conceal the visitor's real nature (IV, 103-104). The only book that tells the truth is the Bible; Clarissa manages to reclaim her soul because she turns to the Bible, but her victory is incomplete. A useful, potentially valuable member of society dies, and that loss shadows her personal achievement.

True to his heroine, Richardson attempts to illustrate her spiritual awakening through imagery. As a writer, he cannot get away from words, but he does try to temper their deceptiveness by using them to paint vivid pictures that focus the reader's attention on death and on the nature of Clarissa's death. For the most part, his strategy works. There will probably always be doubts about the words Clarissa and Lovelace use to rationalize their actions and penetrate each other, just as there will always be doubts about Clarissa's carefully explained reasons for dying. Even if her motives are thought to be silly or cynical, however, it is hard to deny that she does discover something important about herself in the prison scene, and that she does have something of the aspiring saint about her, however much her spirituality is mixed up with hurt pride and disappointment. Similarly, it must be admitted that her coffin is an arresting expression of her mind and heart, and that her death scene gives an impression of peace and joy that is not found in the descriptions of the fatal illnesses of Belton or Mrs. Sinclair. It is, finally, ironic that Richardson did not have enough faith in his readers or in

himself to leave Clarissa alone. Afraid that the moral lesson of his novel was being overlooked, he added footnotes, new passages, prefaces, postscripts and an index to the book, all of which tend to glorify Clarissa and blacken Lovelace, and claimed that most of the additions were restorations from the original text.<sup>2</sup> The new words accomplish little. They draw attention to themselves, attempt to reinterpret certain actions that seem to need no explanation, and promote discussion, dissension and confusion;<sup>3</sup> they behave, in fact, just like the words Clarissa and Richardson have tried to rise above.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>I.P. Watt, "The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding", RES, XXV (1949), 330, 332.

<sup>2</sup>Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "Clarissa Restored?" RES, new series, X (1959), 156-157.

<sup>3</sup>William Beatty Warner, Reading 'Clarissa': The Struggles of Interpretation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 238-239.

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