



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file - Votre référence

Our file - Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

**A Foucaultian Reading of
the Constitution of Female Sexuality
in
Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa**

Elaine Pigeon

**A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

September 1994

© Elaine Pigeon, 1994



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

THE AUTHOR HAS GRANTED AN
IRREVOCABLE NON-EXCLUSIVE
LICENCE ALLOWING THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF CANADA TO
REPRODUCE, LOAN, DISTRIBUTE OR
SELL COPIES OF HIS/HER THESIS BY
ANY MEANS AND IN ANY FORM OR
FORMAT, MAKING THIS THESIS
AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED
PERSONS.

L'AUTEUR A ACCORDE UNE LICENCE
IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE
PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE
NATIONALE DU CANADA DE
REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER
OU VENDRE DES COPIES DE SA
THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET
SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT
POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE
CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES
PERSONNE INTERESSEES.

THE AUTHOR RETAINS OWNERSHIP
OF THE COPYRIGHT IN HIS/HER
THESIS. NEITHER THE THESIS NOR
SUBSTANTIAL EXTRACTS FROM IT
MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE
REPRODUCED WITHOUT HIS/HER
PERMISSION.

L'AUTEUR CONSERVE LA PROPRIETE
DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE
SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES
EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-
CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU
AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON
AUTORISATION.

ISBN 0-315-97644-6

Canada

ABSTRACT

A Foucaultian Reading of the Constitution of Female Sexuality in Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa

Elaine Pigeon

In The History of Sexuality, Volume 1, Michel Foucault identifies a profound social change that he calls "the deployment of sexuality," which became evident in Western societies by the eighteenth century. Foucault brilliantly argues that the deployment of sexuality is nothing less than the discursive production of sexuality ordered according to economic and political determinations within the constraints of the heterosexual matrix and implemented by the various technologies of power as a means of disciplining and regulating the social body, beginning at the level of the individual.

Foucault draws attention to the proliferation of discourses centering on sex that began to emerge in the late seventeenth century in the form of the confession or spiritual autobiography. Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa can be read as part of this larger body of discourse on sex. In Pamela,

Richardson began his process of spiritualizing femininity, reducing it to the insoluble essence of virtue through the internalization of Christian principles. By allowing the rape that never happens in Pamela, in Clarissa, Richardson was able to test the limits of feminine virtue. The eventual death of Clarissa provided the means by which Richardson could overcome the sexual significations of the female body, thus allowing Clarissa's essentialized feminine virtue to triumph with tragic finality over her physical body by displacing that body altogether. The subsequent internalization of the powerful ideological ideal the textual body Clarissa provides could then effect the regulation of female sexuality in other young women of the early modern period, thereby deeply inscribing female sexuality within the constraints of the artificial coherence of the heterosexual matrix.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Marcie Frank for making this project possible.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Preface | vii |
| Introduction: Richardson's <u>Pamela</u> and <u>Clarissa</u> as Discourse on Sex | 1 |
| I The Deployment of Sexuality in Early Modern England | 35 |
| II Richardson's Deployment of Virtue: Its Transformative Powers | 65 |
| III Female Sovereignty: Richardson's Application of Locke | 88 |
| IV Female Sexuality: Uncovering the Violence of Its Constitution | 105 |
| Conclusion | 144 |
| Works Cited | 146 |

Preface

In The History of Sexuality, Volume 1, Michel Foucault identifies a significant social shift that took place during the eighteenth century. What he calls "the deployment of sexuality," which can be defined as the effects of the discursive production of sexuality, replaced the "deployment of alliance" as the principle structuring the relation between men and women. Within the deployment of sexuality, individual identity became thoroughly entrenched in sex in accordance with a system of artificial binary opposites. This development led to the privileging of sexual identity rather than class and political affiliations, a process that is intimately linked to commodification. Foucault determines that the deployment of sexuality originated in the proliferation of discourses centred on sex that began to emerge in the late seventeenth century. These discourses derived from the confession, which, Foucault maintains, has remained the general standard governing the production of the "true" discourse on sex.

Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa can be identified as discourses on sex. Presented as spiritual autobiographies, these two novels define the new social role of the eighteenth-

century, middle-class female, whose sexual identity Richardson constituted according to Christian principles of virtue. In the introduction that follows, I examine Richardson's discursive production of female sexuality, his modification of the eighteenth-century code of femininity. Beginning with Pamela, Richardson attempted to relocate the source of a woman's identity from her increasingly sexualized body to her spiritualized inner depths. The achievement of this objective results in the marriage of Pamela, a mere servant-girl, to the aristocrat, Mr. B., who has been reformed through Pamela's exemplary virtue. Their union corresponds to the system of marriage of the deployment of sexuality. Effectively, Richardson's implementation of essentialized virtue constitutes the female's sexual identity in order to override the demands of alliance.

Richardson's discursive production of femininity's essence is facilitated by the absence of the female's increasingly sexualized body, which is displaced by the textual embodiment of the early modern woman's virtuous identity. In Clarissa, the displacement of the female body is taken to its final and tragic conclusion -- Clarissa's death - - which resulted in the creation of a much more powerful ideological model by which female sexuality could be even more rigorously regulated. As examples of eighteenth-century discourse on sex, Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa actively participated in producing the "true" essence of the feminine:

virtue.

In Part I, I provide an outline of Foucault's conception of the deployment of sexuality, suggesting how it manifested itself in eighteenth-century England. I also focus on how male and female sexual identity were figured within the heterosexual matrix. For this end, I rely on the research of Thomas Laqueur, Lawrence Stone, Alan Bray and Randolph Trumbach.

In Part II, I examine how Pamela's sexual identity is constituted through the transformation of her desire into written discourse and how her "blissful" suffering at the hands of Mr. B. provides the means by which her identity is established. Then I demonstrate how Pamela's essentialized virtue effects the reformation of the corrupt aristocrat, Mr. B., which establishes the ground for their marriage, thus exalting Pamela's social status by rewarding her for her virtue, an exchange of power that is achieved through the interface of heterosexual identities under the regime of sexuality.

Of course, Pamela's social valorization is contingent on the recognition of the female's right to sovereignty over her body as a property. Part III focuses on Richardson's application of Locke's principles concerning the rights of the individual to women. The issue of a female's sovereignty over her body is critical to the system of marriage of the deployment of sexuality. However, the individual's right over

his or her body and the idea of the person as a property also signifies an important development in society in the early stages of commodification. I argue that the sexualization of gendered bodies is a manifestation of commodification under the regime of sexuality. Although the female body is fully displaced by the text Clarissa, what we are left with is an "imaginary" or "normalizing" feminine ideal that promotes the exchange value of essentialized virtue by which female sexuality is both constituted and regulated.

Laura Brown's Marxist readings of eighteenth-century literary culture suggest the violence implicit in the constitution of female sexuality in which female desire is effectively erased, a process I investigate in Part IV. While incorporating the most recent analyses of Clarissa, by William Warner Beatty, Terry Eagleton, Terry Castle and Tassie Gwilliam, I maintain that the rape of Clarissa provided the test by which Richardson could establish that feminine virtue is an inner, spiritual determination, above all else, the "true" essence of femininity.

Introduction:
Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa as Discourse on Sex

In what follows I will investigate the convergence of Samuel Richardson's Pamela [1740] and Clarissa [1747-48] with the Foucaultian paradigm of the discursive production of female sexuality. I have chosen Richardson's texts precisely because his two early novels are concerned with defining the sexual identity of the early modern woman. Although they undoubtedly reflect the historical circumstances of the mid eighteenth century, Richardson can clearly be seen as participating in the discursive elaboration of the feminine ideal. As we shall see, Richardson is defining nothing less than the very essence of femininity itself. My analysis will proceed by examining the ways his texts conform to a prescriptive programme to instill female virtue and then conclude with a brief probing of the ways in which Clarissa, in particular, subverts or exceeds these prescriptions.

In Desire and Domestic Fiction, Nancy Armstrong relies on select fragments of Michel Foucault's analytics of sexuality that support her thesis that gender differences "came to dominate the functions of generation and genealogy" in early modern culture (11); however, her application of Foucault is questionable. Although she recognizes that desire is

discursively produced, pointing out that Foucault "asks us to think of modern desire as something that depends on language and particularly on writing" (11), Armstrong fails to interrogate the political motivations of the constitution of female sexuality within a masculinist, heterosexual economy, despite stressing the relationship between the sexual and the political. In my view Armstrong is only too ready to accept the status quo: Her analysis of Pamela, in particular, suggests that she would rather embrace the rise of the middle-class woman than investigate the ideology this new role serves. For this reason I will attempt to present the Foucaultian paradigm in full in order to show how it provides a useful tool by which we can uncover the ideological project advanced in literary texts such as Richardson's. Moreover, because Foucault does not address the issue of gender, which Armstrong herself points out, Judith Butler's brilliant studies of the discursive production of gendered identity will be relied upon to supply the lacuna. As a feminist philosopher, Butler provides a much needed supplement to the foundational work Foucault presents in The History of Sexuality, Volume 1. In what follows, I will begin by examining the ways in which Richardson's two early novels fit into the Foucaultian framework.

Richardson's Pamela offers a uniquely coherent example of one manifestation of the eighteenth-century social shift from what Foucault identifies as "the deployment of alliance" to

"the deployment of sexuality." In Richardson's first novel, the corrupt aristocrat, Mr. B., after repeatedly failing in his outrageous attempts to seduce his young, vibrant and physically attractive servant girl, finally comes to perceive her true worth -- Pamela's virtue -- through reading her letters and journals. This realization leads to Mr. B.'s transformation from a rake into a husband, and the redemption of his lapsed honour. In light of her virtue, Pamela's literacy and domestic management skills are recognized as socially valuable assets, and the fact that she is a mere commoner is neutralized. As Armstrong indicates, the new social identity for eighteenth-century women that Richardson was promoting deployed sexuality by privileging gender distinctions rather than class and political affiliations, making it possible for women like Pamela to cut across social boundaries through marriage, without actually overturning the social structure into whose ranks they rose.

Although the social structure that accommodates Pamela's rise was preserved, a modification of the identity of that portion of the aristocracy exemplified by Mr. B., who was a gentleman by birth, was necessitated by the deployment of sexuality. As Michael McKeon indicates, Mr. B. became distinctly "modernized" by adopting Pamela's Christian principles of virtue and marrying her (365). More specifically, McKeon describes Mr. B. as:

indifferent to acquiring a title for himself; possessed of "Puritan" ideas (his sister's word) on the relation of

birth to worth and the preferability of love to convenience in making the marriage choice; and a monied man who industriously improves his estate, accumulates capital, invests in stock, and enjoys running his household like a "Piece of Clockwork." (366)

In other words, Mr. B. is redeemed because he embraces values that came to be associated with the middle class, but which his sister, Lady Davers, correctly identifies as puritan in origin (Pamela 449).

As a system of marriage, Foucault suggests that the deployment of sexuality can be conceived as an apparatus that was superimposed onto that of alliance (106), thereby mediating the rise of the middle class. In distinguishing itself as a social group, McKeon determines that during the early modern period, "the traditional, qualitative criteria of honorific status were ... definitively infiltrated by the quantitative criteria of socioeconomic class" (162). According to these socioeconomic determinations, the middle class came to include merchants, financiers and yeomen, as well as gentry (160) or the "lesser nobility" (159), that portion of the upper class to which Mr. B. belonged.

However, the majority of this new class quickly became gentrified, as evidenced in Pamela, Part 2 [1741], in which even Pamela's manner of speaking is altered as she is progressively socialized (Harris 38). This change is legible, given that Pamela reveals her particular use of the English language in her writing. Although Richardson attempts to obscure Pamela's lowly origins in his sequel in order to

assimilate her into the gentry, he continues to stress that it is her virtuous "nature" which, above all else, has led to her reward: her exalted social status through marriage (Castle, Masquerade 140-41). He thereby advanced the notion that one's social rank be determined in accordance with internal worth rather than by birth, an idea that is clearly anticipated in Part 1, which is, after all, subtitled, "Virtue Rewarded."

Although Pamela provides an illustration of how the deployment of sexuality manifested itself in the eighteenth century, this is not to say that Richardson initiated it. As his biographers, Eaves and Kimpel reveal, Pamela faithfully adheres to the true account of a young and extremely virtuous servant girl who married her master, an exceptional occurrence that was brought to Richardson's attention by an unidentified correspondent some twenty years before he actually began writing his first novel (88). Pamela, which in part functions as a conduct book, offered specific instruction to other young, non-aristocratic women on how to govern themselves so that they too could benefit from the deployment of sexuality and join the ranks of the emergent middle class through marriage.

Foucault suggests that the regime of sexuality and its system of marriage became manifest in Western societies from the eighteenth century onward (106). Ian Watt helps substantiate this claim in part, pointing out that in England, by

1740 the middle-class concept of marriage was not yet completely established, and Richardson must have felt that his aim of producing a new model of conduct for the relations between men and women involved paying attention to many matters which we take for granted but on which there was not yet complete public agreement when he wrote. (149)

Although Richardson was actively promoting a middle-class concept of marriage, he was also attempting to modify it in accordance with his own decidedly religious ideology and heavily underscored moral considerations.

As a successful printer and author, Richardson was already a prominent member of the emerging middle class. As a pious Christian, he clearly attempted to align the deployment of sexuality with Christian principles of virtue. According to Richardson's ideological project, the decisive factor in determining women's social desirability and acceptance, regardless of their social status, is their virtue, which McKeon defines as the patrilineal requirement of chastity (157). Critically, McKeon draws attention to how virtue also alludes to inner moral goodness in Pamela (366). In effect, Richardson was redefining the eighteenth-century code of femininity, which demanded chastity in women, by redefining the "nature" of femininity itself.

By relocating the source of female identity from a woman's increasingly sexualized body to her inner depths, Richardson initiated a process of spiritualizing femininity in Pamela. The redefinition of femininity is taken even further in Clarissa, where it is reduced to a self-identical, divine

essence: virtue. As we shall see, the internalization of Christian principles of virtue also functioned as a means of rigorously regulating female sexuality by disassociating desire from the body. In both Pamela and Clarissa, any evidence of their eponymous characters' desire is subjected to conscious resistance and transformed into discourse by Richardson according to strategies I will investigate when I turn to examine each novel. Significantly, Richardson's discursive displacement of female desire produces texts which provide a testament to feminine virtue.

Foucault maintains that "the first figure to be invested by the deployment of sexuality, one of the first to be 'sexualized,' was the 'idle,'" aristocratic woman (121). In order to clarify what Foucault means by "sexualized," it is helpful to turn to Thomas Laqueur's Making Sex. His lucid analysis of the medical history of the sexual differences between men and women is in line with Foucault's reading of sexuality. Laqueur determines that the eighteenth century witnessed a shift in the conceptualization of the sexes from differences in degree to differences in kind (5). Consequently, men and women came to be perceived as incommensurate opposites (154). According to this system of binary opposition, the female was defined as passive or passionless, entirely devoid of sexual desire, which became the exclusive prerogative of masculinity (150). Moreover, the reproductive function the female embodied became the

biological foundation for the interpretation of female sexuality by the late seventeenth century (153). Since the female was perceived as thoroughly different from the male, Foucault maintains that every aspect of the female body became invested with the sexual signification her reproductive function suggested, despite her lack of desire (153).

As a member of the lesser nobility or gentry, Clarissa corresponds more accurately than Pamela to the aristocratic female Foucault is referring to. Significantly, both her patriarchal family and the corrupt aristocrat Lovelace perceive her as property. Although the Harlowes are determined to trade her in a socially advantageous marriage of alliance to the grotesque but rich Solmes, Lovelace, as a libertine, feels he can claim her as his own sexual property outside of marriage. So far Lovelace has been successful in doing just this with a number of other women of "quality." It seems that the deployment of sexuality advanced the commodification of the female body by amplifying and intensifying its sexual significations, rendering women sex objects to be freely consumed. As Watt points out, the eighteenth century evidenced a sharp decline in marriage (142-8). In distinguishing Clarissa from the sexualized, idle female Foucault identifies by transforming her into spirituality itself, not only did Richardson underscore her domestic management skills; most significantly, he succeeded in making Clarissa's spiritual self triumph over her

sexualized body with the tragic finality of her death. In place of her body, what we are left with is Clarissa, the textual embodiment of her virtuous, feminine essence.

It is also worth commenting on the fact that Pamela, though only a mere commoner, is released from her role as domestic servant once abducted by Mr. B. to his Lincolnshire estate. As a result, she is free to spend her time writing, which places her in a similarly defined, "idle" position. Watt offers support to this view, pointing out that from the start "Pamela's epistolary expertness ... suggests a somewhat higher-class position than the one which she is supposed to have," adding that "[s]he is, in fact, a heroine after the pattern of those innumerable eighteenth-century gentlewomen who took Richardson's own advice as to the employment of their leisure: 'The pen is almost as pretty an implement in a woman's fingers, as a needle'" (190). At the beginning of the novel, Pamela writes her parents: "I work all hours with my needle, upon his [Mr. B.'s] fine linen, and the fine linen of the family; and am, besides, about flowering him a waistcoat" (15). Her pen eventually comes to replace her needle altogether as she slides from mere commoner into a higher, middle-class position, from which Pamela can eventually embroider Mr. B.'s waistcoat as his wife. Significantly, it is her pen that earns Pamela this position, since her writing, like Clarissa's, attests to her virtue.

Evidently, Richardson's attempts to relocate the source

of female identity in a woman's inner depths was an effort to privilege her spiritual essence over the increasing sexualization of her body. As Laqueur notes, the Cartesian premise is "that the self is the thinking subject, the mind, and that it is radically not body" (155). Richardson, in fact, tried to make Clarissa seem "all mind" and, therefore, pure spirit -- the essence of virtue itself. Furthermore, both Pamela and Clarissa clearly demonstrate that Richardson renounced the aristocratic view of the female body as an object or property to be exchanged in a marriage of alliance. In defining femininity as the spiritual essence of virtue, Richardson was attempting to establish the female's essential worth, her potential value as a spouse, as opposed to her family's ability to advance her husband's social position.

Particularly relevant to the role Richardson envisaged for women is the problem of female duplicity inherent to "the dichotomy between body and mind," which Tassie Gwilliam draws attention to (15). In her examination of Richardson's revision of the eighteenth-century code of femininity in Pamela, Gwilliam determines:

In the details of representation of femininity in the eighteenth century, we can see over and over again the attempt to settle unsettling questions about duplicity. The meaning of the female body is reorganized and reshaped, but that body's uncertainty, its doubleness or multiplicity, repeatedly troubles representation. Richardson's works engage directly with this question, and Pamela is itself the problematic embodiment of a reinscription of its meaning. (16-17)

In attempting to discursively displace the contradictory

significations of a woman's surface appearance and her inner being by privileging the truth of the latter, Richardson apparently believed he could "settle" that body's "uncertainty" once and for all.

Instead, he contributed to the perpetuation of the contrary indications already produced by the eighteenth-century code of femininity. Gwilliam identifies some notable effects, including how "women's behaviour and bodies were supposed to provoke desire, but women were forbidden to provoke desire intentionally or to be conscious of their desirability" (18). Of course, this contradiction suggested the inevitability of female duplicity, since a woman's outward appearance and actions could always be construed as belying her words. Paradoxically, Richardson's emphasis in Pamela, on privileging inner virtue rather than the significations of the female body, served to further confuse the already unstable relation between the surface of the female body and her inner being and did "not transform existing ideologies of femininity as much as it reinscribe[d] them" (Gwilliam 17). Gwilliam, in line with Henry Fielding's reading of Pamela, argues that this novel actually provides evidence of "the persistent attraction of the body under the purportedly new ideology of femininity," thus suggesting that this was Richardson's intention (17).

In fact, Fielding quickly responded to this possibility with his satire, Shamela [1741], in which virtue proves "eminently profitable" (McKeon 397) by means of female

duplicity, thereby ridiculing Pamela's basic premise. Shamela reveals, "I thought once of making a little Fortune by my Person. I now intend to make a great one by my Vartue" (342). With Shamela Fielding began a critique of Richardson that he continued to develop in his subsequent novels. Ideally, a larger project would trace Fielding's responses in order to elaborate on the problem of female duplicity and provide a more detailed examination of Richardson's revisionary practices in Clarissa. Such a study is outside the scope of this present work. However, because Gwilliam's reading of Richardson is in line with Fielding's, her analyses of Pamela and Clarissa will be relied upon as a supplement.

Although the female body continued to signify sex, female sexuality became disassociated from bodily desire through the internalization of Christian principles of virtue. This produced a dilemma that Terry Eagleton neatly sums up as "a material contradiction that at once de-sexualizes and over-sexualizes women" (35). Significantly, Lovelace, who associates virtue with greatness of soul, believes, "the less soul in either man or woman, the more sensual are they" (651, 713). Clarissa, as a paragon of virtue, is not sensual, but a virtual "frost-piece." But, as Richardson knew, virtue increased a woman's desirability, a fact which both Mr. B. and Lovelace confirm. Evidently, Richardson perceived the root of the problem the conflicting readings his two novels produced to be the privileging of the sexual significations of the

surface of the female body over what he determined to be a woman's "essential" inner moral goodness: her spirituality.

Richardson was, in fact, trying to transform the aristocratic view of the female body as a sexualized object or property in Pamela by emphasizing her inner, spiritual value. In order to repudiate the commodification of the increasingly sexualized female body, he attempted to foreground the significance of inner virtue in a potential wife, as opposed to focusing exclusively on the value of the chaste female body as a reproductive site for the transmission of power. Although Pamela's virtue is what merits her reward -- her exalted social status -- her virtuousness is established through revealing her inner being. Of critical importance is that this heroine's letters and journals serve as evidence that provides "the truth of her sex," so that her chastity and inner virtue are presented as intrinsically linked. However, the potential for female duplicity was not entirely dispelled, since a woman could still manipulate what passed for truth.

In diverting attention away from the female body as a sexual object, Richardson seems to have been repudiating the commodification of that body. However, socioeconomic factors constituted such an integral aspect of the deployment of sexuality that it was not possible to separate the process that sexualized the female body from commodification, even if Richardson's discursive displacement of female sexuality onto virtue, a discourse of virtue at that, was meant to relocate

the site of a woman's value in her inner depths. The most effective means of establishing a clear distinction between a woman's essence and her objectified, sexualized body was by eliminating that body entirely, which is probably the main reason Richardson insisted on having Clarissa die.

Although Pamela "has always been subject to very contradictory interpretations," witnessed, at the outset, in the reactions of the "Pamelists and Antipamelists" of the eighteenth century (Watt 168), a similar problem nevertheless arose with the publication of Clarissa. The inevitable and problematic embodiment of the contrary significations of the code of femininity produces considerable misinterpretation and conflict between Clarissa and the other characters within the novel as well as between her and Lovelace and, consequently, resulted in more of the same amongst its readers and interpreters. Many of Richardson's female correspondents, including the famous Lady Bradshaigh, desperately wanted Clarissa to marry Lovelace rather than die. Convinced that his female readers remained blind to Lovelace's incorrigibility, Richardson blackened his character in subsequent editions. He also added an editorial apparatus that dictated precisely how Clarissa was meant to be read, further attesting to the authority he attributed to the word, in particular, the printed word. Remarkably, this interpretation, which emphasized Lovelace's vileness and Clarissa's virtuous transcendence of her material body,

persisted well into the twentieth century.¹

As Gwilliam suggests, in order to avoid accusations of female duplicity on Clarissa's part, Richardson deliberately created a masculine figure who would take over the feminine, duplicitous role (52). Richardson thereby attempted to deflect both deceit and blame onto Lovelace, although Lovelace himself accuses Clarissa of "Female Art." In order to establish that Clarissa's virtue is indeed genuine, Richardson has Lovelace investigate Clarissa's body for evidence of female desire, a "test" which proves absurdly self-defeating, since Lovelace drugs Clarissa in order to rape her, rendering her "senseless." Nonetheless, Richardson apparently believed that a truly virtuous woman was devoid of bodily desire. For in Clarissa, Richardson takes the signification of inner virtue even further than in Pamela, making it Clarissa's distinguishing and transcendent essence, overriding the fact that she was no longer chaste as a result of having been raped by Lovelace. By locating virtue's source in the internal goodness of the individual female, Richardson equated inner virtue with femininity's definite and insoluble essence, thus furthering the distinction between inner virtue and bodily chastity.

Watt is, therefore, partially right to suggest that "[t]here is ... considerable doubt as to how far Richardson

¹ William Beatty Warner takes up this issue in his deconstruction of the novel, Reading Clarissa: The Struggles of Interpretation.

was aware of the duplicities involved in the feminine role" he was advancing; however, he adds, "or as to how we should interpret the narrative which embodies them," since "the code that commanded the allegiance of Pamela and her author is itself open to either interpretation" (168, 170). This may very well be true, but clearly does not coincide with Richardson's editorial additions to Clarissa. Although Watt argues that the duplicity is not conscious on Pamela's part, but implicit in the feminine code by which she acts (168), this was the code that Richardson was refining, the very code that differentiated women from men in terms of sexuality and thus made the deployment of sexuality possible. Either way, the code of femininity demanded that a passive female deny consciousness of the desirability of her "sexualized" body, which was meant to act as lure, while she was obliged to preserve her chastity at all costs in order to remain socially valuable. Consequently, the power dynamics of this seemingly oversimplified, yet nevertheless complicated relation between male and female not only intensified desire, but generated it.

Foucault proposes that "[w]here there is desire, the power relation is already present" (81). In other words, sexual desire is produced by relations of power. An examination of the constitution of female sexuality in the eighteenth century promises to disclose the intimate connection between power and desire embedded in the code of femininity. Crucially, Foucault argues that power is "the

moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable," meaning that relations of power are not necessarily fixed but subject to change. Foucault elaborates, stressing that in itself, power is omnipresent, "because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point one to another." Establishing the female as subordinate to the male in a system of binary opposites therefore insured the generation of heterosexual desire precisely because this configuration attempts to fix a relation of power that can perpetuate itself.

"Power," Foucault continues, "insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the overall effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement" (93). Of course, those who achieve a position of power strive to consolidate it so as to preserve their privileged status. Therefore, the code of femininity, viewed as one of the "terminal forms" (92) power can impose, can be read as that which "constitutes both desire and the lack on which it is predicated" (81), since the repression of desire also generates desire. The final erasure of female bodily desire, evidenced in the internalization of Christian principles of virtue which Richardson actively encouraged, served to further intensify the female's desirability. One of

the primary functions of the code of femininity was to assure the sustainment of heterosexual desire, however, sanctified within a system of marriage that maintained social order.

Indeed, as Richardson knew, the social order was subject to change. The system of marriage of the regime of sexuality promised to facilitate a modification of the social order through a redistribution of power. As Foucault suggests, power "is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (93). In this case the strategical situation under examination is the deployment of sexuality, in which the power relation between men and women is ever present, encoded in the hierarchy that continued to privilege the male despite a redistribution of social power made possible by the emergence of the middle class. Considering the militaristic origins of the term "deployment" is helpful in that it tacitly suggests the implementation of strategies that were meant to expand the front lines of power and thereby effect a social transformation. As Pamela demonstrates, the system of marriage under the regime of sexuality helped extend the hegemony of the ruling class with the formation of a new class, which in turn could rise to dominance. Part I will elaborate more specifically on how the deployment of sexuality was mobilized according to Foucault's formulations.

Richardson's apparent attempts to repudiate the commodification of the increasingly sexualized female body may

have been laudable, but, as suggested, the effects he achieved with the creation of a new feminine ideal rendered female identity much more problematic. In shifting the source of female identity from a woman's body to her inner depths, Richardson succeeded in defining the female as an ideological object whose sexuality was determined according to Christian principles of virtue, in themselves a repudiation of the body. The internalization of these principles of virtue, manifest in a woman's thinking, speech, writing and conscious behaviour, would produce proof of both her spiritual and sexual purity through a rigorous subjugation of the body that effaced evidence of female desire. Christian doctrine proved highly effective because of its self-validating nature.

In determining the source of discourse on sex, Foucault's investigation of confession is particularly relevant:

The confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex. It has undergone a considerable transformation, however. For a long time, it remained firmly entrenched in the practice of penance. But with the rise of Protestantism, the Counter Reformation, eighteenth-century pedagogy, and nineteenth-century medicine, it gradually lost its ritualistic and exclusive localization; it spread.... The motivations and effects it is expected to produce have varied, as have the forms it has taken: interrogations, consultations, autobiographical narratives, letters; they have been recorded, transcribed, assembled into dossiers, published, and commented on. (63)

Richardson's epistolary novels warrant consideration among the various forms confession has taken and require examination within this context as discourse on sex. Pamela and Clarissa provide a richly detailed source of information that promises

to disclose the constitution of female sexuality in eighteenth-century England, particularly when examined in conjunction with the Foucaultian paradigm.

Although Pamela and Clarissa are fictional characters, Richardson presents their letters, journals and other writing as authentic, autobiographical accounts that were meant to render insight into the innermost being of women. Commenting on the strong tradition of confessional writing among the Puritans, particularly after 1660, Lawrence Stone points out that

the bulk of diaries and autobiographies of the seventeenth century come from the pens of Puritans. Deprived of the comforts of the confession box and driven by anxiety over their salvation into a strict moral account-keeping, they took to writing diaries as a means both of confession of sin and of checking up of their moral balance-sheet. They also wrote autobiographies to stress the significance in their lives of their conversion experience. (264)

Clearly, Richardson's novels were meant to function as female confessions despite the fact that they are his own constructions. Of critical importance is the fact that both Pamela and Clarissa produce what Foucault calls "the truth of their sex" through their written discourse, which, viewed as confession, authenticates and vindicates their virtuousness through being read, while simultaneously producing their gendered subjectivity (62).

Foucault maintains that although confession originally provided the vehicle through which "the obligation to admit to violations of the laws of sex, as required by traditional

penance" could be articulated, it was the added injunction to tell everything that "had some affinity with sex" that transformed "sex into discourse" (20). Foucault elaborates:

[T]he important point no doubt is that this obligation was decreed, as an ideal at least, for every good Christian. An imperative was established: Not only will you confess to acts contravening the law, but you will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse. Insofar as possible, nothing was meant to elude this dictum, even if the words it employed had to be carefully neutralized. The Christian pastoral prescribed as a fundamental duty the task of passing everything having to do with sex through the endless mill of speech. The forbidding of certain words, the decency of expressions, all the censorings of vocabulary, might well have been only secondary devices compared to the great subjugation: ways of rendering it morally acceptable and technically useful. (20-21)

In identifying the trajectory of discourse on sex, Foucault points out how "one could plot a line straight from the seventeenth-century pastoral to what became its projection in literature, 'scandalous' literature at that" (21).

Indeed, Pamela has been read under the rubric of low Christian pastoral and classified as scandalous literature, which is how Fielding viewed it. Shamela begins with an exchange between the two Divines, Parson Tickletext, who has praised Pamela, and Parson Oliver, who has uncovered the "real" Shamela's unedited letters. In Shamela, Fielding argues that worldly Honours "are often the Purchase of Force and Fraud," and sometimes possessed by "Wretches who are ready to invent and maintain Schemes repugnant to the Interest, the Liberty, and the Happiness of Mankind" in order "to pamper their Avarice and Ambition" (323). Parson Oliver maintains

that the instruction Pamela conveys to maid-servants is:

To look out for their Masters as sharp as they can. The Consequences of which will be, besides Neglect of their Business, and the using all manner of Means to come at Ornaments of their Person, that if the Master is not a Fool, they will be debauched by him; and if he is a Fool, they will marry him. (324)

As Eaves and Kimpel point out, in the criticism directed at Pamela, Richardson was also accused of indecency (289). Most of the objections singled out the "warm" scenes, in particular the attempted rape, when Mr. B. resorts to dressing up as the female servant, Nan, in order to gain access to Pamela's bedside. Furthermore, it was even intimated that Mrs. Jewkes, with her masculine characteristics, showed evidence of lesbianism (Eaves and Kimpel 129).

However, Pamela's moral usefulness is underscored by the fact that it was actually recommended from the pulpit at a time when novels were considered morally dangerous (Armstrong 108). Particularly relevant, as Foucault points out, is that

the Christian pastoral also sought to produce specific effects on desire, by the mere fact of transforming it -- fully and deliberately -- into discourse: effects of mastery and detachment, to be sure, but also an effect of spiritual reconversion, of turning back to God, a physical effect of blissful suffering from feeling in one's body the pangs of temptation and the love that resists it. (23)

In other words, to be religiously or morally correct, one had to willingly embrace the suffering that resulted from consciously resisting desire, a process of self-denial that produced evidence of one's spirituality or soul. In her lucid reading of Pamela, which will form the basis of my analysis of

that novel in Part II, Janet Todd utilizes Foucault much more effectively than Armstrong. She illustrates how Pamela's "blissful suffering" at the hands of Mr. B. produces her spirituality while making her all the more desirable. Significantly, we learn this about Pamela because she proves exemplary, not only in her "mastery" of and "detachment" from desire, but in transforming her desire into discourse: written discourse that attests to her love of virtue and God.

Once Pamela's virtue or goodness is established through her writing, she is meant to appear transparent; in other words, to be precisely that which she presents herself as being. Since Pamela actually wears some of her letters and journal, having sewn them into her clothes, Mr. B., in reading them, bears testament to the "confession" or proof of her essential virtue, which Richardson has effectively re-inscribed on her body's surface, her already sexualized body. But, as Foucault suggests:

The truth did not reside solely in the subject who, by confessing, would reveal it wholly formed. It was constituted in two stages: present but incomplete ... in the one who spoke, it could only reach completion in the one who assimilated and recorded it. (66)

Within the novel, Mr. B., who forces Pamela to let him read her most personal and private thoughts as she has written them, functions as the one who assimilates and verifies her truth, while Richardson, posing as the editor of this material, completes the role by presenting the written record as Pamela's "true" account. According to Foucault's

designation, this role also serves "a hermeneutic [sic] function" in which Richardson could "constitute a discourse of truth on the basis of its decipherment" (67). Whether as Mr. B., editor or author, Richardson maintained the authority of interpreter and attempted to cancel out Pamela's potential duplicity by magically overpowering the sexual significations of her body through discourse, thereby authorizing her voice.

The method by which Richardson attempted to achieve this end is further clarified in view of Terry Castle's comments on the classical analogy between clothing and language:

The eighteenth century perceived a deep correspondence between the two: not only was language the "dress" of thought -- that lucid covering in which the mind decorously clothed its ideas -- but clothing was in turn a kind of discourse. Then, as now, dress spoke symbolically of the human being beneath its folds. It reinscribed a person's sex, rank, age, occupation -- all the distinctive features of the self. Modern semiotics has confirmed the force of the analogy: like language, clothing is after all a system of signs, and a means of symbolic communication. (Masquerade 55)

Richardson himself refers to this analogy in Clarissa, when Clarissa poses the rhetorical question, "for what are words but the *body* and *dress* of thought?" (543). Presumably, Richardson understood that words were more than just the dress of thought: He understood how thought regulates the body. In literalizing this comparison, by conflating dress and discourse, Richardson was able to reinscribe Pamela's body through the discursive displacement of her sexuality. This displacement is clearly suggested in the postscript of Pamela's very first letter: "just now, as I was folding up

this letter in my late lady's dressing room, in comes my master!" Trembling, "I went to hide the letter in my bosom ..." (4), the most obvious signifier of female sexuality. It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that Pamela is in the late Mrs. B.'s dressing room; she is thus situated within the environment and position that eventually become hers through marriage, itself the result of the discursive deployment of her sexuality.

In both Pamela and Clarissa, the word or discourse is meant to dominate the body and triumphantly produce the truth of sex, the true feminine identity, an ideal that other young women were meant to conform to. Richardson's novels repeat what Foucault describes as "the formidable injunction to tell what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one is thinking and what one is not thinking" (60) in order to produce the truth of Pamela and Clarissa's virtue. Clarissa, in particular, "exonerates, redeems, and purifies" its subject; it "unburdens" her of her "wrongs, liberates" her, and "promises" her "salvation" (62). To read Clarissa would encourage the reproduction of her "noble" virtue in other young women, since it provides a highly effective ideological model to be emulated and internalized.

In fact, in Clarissa the ideological suppression of female desire is much more insistent than it is in Pamela, since Christian principles of virtue have been more deeply

inscribed and are presented as "innate." In the face of Clarissa's immovable virtue, Lovelace wonders, "Can education have stronger force in a woman's heart than nature?" (695). The critical point is that Clarissa's example is meant to prove that it is a "true" woman's "nature" to be virtuous, that virtue is not a product of education but an inherent quality: the very essence of femininity itself. Not only does Clarissa detach herself from and master her heart's desire, but, as her discourse "fully and deliberately" reveals, through her suffering, Clarissa's desire is transformed, redirected towards God, with whom she seeks union in death. In dying, Clarissa's spiritualized, feminine self is dramatically severed from her body so that her virtuous essence can dominate with triumphant finality over the sexual significations of the female body. Thus, the female's spiritualized inner depths or soul is privileged over the body, which, in Clarissa, is effectively erased.

Furthermore, "the censoring of vocabulary," evident in Pamela's progressive gentrification and Clarissa's own highly refined discourse, also functions as a useful moral device. In a Foucaultian reading, Eagleton points out:

It is part of propriety that the rules of acceptable discourse should be internalized, as spontaneous inner constraints on what one may legitimately say. Power is less the brutal inhibiting of truth than its enabling condition. It is not only the arbitrary abrogation of writing but the internal censorship of decorum: what it is proper, and so possible, to *think*. (50-51)

Once internalized, the rules of acceptable discourse not only

constrain what can be said, but, if inscribed deeply enough, spontaneously regulate what one can actually admit to consciousness and acknowledge. Accordingly, socially unacceptable desires can be entirely repressed. Therefore, it follows that identity is, to a large extent, culturally or ideologically prescribed, enabled by, indeed, produced by the existing power structures. Identity, like truth, Eagleton determines, is "an effect of particular discourses in particular conditions," so that the internalization of the rules of propriety, such as Christian principles of virtue, dictate or shape truth, determining how "free" one can be (79, 81). However, Eagleton fails to fully consider the negative implications of the masculinist production of femininity in Clarissa, which will form the basis of Part IV of my analysis.

Significantly, Lynn Hunt, in her brief but thoughtful analysis of the subject in The History of Sexuality, points out that Foucault's "basic view [is] that subjectivity, gender, and sexuality are fundamentally shaped by discourse and representation" (78-79). As Hunt suggests, his "focus on the body as the site for the deployment of discourse opened the way for a consideration of the gendering of subjectivity" (81). In Gender Trouble, Judith Butler astutely points out how

[i]t would be wrong to think that the discussion of "identity" ought to proceed prior to a discussion of gender identity for the simple reason that "persons" only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility. (16)

Of critical importance is the fact that in Clarissa Richardson is defining femininity itself. According to Richardson's scheme, for the eighteenth-century female, cultural intelligibility lies within a matrix of virtue that is superimposed onto that of heterosexuality. In this manner, female sexuality is constituted.

Although essentialized virtue, as the source of a woman's "true" identity, meant that she was "naturally" devoid of physical, bodily desire, virtue nevertheless remained intimately linked to the female body. According to Richardson's definition of femininity, virtue in an unmarried woman signified both spiritual and sexual purity, unless of course she has been raped. Although chastity is subordinated to spiritualized, inner virtue, it clearly maintained its social value. Chastity and, more importantly, passionlessness are signs of an essential virtue that promises a woman's complete fidelity after marriage, assuring the preservation of patrilineal continuity. As a result, the internalization of virtue masked the commodification of the increasingly sexualized body of the eighteenth-century female by transforming a woman into what Armstrong describes and accepts without comment as a "metaphysical object" (117).

This transformation can also be defined as the discursive production of the feminine soul. According to Butler's careful reading of Discipline and Punish, Foucault interprets the soul as representative of

a normative and normalizing ideal according to which the body is trained, shaped, cultivated, and invested; it is an historically specific imaginary ideal (*idéal spéculatif*) under which the body is effectively materialized. (Bodies 33)

Richardson's representations of Pamela and Clarissa, as "metaphysical objects" that render their spiritualized, feminine essence, provide the normalizing ideals which his eighteenth-century female readers were clearly meant to emulate, since both serve as exemplars to their sex.

However, the truth Pamela and Clarissa purport to affirm regarding female sexuality must be seriously questioned. In these novels Richardson attempts to organize what Butler identifies as "an artificial binary relation between the sexes, as well as an artificial coherence within each term of the binary" (Gender 19). Furthermore, in accordance with Butler's concise reading of the French feminist philosopher, Luce Irigaray, I argue that the heterosexual hegemony of the regime of sexuality, which Richardson's texts firmly uphold, is an economy that privileges the male by effectively excluding the female. For Irigaray reads the binary opposition between the sexes as "a ruse for a monologic elaboration of the masculine" (Gender 18). In Bodies that Matter, Butler elaborates:

Although feminist philosophers have traditionally sought to show how the body is figured as feminine, or how women have been associated with materiality where men have been associated with the principle of rational mastery, Irigaray wants to argue that in fact the feminine is precisely what is excluded in and by such a binary opposition. In this sense, when and where women are represented within this economy is precisely the site of

their erasure (37).

It is my contention that the economy of binary opposition that excludes women in their representation is precisely that which Richardson inherited and continued to perpetuate.

It would be tempting to read the mind/body split in both Pamela and Clarissa as a form of the male/female opposition in line with the feminist tradition that Butler cites, in which the masculine principle of mind gains supremacy at the expense of the so-called feminine principle of the materiality of the body. The critical point, however, is that through the internalization of Christian principles of virtue, both the mind and the body are inscribed; therefore, it would be a mistake to assume that one could retrieve the feminine by turning to the body.

More relevant in some ways is Clarissa's supposed transcendence of her body, which serves to repudiate its sexual significations by releasing Clarissa from its potential desire. In Clarissa, any evidence of her desire is transformed into discourse, where it is consciously resisted, mastered and redirected towards God. The spiritual authorization of Clarissa's excessive suffering ostensibly appears to honour her divine essence by providing a testament to her virtue, which displaces the troubling, inscrutable female body altogether. Indeed, within the novel, Clarissa's body is literally buried under discourse, since she not only uses her coffin as a writing table on which to produce her

final text, but also has it inscribed. In displacing Clarissa's body, Richardson was eliminating all traces of its desire. Moreover, Clarissa's textual embodiment, her testament to virtue, provides us with a normalizing ideal by which female sexuality is to be rigorously regulated. Both the mind and the body of Richardson's "imaginary ideal" signify masculine determinations, which displace the feminine while simultaneously defining it. Therefore, Richardson's discursive production of the feminine soul serves a masculine, "phallogocentric" economy under which the female body can be more effectively regulated through the effacement of bodily desire.

The result of Richardson's discursive resolution of the contradictory significations of the mind and body are the novels he writes, which Gwilliam suggestively labels as "fictions of gender." Most significantly, as discourse on sex, Richardson's fictions are meant to be read and reiterated. Reiteration, Butler argues, is the ritual practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. The regulatory norms of "sex" work in this manner "to constitute the materiality of bodies, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative" (Bodies 2). Apparently, Richardson attempted to achieve precisely this end, to produce the effects that he inscribed in his revision of the code of femininity.

Crucially, Butler adds:

As a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice, sex acquires its naturalized effect, and, yet, it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm. This instability is the deconstituting possibility in the very process of repetition, the power that undoes the very effects by which "sex" is stabilized, the possibility to put the consolidation of the norms of "sex" into a potentially productive crisis. (Bodies 10)

In his repeated attempts to discursively annul the gap produced in the mind/body split of the code of femininity, Richardson seems clearly to have denied the possibility of this potentially productive crisis. My analysis attempts to illuminate the contradictions or "constitutive instabilities" of Richardson's construction of femininity as the essence of virtue. Therefore, I argue that Richardson's discursive resolution is facilitated by the absence of the female physical body, which culminates in the final negation of that body in Clarissa in order to achieve its purpose.

Although Pamela's words are also meant to outweigh the contrary significations of her physical, sexualized body, that body, like Clarissa's, only exists in the form of the body of the text, Pamela. As a woman, Pamela does not exist; she too remains an imaginary ideal, a discursive product to be assimilated. In redefining the code of femininity, Richardson made the construction of the internal "essence" of the feminine seem real; this is precisely his power. Of course, the textual achievement of this end is mediated by the absence

of the physical body. Therefore, as discourse on sex, Richardson's representations of the feminine ideal need to be examined as the discursive displacement of the female body, one of the mechanisms of power by which the deployment of sexuality was mobilized.

Accordingly, the feminine cannot be said to "be" anything in essence except a discursive product of a masculinist economy, which is precisely what Pamela and Clarissa are. Butler warns "against an easy return to the materiality of the body" for "to invoke matter is to invoke a sedimented history of sexual hierarchy and sexual erasures" which, however, "should surely be an object of feminist inquiry" as opposed to its problematic ground (Bodies 49). She concludes that "if the feminine is said to be anywhere or anything, it is that which is produced through displacement and which returns as the possibility of a reverse-displacement" by exposing "precisely what is excluded" in order to "reintroduce the excluded into the system itself" (Bodies 45). In the analyses of Pamela and Clarissa that follow Part I, I will attempt to distinguish that which has been excluded.

My argument is that the contradictions produced by the economy of the binary sexual opposition, as elucidated by Butler's reading of Irigaray, permeate Richardson's texts and can be evidenced in the exclusions or gaps that he attempts to displace as well as in the function of these texts, which are themselves a further displacement of the feminine. Gwilliam

is right to point out that Richardson reinscribed the code of femininity, but, most importantly, because it is a masculinist inscription, we need to ask what relation this code has to real femininity. According to Butler, real femininity is not represented because "certain cultural configurations of gender take the place of 'the real' and consolidate and augment their hegemony through that felicitous self-naturalization." Precisely because Richardson's definition of femininity within the binary structure of heterosexual opposition is so narrow -- the self-identical essence of virtue -- what is excluded is not only female desire, but the possibility of its multiple expression, a possibility that will be explored in Part IV. However, before proceeding to my analyses of Richardson's discursive production of the feminine, I will attempt to elucidate Foucault's historical analysis of the deployment of sexuality in order to provide a context in which we can locate Richardson.

I

The Deployment of Sexuality In Early Modern England

Prior to the deployment of sexuality, Foucault maintains that "relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a *deployment of alliance*: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions" (106). Marriages of alliance were based on what McKeon characterizes as "the exchange of women aimed at the establishment of kinship relations between men" (157), the purpose of which was to increase and consolidate the political power of the ruling class, while simultaneously reproducing sharply defined class and gender divisions that ensured its perpetuation. As McKeon suggests, women were merely pawns in an exchange that was aimed at preserving the interests of men who dominated the patriarchal social hierarchy.

In his extensive study, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, Lawrence Stone confirms that before the eighteenth century, most marriages among the propertied classes were indeed marriages of alliance, since they were "arranged by the parents in the interest of family financial or political advantage" (502). Stone points out that this fact strengthened the view that "male fornication and adultery are venial sins to be overlooked by the wife" (502). He

suggests that for most of the early modern period this "double standard" of sexual behaviour prevailed among the upper classes, since "the husband enjoyed full monopoly rights over the sexual services of his wife, who was expected to be a virgin on her wedding night" (501). As Stone remarks, women had been regarded as the sexual property of men for millennia, which meant that their value as "property is diminished if it has been or is being used by anyone other than the legal owner" (503). Significantly, he determines that "the higher one goes in the society and the greater the amount of property likely to change hands with a marriage, the greater the stress on pre-marital chastity" (504). Under the regime of alliance, women of the aristocracy or propertied classes were clearly perceived as property; they either belonged to their fathers or husbands. Consequently, these women had no claim to ownership of their bodies as a reproductive site for the transmission of power.

This situation was radically altered over the course of the eighteenth century through the development of what Foucault identifies as "the main elements of the deployment of sexuality," the primary one of which, he maintains, was "the feminine body" itself (108). Despite the fact that women were no longer required to bring property or wealth into marriage with the deployment of sexuality, the reproductive function of their bodies clearly took on added significance, since "names and possessions" were still transmitted through that body.

Effectively, the sexualization of the female body, its thorough investment with the sexual signification of its reproductive function, enabled all women to claim ownership of their bodies as a reproductive site, an important development that provided them with a degree of social leverage they had previously been denied; however, their newly acquired power came at a cost: women's bodies were still understood as property.

Furthermore, the eighteenth-century patriarchal code of femininity continued to demand virtue, in the form of chastity, in a woman in exchange for social valorization -- namely, marriage. As a result, virtue, by safely containing desire, became the means by which women's bodies, already viewed as property, attained social value as a chaste but sexualized commodity that women could now trade on the marriage market as a means of rising socially. Particularly relevant is that the increasing sexualization of the female body also meant that the system of marriage of the deployment of sexuality distinguished itself by being concerned "with the sensations of the body [and] the quality of pleasures" to be experienced within matrimony (Foucault 106).

Foucault points out that the deployment of alliance "lost some of its importance as economic processes and political structures could no longer rely on it as an adequate instrument or sufficient support" (106). In England, a highly significant change that affected the distribution of social,

economic and political power can be found in the act of legislation,

the 1646 abolition of feudal tenures and the Court of Wards: henceforth [property] ownership is absolute and no longer a condition of feudal fealty and service, and great landowners are able to manage, exploit, and consolidate -- to "improve" -- their estates free of contractual duties to the king. (McKeon 176)

Although it seems that the "long-term transition from 'feudalism' to 'capitalism'" began as early as the thirteenth century, Christopher Hill argues that "the end of the Middle Ages" or feudalism can actually be positioned here, in the seventeenth century (McKeon 176). From the mid-seventeenth century onward, a portion of the merchant class, precipitated by the advent of mercantile capitalism during the Renaissance, was able to join the ranks of the aristocracy by acquiring property and assimilating themselves into the gentry. During this period, aristocratic ideology underwent a marked transformation, becoming what McKeon calls "progressive," by challenging the exhausted belief in inherited "honour" (155). Consequently, the new values of "industrious virtue" that some of the aristocracy adopted were later attributed to the capitalist middle class or bourgeoisie when class differences came to be determined according to economic criteria rather than by rank at birth. The social restructuring produced by these economic and political changes effectively enabled what McKeon identifies as the persistence of the aristocracy, however modified (167-9).

The deployment of sexuality provided the means by which

the new upper classes could rapidly expand and consolidate their positions from the seventeenth century onward. As much as the regime of alliance had restricted its focus to narrowly reproducing its power base, the regime of sexuality instead expanded its hegemony at an increasing rate right from its inception. Moreover, Foucault proposes that

if the deployment of alliance is firmly tied to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the deployment of sexuality is linked to the economy through numerous and subtle relays, the main one of which, however, is the body -- the body that produces and consumes. (106-7)

In other words, all bodies came to participate in the economy under the regime of sexuality, either as producers or consumers or as both. In fact, Foucault argues that the development of capitalism "would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (141). Effectively, the increasing sexualization of bodies radically advanced the commodification of the human body itself.

The female body, as the site of reproduction, clearly maintained its integral link to the economy, not only because it continued to serve as a means of transmitting power and wealth, but because it provided the means by which the population would be increased. Significantly, as McKeon points out, the second half of the seventeenth century "experienced a demographic crisis that reduced the general population so sharply that the peak of 1656 was not surpassed

until 1721. England's landed elite shared fully in this crisis" (153). Furthermore, the demand for an increase in the population was evident in programmes that Foucault refers to as the rather crude populationist arguments of the mercantile epoch (26). As he suggests:

a country had to be populated if it hoped to be rich and powerful; but this was the first time that a society had affirmed, in a constant way, that its future and its fortune were tied not only to the number and the uprightness of its citizens, to their marriage rules and family organization, but to the manner in which each individual made use of his [sic] sex. (26)

Not only did the eighteenth century witness the rise of the middle class in England, but "with the progress of enclosures, the amalgamation of farms, the development of cottage industries and the growth of towns" there was a significant increase in the rural population as well (Stone 637). Although Foucault does not refer to English society specifically, the particular organization and implementation of heterosexuality initiated by the deployment of sexuality can certainly be applied to England's project of empire: to its growth, expansion and subsequent rise as a dominant world power.

Indeed, Stone's empirical study provides strong evidence of a cultural change in sexual attitudes and behaviour during the period between the late seventeenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, in which the popular expression of sexuality became increasingly conspicuous in England (621). For this reason, Stone's research will be relied upon to help

fill out the sketch Foucault supplies. However, it is not my intention to present Stone as the historical authority on sex and marriage in early modern England. Rather, Stone's Freudian interpretation of the material he amassed provides a particularly relevant counter-point to Foucault's sexual analytics. Whereas Foucault is suggesting that the proliferation of discourses centering on sex that began to emerge in the seventeenth century mobilized the regime of sexuality with the discursive production of sexuality, Stone, in agreement with the repressive hypothesis, determines that the main reason for the social transformation of sexual conduct in early modern England can be found in the decline of the strict Puritan leadership of the early seventeenth century (Stone 623). According to Foucault's analysis, it was not the relaxation of laws governing sexual behaviour that unleashed a tide of repressed sexuality, as Stone assumes. Foucault argues:

Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power. (105-6)

Central to Foucault's understanding is that "sexuality and power are coextensive"; therefore, it follows that sexuality can never be "free" of the "law." Conversely, sexuality is

dependent on the law for its generation, in whatever form the law takes on (Butler, Gender 29). In other words, while the law can indeed be repressive, as a mechanism of power, it is primarily productive.

For his part, Stone determines that after the Restoration there was evidence of a relaxation of social controls in the "progressive separation of sin from law, which resulted in a marked decline in attempts to enforce the laws concerning sexual behaviour" (631). Stone overlooks the possibility that the creation of a new norm that both generates and governs sexuality may have taken over the function of the law. He maintains that one of the most important factors that contributed to the loosening of popular conventions about sexual behaviour "was the reaction after 1660 to the Draconian imposition by military rule in the 1650s," under which "[s]tage plays, horse-racing, cock-fighting, maypoles, and brothels had all been suppressed; ale-houses had been severely limited in numbers, and adultery made punishable by death" (627). Although unable to substantiate a further counter-claim, Stone nevertheless suggests that it is possible

that the lower-middle classes did not share in this cultural change, continuing to cherish Puritan and then Methodist values throughout the century without a break. It seems certain that the more pious of the Anglican upper bourgeoisie and gentry were also unaffected by the change. (648)

This latter group would include Richardson, who as a pious Anglican, clearly did not approve of libertinism.

Moreover, Stone does suggest that the possible

explanation for the change in attitudes towards sexuality in the late seventeenth century was also the result of "a change in moral theology, obviously mainly affecting the middle- and upper-class reading public, but also presumably penetrating down to the poor through sermons" (624). According to Stone's determinations, by the eighteenth century, a new sexual ideal emerged as the fusion of the old norms of the aristocracy:

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there had been two parallel archetypes of sexual conduct in existence: one being conjugal, primarily for the procreation of a male heir; and the other being extra-marital, exclusively for love, companionship, and sexual pleasure. (527)

In partial agreement with Foucault's analysis, Stone concludes that "[b]y legitimizing the sexual act within marriage for the purpose of mutual comfort and endearment, Protestant theology began the slow separation of sexual pleasure from procreation that ended in the late seventeenth-century spread of both contraception and libertinism" (625). As a result, the eighteenth century witnessed "a glorification of the sexual aspects of love in art, literature and life, now channelled as much inside marriage as outside it: the role-models of wife and mistress were united..." (657). In Part III, I will investigate how this fusion of roles actually manifests itself in Pamela.

Significantly, the modification of Protestant theology that Stone draws attention to, in which the sexual act was legitimized within marriage, was only one manifestation of the profusion of discourses centering on sex that began to emerge

at the end of the seventeenth century. In Foucault's view, the regime of sexuality is the sum product of the development of particular mechanisms of power, including, of course, the propagation of discourse on sex. Foucault maintains that

the deployment of sexuality has its reason for being ... in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way. (107)

In other words, the population was subjected to a new form of social control, which is not at all the way Stone reads the situation.

The deployment of sexuality spread through the entire social body by affecting all subsequent class formations as it gradually worked its way down the social order, since the upper classes had, in fact, initiated it. However, this is not to say that it was overtly enforced, but rather that it permeated the social body as it became an integral, internalized aspect of daily, family life. As Foucault suggests:

Through the political economy of population there was formed a whole grid of observations regarding sex. There emerged the analysis of the modes of sexual conduct, their determinations and their effects, at the boundary line of the biological and the economic domains. There also appeared those systematic campaigns which, going beyond the traditional means -- moral and religious exhortations, fiscal measures -- tried to transform the sexual conduct of couples into a concerted economic and political behavior. (26)

The deployment of sexuality expanded its hegemony by gaining control over the population through what Foucault designates as "technologies of power."

Strictly speaking, technologies of power are the techniques or strategies used to apply the knowledge of scientific disciplines to the social body; however, in a broader sense, they include the proliferation of discourse that Foucault draws attention to. Therefore, it follows that Richardson's novels, particularly when viewed as conduct books or discourse on sex, can also be identified as technologies of power. Crucially, as Foucault understood so well, it is discourse itself that "transmits and produces power" (101). As a printer, Richardson also seems to have firmly grasped this phenomenon. Among its effects, discourse produces what Foucault calls "relations of power-knowledge," as evidenced in the procedures of confession, in which the penitent submits to the power of the confessor who possesses the knowledge by which truth is measured. As previously discussed, Richardson assumed "the hermeneutic function" of this latter role as author and editor. Significantly, relations of power-knowledge, however they figure, are not static forms for the distribution of power; rather, they are "matrices of transformations," subject to modification and even strange reversals (99).

Foucault defines the specific technologies of power that attempt to govern and administer life itself as "bio-power." As a positive exercise of power over life, in the sense that its "highest function was to invest life through and through" by focusing on "the problems of birthrate, longevity, public

health, housing, and migration," bio-power was a method of disciplining the human body as well as of supervising the social body as a whole (140). Foucault points out that these were two separate techniques of "bio-power" that remained clearly distinguishable in the eighteenth century, but were joined in the deployment of sexuality (140). These "regulatory controls" formed what he calls "*a biopolitics of the population*" (139), which, when applied to the deployment of sexuality, can also be read as a politics of sex, since these regulatory controls prescribed specific sexual behaviour.

According to Foucault, bio-power resulted in "the growing importance assumed by the action of the norm," with far-reaching consequences (144). Particularly relevant is that because the socially permissible constitutes the norm, the maintenance of the norm took over the function of the law to a large extent by providing "continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms" through "a continuum of apparatuses," including the family, pedagogy or education, medical, administrative and so on (144), all of which, as relations of power-knowledge, policed the individual as well as each other, thereby regulating the social body as a whole. In other words, the proliferation of discourses centered on life and their subsequent implementation produced a normalizing society that proved to be highly self-regulatory, since technologies of power-knowledge, including such texts as Richardson's, gave

form to a dominant ideology based on a sexual politics that became internalized, no longer relying exclusively on external enforcement. Thus, the "law" was internalized.

Most importantly, Foucault proposes that sexuality, as an object of intense investigation, is actually the product of the very "techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse" that were capable of investing it with the power they transmitted and produced (98). Along with the incitement to discourse, the new rules of propriety concerned with sex resulted in a censoring of public discussions while prescribing a narrow range of acceptable behaviours (17-18). Foucault is suggesting that this highly focused interest in the assumed truth of sex amplified sexual identity. Initially, it seems that the deployment of sexuality produced an intensification of the body, which may have been what motivated Richardson's ideological project, in itself a repudiation of the overtly sexualized female body.

A key point in Foucault's analysis is the understanding that "the biological and the historical ... are bound together ... in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective" (152). In other words, the proliferation of discourses centered on life shaped history and, therefore, are not consecutive to it. The deployment of sexuality, manifest in the reconfiguration of gender categories construed as binary opposites within the heterosexual matrix, is a direct product

of these discourses. Moreover, as Butler shrewdly notes, it makes no sense to define gender as simply the cultural interpretation of sex, since sex itself is a gendered category. She determines that:

As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts. (Gender 7)

In other words, the apparent naturalness or coherence of the heterosexual categorization that became dominant is a ruse.

Foucault determines that sex came to be defined in three ways within the deployment of sexuality:

as that which belongs in common to men and women; as that which belongs, *par excellence*, to men, and hence is lacking in women; but at the same time, as that which by itself constitutes woman's body, ordering it wholly in terms of the functions of reproduction.... (153)

Here we find Foucault's concise reading of female sexuality, which clearly parallels the paradox of the code of femininity without, however, identifying the role of virtue. Nevertheless, as evidenced in Pamela and Clarissa, virtue clearly dominates in the eighteenth-century constitution of female sexuality in England. Indeed, virtue is the term through which the various contradictions of those definitions of sexuality are mediated. Significantly, Foucault points out how women's bodies were thoroughly invested with sexuality precisely because of its reproductive function and despite women's supposed lack of sexual desire. Although it would appear as if female sexuality is "naturally" grounded in the

reproductive function, Foucault is suggesting that the female body is invested with the sexual signification of its reproductive function by attributing or projecting this signification onto the surface of that body. Interpreting female sexuality from this perspective provides clear insight into how it is a construction or product of discourse that was imposed onto the female body, where it became inscribed for all to read.

Laqueur's description of the "one-sex model" that dominated biology up until the seventeenth century is extremely useful in that it too readily reveals how sexed distinctions are cultural constructions. According to this model, there was essentially "one canonical body" that was male (63). Women were perceived as an inverted version of the male, and their sexual organs were understood to correspond symmetrically: the vagina represented an internal penis; the ovaries, the male testicles; the uterus, the scrotum. However, as an inverted male, the female occupied an inferior position in the social hierarchy dominated by the male.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as other biological differences were discovered, their interpretation provided an opportunity to graft cultural gender constructions onto an apparently natural base, which became the bodies of the "two-sex model," in which the female came to be perceived as the male's incommensurate opposite (viii). Furthermore, in accordance with previously defined

distinctions, differences in sex continued to insist on the physical and mental inferiority of women. Moreover, "the erasure of female pleasure from medical accounts of conception" served to underscore women's passivity or passionlessness and helped promote the notion that women were devoid of sexual desire (viii).

Although Randolph Trumbach's view of sex is not Foucaultian, he takes Laqueur's analysis significantly further. To begin with, he points out how

[i]n almost all discussions of the relationship of biological sex to gender, and of the female gender to the male, the presumption is made that there are two biological sexes, man and woman, and two genders, female and male. (112)

Trumbach proposes that "the new paradigm of the early eighteenth century was not really one of two genders" and suggests that there was actually "a third illegitimate gender," which he identifies as "the adult passive transvestite effeminate male or molly who was supposed to desire men exclusively" (112). Because this kind of desire did not conform to the biologically determined interpretation of sexuality, it "was taken to be the result of the corruption of an individual's mind that had occurred in his early experience" (112). For, according to the new paradigm, "men were not supposed to know what it was like to desire males..." (112). Consequently, such desire, which only came to be categorized as homosexuality during the late nineteenth century, began to be interpreted as an aberration or deviation

from the naturalized norm of heterosexuality, rather than as a sin anyone could commit.

Trumbach maintains that prior to this, in the early seventeenth century, when "the Christian teaching [was] that sexual relations were supposed to be primarily procreative" within marriage, sexual "relations between members of the same gender did not violate the gender code.... Sodomitical acts contravened the gender system only when they violated the patriarchal code, that is when adult men allowed themselves to be penetrated..." (113-4). During this period, the most famous lawyer of early modern England, Sir Edward Coke, "defined sodomy to mean either sexual intercourse between a woman and a beast, or anal intercourse by a man with either a male or a female" (Trumbach 125). Trumbach determines that before the development of the third illegitimate gender category of the molly,

a male rake was prepared to have sexual relations with both women and boys, because he took the dominant role in both kinds of act. Others might view his behaviour as very wicked, but they did not think of him as effeminate. Sexual relations with a younger male did not lessen the masculine status of a rake; if anything, it reinforced the image of his power.... There were, however, a few adult males who took the passive role in sodomy. They were likely to be classified as hermaphrodites, since they had changed, in effect, from being men to being women. (127-8)

Sexual relations between adult men were clearly perceived as a violation or transgression of rigidly defined gender boundaries, since one of the men sacrificed his dominant, male position. However, it seems that according to the new

paradigm, all sexual relations between males feminized the participants, effectively depriving them of their masculine status altogether. With this change, the distinction between heterosexual and what we now readily identify as homosexual desire was clearly delineated.

Since women were defined in terms of their social or familial relation to men, Trumbach suggests that women who desired other women were not consistently classified within a parallel "illegitimate gender" category precisely because a woman's gender status remained relatively unimportant up until the end of the eighteenth century, when such a category slowly emerged (130, 112). Trumbach argues that prior to this, what we would now single out and identify as a bisexual woman was an acceptable libertine norm (129).

Foucault suggests that from the eighteenth century onward there was a steady increase of discourse centered on sex, precisely because "the sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and as a target of intervention" (18, 26). He proposes that the deployment of sexuality "first developed on the fringes of familial institutions (in the direction of conscience and pedagogy, [i.e., in religious pamphlets and Puritan conduct books]), but gradually became focused on the family..." (110). Furthermore, "[t]he family cell, in the form in which it came to be valued in the course of the eighteenth century," provided the ground on which the main elements of the

deployment of sexuality were able "to develop along its two primary dimensions: the husband-wife axis and the parents-children axis" (108), both of which, it should be noted, are relations of power, a significant factor, since Foucault proposes that relations of power are what generate sexuality. In fact, he argues that the role of the family served "to anchor sexuality and provide it with a permanent support," that "sexuality has its privileged point of development in the family" (108).

Crucial to Foucault's conception of sexuality is that "sex" is a complex idea that was formed inside the deployment of sexuality, as opposed to the anchorage point that supports the manifestations of sexuality (152). He maintains that the arrangement that has sustained sexuality "has been united from the outset with an intensification of the body -- with its exploitation as an object of knowledge and an element in relations of power" (107). By adopting the privileges of alliance, the pleasures and the intensity of sensations of that regime's disparate expressions of sexuality (108), and restricting their range, the family became the focal point of the heterosexual matrix, effectively ensuring the replication of heterosexuality en masse by modelling and regulating sexuality, thereby producing what Butler refers to as "compulsory heterosexuality."

Foucault maintains that the family is the actual site at which the deployment of alliance and that of sexuality

intersect, although the family "was reorganized, restricted no doubt, and in any case intensified in comparison with the functions it formerly exercised in the deployment of alliance" (110). Therefore, the system of marriage of the regime of sexuality functions "in conjunction with a system of alliance" (108), that is, in conjunction with a system of marriage conceived specifically to increase political and social power. This suggests that the privileging of sexual identity over class and political affiliations was a development or extension of the arrangement of marriage under the regime of alliance. However, this new marriage system succeeded in obscuring its basis in alliance, thus also concealing its primary motivation -- power (107).

Stone outlines three stages of change to the family in England that led to what he calls the "the companionate marriage," which corresponds to the system of marriage Foucault attributes to the regime of sexuality. First of all, Stone identifies what he calls "the open lineage family," in evidence from 1450-1630 (653), which corresponds to the system of marriage of the regime of alliance. The modification of this family type resulted in what Stone calls "the restricted patriarchal nuclear family," mainly in evidence from 1550-1700. Most importantly, loyalty to state or sect replaced loyalty to lineage or patron, which "weakened the diffuse affective network of kin and neighbours ... and tended to isolate the nuclear core," in which patriarchal power was

reinforced (653). According to Stone:

For the state, Passive Obedience to the husband and father in the home was the model for and guarantee of Passive Obedience to the king in the nation. In Protestant England there took place a partial transfer of the functions of the Church to the family, of the priest to the head of the household. (654)

This family's patriarchal authoritarianism, "which was so marked among the propertied classes," included strict parental control of pre-marital relations as well as wifely obedience and the breaking of the children's will through severely punitive disciplinary practices, such as flogging (Stone 654). Although this family type focused more intensely on the nuclear core, it remained within the model of alliance.

With "the closed domesticated nuclear family," we arrive at what Stone identifies as the final stage in the development of the nuclear family, in increasing evidence from 1620 to 1800 (655). This type of family "was characterized by a continuation of the emphasis of the boundary surrounding the nuclear unit, and a progressive decline in the influence on that unit of both the neighbourhood and the kin," which, according to Stone, led to a greater emphasis on internal bonding within the family (655), that is, to the intensification of the family Foucault points to. Furthermore, Stone argues that the decline of religious influence evident in the early eighteenth century "was undoubtedly accompanied by a decline in the moral control formerly exercised by heads of households over their children, apprentices and servants," resulting in "a significant shift

of power relationships within the household" (634). For, as Stone puts it: "How could paternal control over the choice of a marriage partner be maintained, if the pair were now to be bound by ties of love and affection?" (263).

Stone proposes that the "growth of inter-generational conflict over freedom to choose a mate" was caused "partly by the rise of individualism and a desire to put personal happiness before collective or family interests" (630). He notes some corollary effects:

Mate selection was determined more by free choice than by parental decision and was based as much on expectations of lasting mutual affection as on calculations of an increase in money, status or power.... There were the beginnings of a trend towards greater legal and educational equality between the sexes, and the claims of each child to some part of the inheritance were carefully protected, although there was no decline in the emphasis on primogeniture. (656)

As Hill points out, "[t]he eldest son came to occupy a unique position of authority" among the propertied classes, effectively usurping the authority of the father, since "the estate, the family property, acquires greater importance than the individual owner" (102-3), a dilemma evidenced in Clarissa. Although male offspring were now free to select a wife according to motivations of affection, Stone maintains that economic interests continued to be granted serious consideration. Consequently, marriages tended to remain within their own class rather than extending across social boundaries, as witnessed by the exception which proves the rule in Pamela.

Significantly, Stone remarks that the changing lifestyles of the higher social groups were clearly imitated by women of the lower orders, thereby distinguishing them as women of "quality." These women were oriented toward domestic management. Since they had servants, there was also an increase in leisure time.

The key was conformity to elaborate rituals of behaviour involving an increasing privatization of one's body, its fluids and its odours.... Knowledge of the classics for men, and music, dancing and needlework for women, were additional glosses on this deeper evolution of elite manners based on the refinement and elegance of body and mind. (656-7)

This "deeper evolution of elite manners," involving the body and mind, undoubtedly reflects the internalization of the technologies of power that Foucault points to. Furthermore, the privatization of the body suggests an intensification of the body as an object of knowledge.

According to Stone, details of the precise manifestation and causes of the change in the sexual mores of the English vary significantly from the propertied to the non-propertied classes (648). He makes a marked distinction between the increasingly literate propertied classes, "who were governed more by changing ideas than changing economic circumstances, and ... the largely illiterate, propertyless poor, among whom economic and social factors predominated" (643-4). Stone determines that legislation "made each parish responsible for the relief of the poor who resided or were born in their parish. This created a very strong incentive to prevent the

building of houses in the parish by the poor" (639). He suggests that the unanticipated consequences of this legislation caused "both a rise in the proportion of the propertyless in the society and a migration of more and more girls and boys to find work and housing further away from home" (640-1). Effectively, these "boys and girls" were now free to make their own mate selection, and even to indulge in sexual experimentation (655). Moreover, females, like Richardson's Pamela, were particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Stone points out that the

penalties of pregnancy without marriage in the eighteenth century were ... very heavy for both mother and child. The former was likely to lose her job, might be sent to the House of Correction, and eventually be driven into prostitution. Because of the tremendous incentive to the mother to conceal the birth, the child was likely to be murdered in the first few hours, or abandoned in the street, either to die there or to be dumped in a workhouse, where the prospects of survival were not much better. (635)

Although Stone acknowledges that there is evidence of a tendency in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to use the law to suppress sexual misconduct, he argues that these laws were concerned "with the economics of child maintenance and no longer with the morality of fornication *per se*" (635). Nevertheless, there were concerted attempts to enforce moral restrictions on sexual behaviour. Stone suggests that the "private societies for the Reformation of Manners, which sprang up between 1674 and 1694 in a last-ditch effort to hold back the tide of sexual permissiveness, were only temporarily effective and died away after a few decades

of activity" (634). It seems, however, that Stone underestimates the sociosexual significance of these societies, in particular their homophobic element, although he notes that "the collapse of the first Society for the Reformation of Manners in 1738 was separated from the foundation of the second in 1757 by less than twenty years" (679).

Alan Bray, in his study, Homosexuality in Renaissance England, describes the Societies for the Reformation of Manners as "a crusading religious organization which played an important role in prosecuting sodomites, prostitutes and sabbath-breakers," as well as general drunkenness and debauchery (82, 89). In particular, Bray focuses on their raids on "molly houses," taverns and public houses in London in which homosexual men gathered for pleasure: drinking, singing and dancing (84). Furthermore, it was possible "to have sexual intercourse in the house itself: for many a molly house would have been the only place where this was possible with any safety" (84). Bray points out that the "molly houses of the early eighteenth century are in sharp contrast to the socially amorphous forms homosexuality had taken a century earlier; Elizabethan or Jacobean England had no parallel to the separate world it represented" (85). Nevertheless, the more diffuse homosexuality of early seventeenth century society continued to exist, especially in rural areas (88). Significantly, however, "[w]hat had once been thought of as a

potential in all sinful human nature had become the particular vice of a certain kind of people, with their own distinctive way of life" (104).

Bray points out that the term "molly," unlike its Renaissance predecessors, "bugger" and "sodomite," is much more specific in meaning, since "it is concerned with homosexuality alone, while they are about sexual confusion in whatever form, of which homosexuality was only one part" (103). On the other hand, he suggests that "molly" and "homosexual" are closer in meaning, "in that they refer to a social identity, a kind of person, not the same identity but crucially an identity..." (103). Prior to the late seventeenth century, "outside an immediately sexual context, there was little or no social pressure for someone to define for himself what his sexuality was" (70). In other words, identity had not yet been fully constituted according to "the truth" of one's sex.

Moreover, by the end of the eighteenth century, Trumbach determines that "there is some evidence that there was beginning to appear a role for women which was parallel to that of the molly for men" (112). As a small minority, these women, who were called tommies or sapphists, were also considered perverse (112-3, 115). Trumbach maintains that the development of the sapphist role began slowly for women after the mid-eighteenth century "and could be seen enacted very clearly by some individuals in the last quarter of the

century" (114). These sapphists "dressed partly as men and partly as women, and their appeal lay in this ambiguity" (115). However, for most of the eighteenth century "sexual relations between women were not yet tied to cross-dressing, as sexual relations between men had come to be. Mollies, everyone knew, dressed as women" (121-2).

It seems that a small minority of these women were actually arrested and punished for cross-dressing, since "sexual relations between women were not illegal in England," simply because "sexual relations between two women did not come under the sodomy statute" (123, 125). Despite this, in the early eighteenth century, "female clothing that seemed to impinge on the male domain" of dominance was clearly stigmatized (117). But, as Trumbach points out:

The stigmatization ... was never as great as that which male sodomites experienced. Women's lives were never as public as men's. There is no evidence of a female sexual subculture of taverns or public places of assignation as there were for male sodomites. (134)

Trumbach suggests that a woman who cross-dressed or adopted overt masculine characteristics was thought to be an actual physical hermaphrodite; consequently, "[h]er clitoris was likely to be examined by physicians for signs of an enlargement that might be the first state in its transformation into a penis" (117).

Trumbach refers to Dr. Carr's *Medical Epistle*, in particular his discussion of sexual transformation, in which, in accordance with the old one-sex paradigm, Carr argues that

because women's genitalia were exactly like those of men, except that they were inverted, by manipulation they could be "brought outside of the body, thereby transforming them into men" (118-9). Furthermore, in the early seventeenth century, Sir Edward Coke, in his commentary on the common law had said "that hermaphrodites could not live as both males and females" (120). They were obliged to pick one sex and adhere to it forever; failing this, they were then considered to be guilty of sodomy (120). Trumbach suggests that hermaphrodites had traditionally been assigned to a third biological category, albeit a defective and therefore feminized one. Most significantly, he proposes that this

was the beginning of the argument that biologically there were only two sexes, that on these anatomical differences are founded two gender roles, but that both genders sexually desire only the opposite gender. No individual was able to perform the role of a gender which was not a reflection of the individual's sexual anatomy. (120)

Although Richardson does not suggest that Mr. B. or Lovelace indulge in same sex acts, he does have Mr. B. cross-dress prior to his reformation, while Lovelace clearly transgresses the boundaries of his sex when he dreams he is the woman, Mother H. Through this feminization, Richardson may have been stigmatizing Lovelace as a sodomite, in the sense that he resists clear gender differentiation. For Richardson's moral programme attempts to secure distinct divisions between the sexes. Surely his two early novels influenced the formation of heterosexual identity in the eighteenth century by reconstituting and reiterating gender

ideals, in particular the feminine ideal of the virtuous woman. Nevertheless, Clarissa, as the site in which sexuality is produced, opens up erotic possibilities beyond Richardson's prescriptive goals, which I will discuss in Part IV. Moreover, these two novels prepared the ground on which Richardson created the ideal of the virtuous male, represented in his final novel, Sir Charles Grandison.

As a successful printer and a prominent member of the rising middle class, Richardson transmitted his power and authority through the discourse he produced. Indeed, as Eagleton suggests: "Richardson did not only share in the bourgeois public sphere of eighteenth-century England; he helped to construct it" (7). He maintains that Richardson's novels functioned as "lynchpins of an entire ideological formation" (5), an ideology that actively encouraged the deployment of sexuality, but which clearly attempted to align it according to Christian principles of virtue. Significantly, the internalization of Richardson's feminine ideal facilitated the regulation of female sexuality within an exclusively masculinist economy.

In the analyses that follow, I will begin by focusing on how Richardson's representation of women tied them to a masculinist political economy by examining the roles available to women in eighteenth-century English society, as suggested by Pamela and Clarissa. In attempting to define the early modern woman by privileging her internal moral goodness,

Richardson was trying to impose his own ideology of feminine virtue onto the deployment of sexuality, by making what he determined to be female sexuality's essential features "correspond to the functional requirements of a discourse that must produce its truth" (Foucault 68). As we shall see, Richardson advanced a fundamentally patriarchal ideology that kept women in a highly restricted position of subservience to the male, who continued to dominate and maintain a privileged position of socioeconomic and political authority. Significantly, even a woman's inner spiritual value, as essentialized virtue, evidenced this subjugation.

II

Richardson's Deployment of Virtue: Its Transformative Powers

In Desire and Domestic Fiction, Armstrong maintains that Richardson empowered women with Pamela's virtuous example, by illustrating how they could advance their social position through a middle-class concept of marriage. Indeed, Richardson's project was considered too radical and potentially subversive by many of his contemporaries, including authors such as Fielding. In France, Pamela was put on the *Index* of the Roman Catholic Church, so that the French translation was actually banned from 1744 until 1900 (Eaves and Kimpel 126). Not only does this remarkable fact attest to the ideological power of Richardson's work, but it also reveals the extent to which his position was viewed as scandalous.

Nevertheless, in promoting a new social role for women, it is equally important to acknowledge how Richardson was also preserving male privilege, since virtue continued to deny women power in their own right by censoring their desires. Effectively, the social identity of women remained entirely dependent on that of men for definition. As Mr. B. informs his sister, Lady Davers, towards the end of Pamela, "a man ennobles the woman he takes, be she who she will; and adopts

her into his own rank, be it what it will: but a woman, though ever so nobly born, debases herself by a mean marriage, and descends from her own rank to his she stoops to" (447). Clearly, Richardson recognized that the male held the dominant position.

Armstrong demonstrates how women were clearly relegated to the domestic sphere, which had become sharply distinct from the overtly political and public world of men by the second half of the eighteenth century. Armstrong points out that the new woman's domestic role in Pamela was also one of moral authority, in which she functioned as a model of self-regulation and provided moral surveillance of the male, in addition to supervising in the actual management of the home (124). Although it is certainly true that women were meant to act as the moral custodians of the home, Armstrong gives little consideration to the fact that a woman's moral authority was defined according to an ideology that privileged the male; consequently, such authority was only granted to women on the condition that they upheld essentially patriarchal values.

Furthermore, the domestic management skills of the individual female provided a profitable function to the male in the early stages of capitalist development. In effect, the deployment of sexuality shifted the focus away from the cumulative power potentially gained through a marriage of alliance to how women, perceived as increasingly sexualized

beings, could contribute to the social and economic empowerment of the eighteenth-century male, while providing a means of transmitting that power.

Although Armstrong stresses the importance of acknowledging the political power women mobilized in forging the middle class, it is important to recognize how their collective power was, in actuality, seriously undermined by the fact that the social change they were helping to bring about remained patriarchal in its fundamental arrangement. Not only were women outwardly depoliticized in their exclusion from the public sphere, but the political function they performed within the private realm of the home, the centre of support for the new, middle-class male, was severely restricted. Authors of conduct books, men and women writers alike, prescribed behaviour appropriate to the female according to a rigid, Puritan ideology. These books comprise what Armstrong calls a "strictly gendered field of knowledge," since they focused on women's domestic management skills, while advancing behaviour that was morally and socially desirable, thereby shaping the new sexual politics by defining an exclusively feminine, collective identity.

Cheryl Turner, in her study of early women writers, determines that the "orientation towards female readers" evident in these eighteenth-century texts can actually be traced to the early seventeenth century, to books that are "grouped together loosely on the basis of their common

interest in women's social and familial duties and their ability to fulfil them" (23). These books are, of course, also conduct books, and considered along with those that Armstrong cites, they constitute the discourse centred on familial institutions that Foucault draws attention to as the source of the pedagogy that provided the "regulatory controls" of the norm that emerges under the deployment of sexuality. As previously discussed, the standards of the "norm" corresponded to the system of binary opposites in which the female was defined as essentially passive. Consequently, women's desires were heavily censored, since they were determined by dominant male values.

Kathryn Shevelow substantiates this in Women and Print Culture, although she focuses primarily on periodicals of the seventeenth century. However, these periodicals, which predate the novel, served as preparation for its development and influenced its politics. As Shevelow critically notes: "At the same historical moment that women were, to a degree unprecedented in western Europe, becoming visible as readers and writers, the literary representation of women ... was producing an increasingly narrow and restrictive model of femininity" (1), in spite of the fact that some of these writers were women. Shevelow emphasizes that the authorization of women writers "does not contradict women's political powerlessness but actually reinforces it," by defining a place for women "within the terms of the dominant

patriarchal ideology" (14). Only the female voice that upheld male privilege within the new social arrangement was granted the authority it needed in order to be heard, clearly a point worth serious consideration, but one that Armstrong overlooks in her celebration of women's advancement within the middle class.

Armstrong, in fact, applauds Richardson for authorizing the female voice in Pamela, arguing: "'Words' are indeed all Pamela has to exert against the coercion of rank and a large fortune, but her 'words' prove the more powerful for being the only power she has" (119). Although there is some truth in this claim, it is also true that, despite Pamela's prettiness, it is initially her "tongue that piques her master's interest and her letters that keep it" (Todd 67). Moreover, it is certainly relevant that Pamela's "voice" is not really her own, since Richardson produced her words, words that convey his interpretation of Christian principles of virtue. Not only did Richardson's ideology of virtue provide Pamela with a moral and religious defence against the intended transgressions of the corrupt aristocrat, Mr. B., but, paradoxically, it intensified Pamela's social and sexual desirability, while serving a masculinist economy. Richardson's conception of the deployment of sexuality, as articulated through Pamela, was clearly intended as a means of re-forming the existent but debilitated aristocratic ideology of honour of the old, patriarchal order. Indeed, Richardson

authorized Pamela with what McKeon calls "the progressive ideology" of a new order, which promoted essentially puritan, middle-class values.

Moreover, Christopher Hill reminds us that "the Bible is explicit on the subordination of women" (118). In apparent agreement with the puritan conception of marriage, Richardson viewed women as man's helpmeet (Hill 115). Although conditional on the male proving himself worthy, that is, of being "a man of sense and honour," Richardson firmly upheld the Christian view of the subordination of women, baldly stating: "Subordination is not a Punishment but to perverse or arrogant spirits" (Nussbaum 154). As much as Richardson encouraged and helped eighteenth-century women advance their position within the emerging middle class, their position always remained defined as essentially subordinate to the male, be he God or man.

As Janet Todd astutely notes in her starkly revealing analysis of Richardson's novel, "Pamela: or the Bliss of Servitude": "Most usefully for the servant, the concept of virtue gives a new and powerfu' master in God and so allows [Pamela] proudly to nullify the whole social hierarchy in which Mr B. sets so much store" (67), by relying on another, more privileged, patriarchal hierarchy. When Pamela reminds Mr. B. of his social station and how he is degrading himself by encroaching on his lowly servant, she "forces her master to the correct stance"; for when "she asserts the distance of

maid and master, she manages at the same time to elevate her own lowliness by spiritualizing it. In the Christian scheme, the last is first, the servant of the Lord above the worldly master, and the poor blessed beyond the rich" (65). One of the functions of Richardson's urging of Christian principles of virtue, evident in Pamela's words, is as a distancing technique that keeps Mr. B. safely in his place.

So Pamela beats Mr B. at his own game by accepting his social hierarchy and glorying in her lower rung. She is a humble servant and by refusing any other role she dignifies and valorizes this status. But Pamela also sets up an opposing hierarchy altogether, one which Mr B. must come to accept along with his own. In this one, social rank gives way to individual qualities with which the maidservant is well endowed: beauty, wit, literary accomplishments, gentility and above all virtue. With these it is an easy matter for a servant to become a wife. (Todd 66)

In her application of Foucault's ideas on the deployment of sexuality as the privileging of opposing gender identities over class affiliations, Armstrong reads Pamela's social metamorphosis in this way: as a change from being perceived as an extension of Mr. B.'s property as a lowly servant girl to being recognized as a woman, specifically, the new eighteenth-century, domestic female, who embodies these distinguishing characteristics. Subsequently, Mr. B.'s transformation is also read as that of master to male. Thus the social hierarchy that distinguishes and privileges Mr. B. over Pamela is counterbalanced, making their marriage possible.

This reading, which points to the increasing significance of sexual identity, is only correct in part, since, as Todd

goes on to demonstrate, Pamela's transformation into Mr. B.'s wife exalts her into a role which absorbs and preserves her subservient position. Moreover, as Todd points out, "while describing his new pious ideology of service, Richardson uncovered a psychology of servitude that wickedly allowed the social terms -- maid, master and mistress -- to assume for a while their sexual meaning" (63) according to their explicit power designations. The implied sexual signification of these roles certainly merits attention in applying Foucault's ideas on the deployment of sexuality. The very fact that Foucault chose to use the term "sexuality" rather than gender clearly suggests that sexual desire plays a critical role within this particular heterosexual economy. As we know, the deployment of sexuality did not provide women with equal status as man's companion; furthermore, Foucault maintains that relations of power are what produce desire.

The power relation between master and maid is, of course, particularly relevant in that it comes to parallel the power relation between husband and wife after Mr. B. and Pamela marry, although the sexual dynamics of the former relation are clearly tempered within the sanctity and respectability of marriage. This point is underscored by Pamela's curtsy to Mr. B. during their wedding ceremony and thereafter echoed in her continued response to Mr. B. as "master." As Todd suggests, "Pamela is a proper wife not despite her servitude but because of it." In fact, as Mr. B.'s wife, Pamela

"becomes more servile than ever the servant has been" (68). Pamela's most endearing quality, her ability to counter the presumptions of Mr. B. with verve and disarming honesty, simply evaporates: she no longer dares to challenge or reprimand him and, instead, meekly defers. As if somehow actually defeated by Mr. B. in marriage, Pamela vows, "I will endeavour to conform myself, in all things, to your will" (470). In line with the Christian view on the subordination of women, as Mrs. B., Richardson has Pamela submit.

As Todd recognizes, the particular manner in which Pamela submits to her master prior to their marriage also merits examination. She points out how Mr. B.

likes his servant best on her knees in tears, and Pamela frequently obliges him. The description "I fell down on my knees," usually clutching some part of his lower anatomy, rings through her account of her ordeal. The religious emblem of Mary at the feet of Christ ... gives way ... to the ravishing figure of Sade's Justine, prostrate before the rampant male. (70)

Todd proposes that Pamela's "submission is not the humility of a social servant and wife, but, instead, of erotic object and victim" (69). Indeed, Mr. B. finds Pamela most beautiful when reduced to tears: "I think I never saw her look better though, in my life" (193).

A comparative analysis of Pamela and Clarissa reveals that the constitution of Pamela's "sexualized" identity prefigures the blatantly aggressive victimization of Clarissa despite the fact that Mr. B. does not actually go through with the rape. Although Clarissa is not the servant of the corrupt

aristocrat, Lovelace, when she becomes entirely dependent on him for her protection, her female role as "erotic object and victim" is played out conclusively. Most significantly, the rape of Clarissa and her subsequent death serve as the means of fully illuminating the essentialized, inner quality of this paragon of virtue, who, unlike her more humble counterpart, was unable to effect the reformation of her perpetrator, since he was more thoroughly corrupt.

Even though Mr. B. "reforms," Pamela still marries someone who has made various attempts to rape her, who has, in fact, abducted her and frequently treated her with outright cruelty, not to mention his free fondling of her neck and breasts and his invasive reading of her private letters and journal. Remarkably, Mr. B.'s persistent abuses only serve to fuel Pamela's desire for him: "What is the matter, that with all his ill usage of me, I cannot hate him? ... O what an angel would he be in my eyes yet, if he would cease his attempts, and reform!" (187). Evidently, Mr. B.'s attempts on her chastity are the root of the problem, not his characteristic cruelty and ruthless domination; that is -- in Foucault's terms -- the problem is sexuality and not power. Shortly thereafter, Pamela's probing deepens, but to no avail: "To be sure, he is a handsome fine gentleman; -- What pity his heart is not as good as his appearance! Why can't I hate him?" (206). According to Foucault, the deployment of sexuality "is concerned with the sensations of the body, the quality of

pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible these may be" (106). As Pamela reveals, she is primarily influenced by Mr. B.'s agreeable physical appearance; in addition, one can assume that his position and fortune greatly enhances his desirability, even if this is consciously denied on her part.

However, the main reason that Pamela does not hate Mr. B. is precisely because he does not rape her when he has demonstrated that it is clearly within his power to do so. It is, after all, only when Lovelace follows through with the rape that Clarissa finally disallows any possibility of a reconciliation. Not too long after the climatic rape attempt at Lincolnshire, Pamela mysteriously finds herself writing:

love is not a voluntary thing: Love, did I say? -- But come, I hope not: -- At least it is not, I hope, gone so far as to make me very uneasy: For I know not how it came, nor when it began; but crept, crept it has, like a thief, upon me; and before I knew what was the matter, it looked like love. (260)

So love is like a thief, robbing Pamela of -- what? Her will? Her ability to perceive Mr. B. clearly? Significantly, Pamela does admit concern that her ability to resist Mr. B. outside of marriage may have been seriously undermined; therefore, it follows that love is like a thief because it threatens to rob Pamela of her most treasured "jewel" -- her chastity, the source of her social value. Since Pamela does in fact submit her will to Mr. B.'s in marriage, one can also infer that her "love" for him "robs" Pamela of her ability to fully "possess" her own person.

Todd proposes that within the "sado-masochistic sexual economy" of Pamela, "submission is not an exemplary virtue, but the mask of a masochistic desire" (71, 69). She argues that "it is Mr B.'s sadism that wins" Pamela (70), which implies that Pamela seeks pain. To a certain extent, this is true. As a good Christian, Pamela embraces the suffering her resistance to desire produces, which constitutes, in turn, her virtuous feminine identity. However, Pamela is not conscious of this process. Rather, it is Richardson who collapses humility and humiliation into each other in having the female submit to his moral authority, the authority his representations of the ideal eighteenth-century female have internalized, thus rendering them masochists. As Clarissa comes to realize, the constructions or identity others impose on her cause her pain, but in no way does she indicate that she desires this suffering, although Richardson uses it to exalt her. Critically, what Clarissa cannot say is that Richardson himself is defining her, as an exemplar to her sex, through the very suffering he is imposing on her. Although Clarissa's suffering is obviously much more extreme than Pamela's, Pamela also recognizes that her exalted role as Mr. B.'s wife is a painful one.

As Jocelyn Harris points out, in the first edition of Pamela, volume IV, Pamela comes to perceive her position as wife as "a kind of state of humiliation for a woman" (Harris 42). But Richardson has Pamela rationalize this condition by

adding that "a man of sense and honour ... will look upon you as his equal; and will exalt you the more, for your abasing yourself" (Harris 42). The logic of this statement implies that a woman achieves equality through self-effacement, for which the honourable male will exalt her. In other words, if a woman is both wise and fortunate enough to marry a "good man," he will reward her for devaluing herself. While reinforcing a woman's self-abasement, this keeps her in a precarious and vulnerable position; although she may be regarded as an equal, if from a patronizing perspective, in actuality her status can be withdrawn at any time. As Eagleton points out: "The exaltation of woman, while undoubtedly a partial advance in itself, also serves to shore up the very system which oppresses them. For the eighteenth-century woman ... the pedestal is never very far from the pit" (15), as Clarissa cruelly discovers. Pamela, true to the form Richardson has moulded her in, humbly accepts this position as the God-given fate of all women. Luckily for her, Mr. B. is miraculously transformed into "a man of sense and honour" through her virtuous example.

Richardson, who successfully integrated the puritan ideology of conduct books into the form of the epistolary novel, is an author who requires serious consideration because his immense popularity attests to his influence. Armstrong, however, in her rather naive enthusiasm for Pamela, overestimates the political power Richardson was advocating

for women, although she is right to insist "that one cannot distinguish the production of the new female ideal either from the rise of the novel or from the rise of the new middle classes in England" (8). Armstrong suggests that this can be viewed as a matter of life imitating art, even if that "art" found its earliest expression in the form of conduct books and periodicals that targeted the female reader; but this reading glosses over how Richardson's discourse helped to produce self-regulatory norms of sexual ideology. The early novel, and Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa in particular, clearly participated in promoting the deployment of sexuality by defining socially sanctioned behaviours for women that would help shape their characters and collective identity, thereby giving form to a gendered identity that would mediate in the formation of a new, powerful class. Most significantly, in facilitating the emergence of the middle class, the system of marriage or the deployment of sexuality extended the domain of the dominant class by means of a class mutation; patriarchal power was "reformed" and not eradicated in the formation of this new social group.

Pamela's role, then, whether as servant or wife, is ultimately one of self-denial; her purpose is to serve Mr. B., who embodies male political and public power, whether as corrupt aristocrat or as an upright member of the middle class. Either way, his position is one of privilege and dominance; however, his moral reformation is clearly favoured

by Richardson, which is precisely why he authorizes Pamela's voice: it affects Mr. B.'s transformation, which, in turn, leads to her reward -- her exalted social status as Mrs. B. Clearly recognizing sexuality's potential as "an especially dense transfer point for the relations of power" (Foucault 103), Richardson seems to have envisioned its deployment as a means by which both Mr. B. and Pamela could be socially transformed, a process that actualized his middle-class values. Furthermore, as McKeon points out:

In progressive narrative, the aristocrat's sexual desire represents at bottom the longing for his own alienated honor.... The reformation of the corrupt aristocrat requires the acknowledgement that honor consists not in lineal rank but in chaste virtue. (259)

Confronted with the "truly" virtuous Pamela, Mr. B. comes to precisely this realization.

Despite the fact that Richardson establishes that Pamela is "too pretty to live in a bachelor's house" right from the start, Mr. B., in the early stages of his reformation admits to Pamela, "I see you so watchful over your virtue, that though I hoped to find it otherwise, I cannot but confess my passion for you is increased by it" (8, 223). According to Richardson, a woman's virtue, that is, her inner goodness, served to advance a new, modified patriarchal order, by inspiring morally honourable behaviour in the male. Significantly, McKeon proposes that Mr. B.'s "lust expresses his will to repossess what his behavior announces he has lost to her, both his honor and his externalized conception of

honor, which is now internalized in Pamela's virtue" (367). Moreover, Richardson seems to have clearly understood how a woman's virtue intensified the male's desire to possess her chaste body, which, by this time, was being read in an increasingly sexualized fashion: as saturated with the sexual significance of its reproductive function.

Foucault sums up the situation as one in which "sexuality," as the sum product of the technologies that invested sex with their own power, "constituted 'sex' itself as something desirable" (156). Although Richardson may not have realized the full extent to which sexual desire was discursively produced, he evidently recognized how the discursive production of female sexuality, constituted by virtue, could facilitate a middle-class marriage, the system of marriage Foucault attributes to the deployment of sexuality. For the dynamic of virtue, which incorporates what McKeon identifies as "the transvaluation of honor into virtue," motivates Mr. B.'s reformation. In other words, Pamela embodies specific properties that Mr. B. wants to claim as his own; combined with the sexual signification of her female body, her virtue intensifies his desire for her. Of course, this process was intended to lead to marriage, thus framing the deployment of sexuality within the legal sphere of alliance, while advancing the hegemony of the middle class.

Sexuality, Foucault argues, was "born of a technology of power that was originally focused on alliance" (108), which

suggests that the privileging of gendered identity over class and political affiliations was an extension of the arrangement of marriage under the regime of alliance. Therefore, it follows that the system of marriage of the regime of sexuality was also inspired by the promise of an increase in political and social power. But precisely because the deployment of sexuality succeeded in obscuring its basis in alliance, its chief motivation -- power -- was also obscured (107). In order to fully grasp how sexuality operates as "a transfer point for the relations of power" (103) in the ways in which Pamela's and Mr. B.'s desire for each other is fuelled, it is worthwhile to examine how their mutual interest is actually motivated by power rather than by sexual desire.

Pamela begins immediately after the death of Mr. B.'s mother, who was a widow, which makes Mr. B. the sole master of the estate, granting him an extensive position of power and authority over the household which includes Pamela, Lady B.'s waiting-maid. It is at this point, when Mr. B. becomes Pamela's new master, that he begins to act on his desire for her, since he is no longer morally constrained by the presence of his mother. However, it is during the attempted rape at Lincolnshire that his dominant motives are most graphically revealed. Once Mr. B., with the assistance of Mrs. Jewkes, has Pamela helplessly pinned to the bed, he declares, "You see now you are in my power!" (213). He threatens to rape Pamela, that is to forcefully deprive her of her virginity, unless she

gives in to his proposal that she live as his kept mistress, but his utterance suggests that the threatened rape is not actually motivated by uncontrollable sexual desire; rather, it is a means of forcing Pamela to submit to his desire to have free access to and dominion over her body as an erotic object.

At this point it is still not possible for Mr. B. to conceive of marrying a commoner; in fact, soon after the attempted rape, he admits, "I cannot endure the thought of marriage, even with a person of equal or superior degree to myself" (223). Mr. B. bitterly rejects the idea that he must make a marriage of alliance within his class, that is, to someone as indulged and spoilt as he is, although this very cynicism makes him ripe for change. Pamela, with her training as servant, promises to be infinitely more manageable as a wife.

Of course, Pamela does not give in to Mr. B.'s threat; instead, she faints, "so that they both, from the cold sweats that I was in, thought me dying" (213). Significantly, in this pivotal scene, Pamela's words do not prevent the rape; it is the physical manifestation of her powerlessness, which, as Armstrong herself notes, produces the fear in Mr. B. that actually prevents him from following through with the rape. Furthermore, this is not the only instance when Pamela loses consciousness; this trait, which Todd describes as "the happy knack of fainting," is attributed to the female as an expression of feminine weakness or helplessness, that is, of

the primacy of the body it defines. At several critical points, Pamela "both preserves her innocence ... and asserts her feminine gentility in one swoon" (Todd 67). Paradoxically, it is Pamela's powerlessness, her essentialized femininity, that becomes the starting point from which she is able to gain power, although her words provide the means by which Pamela can articulate Christian principles of virtue and thereby exalt her powerlessness. As McKeon notes, "Pamela's essential power is the passive and negative one of being virtuous" (364). Moreover, in Foucault's terms, her virtue signifies the lack upon which male desire is predicated. Although Pamela's virtue is the source of her power as a female, her virtue signals the absence of power: femininity.

Critically, Pamela's empowerment remains entirely contingent on the benevolence of others who have power over her. McKeon points out that, as an aristocrat, Mr. B.'s power is automatic, a given; determined by "the reigning distribution of power," it derives from "the moral authority of the social order by which it is conferred" (364). Had Mr. B. actually gone through with the rape, he would have lost what little moral authority he maintained through his rank in the eyes of the reader, as does Lovelace. As McKeon himself suggests, this scene functions as a dramatic enactment of the transference of power that Foucault, in turn, perceives at the interface of sexuality in the relation of power between men and women.

Instead of raping Pamela, Mr. B. allows her to preserve her chastity, silently acknowledging the value of her virtue and how it "cannot be repossessed as alienated honor; it can only be imitated" (McKeon 368). For to violate Pamela's chaste body and devalue her manifest virtue would be to further contaminate himself. The spectacle of Mr. B. hovering menacingly over Pamela's near-naked body while dressed in Nan's clothing suggests that he has already contaminated himself. Although Mr. B. disguised himself as Nan in order to gain access to Pamela's bed chamber, from this point onward, he no longer manifests any such gender confusion.

In recognizing the value of Pamela's virtue, Mr. B. is offered the opportunity to restore his lapsed honour and thereby fully reclaim the authority of his rank. This process achieves its complete effects over the course of his reading the body of her writing, onto which Pamela's sexuality is now fully and successfully displaced. In this manner, male and female sexuality clearly function as transfer points in the exchange of power: Mr. B. marries Pamela instead of raping her, thus bestowing on her his exalted social status, while she in turn reforms the moral authority of his class, injecting the exhausted libertine code with progressive, middle-class values. Although McKeon maintains that "Pamela's value is located in her own person" (368), it is critically important to recognize that her feminine subjectivity, her sexual identity, is constituted by virtue. Specifically,

Pamela's value is located in her internalization of Christian principles of virtue.

Nevertheless, as McKeon determines, "if Pamela's reward for virtue is to have meaning, the moral authority of the social order by which it is conferred must remain intact despite the evidence of social injustice manifest in the very need for her reward" (364). In this manner, the system of marriage of the deployment of sexuality could effect a relatively smooth social transformation. Although the explicit sexual overtones of this potential rape scene make it appear to be sexually motivated, Mr. B.'s declaration of power testifies to the fact that it is not. Indeed, Foucault, in opposition to Freud, argues that "[s]exuality must not be described as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely" (103). Rather, sexuality serves power, which is always the primary motivator.

The rape of Clarissa, which Richardson himself describes as a "dark transaction," provides a much more potent example of the effects sexuality can achieve as "an especially dense transfer point for the relations of power." In distinct contrast to Mr. B., Lovelace, the more thoroughly corrupt aristocrat, follows through with the rape of Clarissa. Although Clarissa is unconscious, it is not because she has fainted, but because Lovelace has drugged her. As a "vile"

rake, Lovelace exploits female powerlessness to its fullest; he uses sexuality as a means of conquest, that is, as a means of dominating women. Initially, the relation of power between Lovelace and Clarissa is figured as that of "conqueror" and "victim." Lovelace desperately believes that the rape will provide the means by which the morally superior Clarissa will be humbled and thereby submit to his masculine power and desire outside of marriage, on his own terms. Despite realizing that this rape may prove to be his undoing, Lovelace still imagines that he can make it up to Clarissa, if need be, by marrying her, so he proceeds.

Lovelace's plan backfires. In robbing Clarissa of her chastity and attempting to physically "possess" her, the truly virtuous Clarissa eludes his grasp, resulting in Lovelace's disintegration. As McKeon suggests, alienated honour cannot be repossessed, only imitated. Although Lovelace thought it possible to reform, he proves to be so thoroughly corrupt that he cannot; as Lovelace himself recognizes, he has become a machine, driven by a compulsion to dominate women sexually. In raping Clarissa, Lovelace is meant to lose any remnant of moral authority his high social rank entitles him to.

Despite the insistence of certain of Clarissa's readers that she be allowed to marry Lovelace,¹ Clarissa's rejection

¹ According to Richardson's biographers, Eaves and Kimpel, Mrs. Pilkington and Colley Cibber were among the first to learn of Clarissa's tragic ending. Along with Fielding, who praised Clarissa, they all wanted "a happy ending," in which marriage would nullify the rape (177, 295). Lady Bradshaigh, perhaps the most

of him serves to reinforce his loss, while granting her a substantial degree of "moral" authority. By escaping Lovelace and withdrawing into herself in order to devote herself to God, with whom she now sought union in death, Clarissa finds her essential inner virtue intact. Moreover, her death, although tragic, provides the means by which her virtuous feminine essence can triumph with powerful finality over her rape-stained body. Most importantly, Clarissa presents a testament of virtue which displaces the female body altogether, thereby relocating the source of feminine identity in a woman's spiritualized inner depths and subordinating the sexual signification of her body. Richardson's novel offers a model of "noble" virtue which other young eighteenth-century women were clearly meant to emulate and internalize. As an "imaginary ideal," Clarissa serves as a powerful and effective means of regulating female sexuality in accordance with Christian principles of virtue for its subsequent deployment. Significantly, the power-reversal the rape activates also leads to Lovelace's death. However, as a vile rake, Lovelace is not redeemed. Lovelace is obliterated in order to be replaced with a "Good Man." Although this transaction is "dark," it is, nevertheless, a transaction.

famous of Richardson's readers, who signed her correspondence 'Belfour' in imitation of Belford, begged Richardson to allow Clarissa to marry Lovelace, whom she could not help liking. After learning of the rape, she pleaded with Richardson that he blot out that one fateful night (222).

III

Female Sovereignty: Richardson's Application of Locke

In her useful but conservative readings of Richardson's novels, Jocelyn Harris draws attention to Richardson's reaction to the criticism Pamela produced, suggesting that he deeply regretted the potential danger his first novel posed.

For the rest of his life Richardson would be trying to make up for the mistaken conclusion he seemed to have reached in Pamela, "that sad, that inconsiderate notion, that a reform'd rake makes the best husband," by warning that subordination is only tolerable with a man of sense and honour. (43)

Not only is Clarissa subjected to the rape that never happens in Pamela, thus demonstrating that Lovelace is indeed morally beneath Clarissa, but the rape provides the means by which Richardson can test the limits of feminine virtue. In Clarissa, virtue becomes femininity's insoluble essence, determining female worth according to what Hill defines as the Puritan "principle that chastity of mind is more important than chastity of the body" (116); after all, it is the mind that regulates the body. For Hill, Clarissa's virtue is such that "[h]er dishonour was outward, formal only: internally she remained spotless" (116), that is, devoid of illicit desire. In order to maintain the sympathy of his readers and Clarissa's status as an exemplar to her sex, Richardson attempted to convince them that virtue is an inner, spiritual

quality, the very essence of femininity itself.

Despite the fact that Clarissa faults herself for her vanity and pride in believing she could reform Lovelace, Richardson clearly implies that her sad fate is largely the result of the Harlowes' refusal to accept the new social identity of the eighteenth-century woman. The Harlowes' attempts to maintain the priorities of alliance without adding to those of the newly emerging regime of sexuality make Clarissa a victim of the difficulties this transition gave rise to. Although at odds with her family, in Clarissa we find the early modern woman *par excellence*. What distinguishes Clarissa from Pamela is that her virtue has been internalized to such an extent as to appear entirely "natural," the very essence of her being, whereas Pamela's virtuousness is presented as behaviour she learnt from her poor but honest parents. However, Clarissa does share certain characteristics with Pamela: Richardson draws attention to Clarissa's modesty and thrift and gives a detailed account of the domestic management skills she has conscientiously developed, in spite of her higher social status. In fine, Clarissa, possesses all the middle-class values originally advanced in Pamela and, once again, exemplifies the new social identity of the virtuous and domestic eighteenth-century woman her female readers were meant to imitate.

In line with Stone's findings, Hill determines that it is in the Puritan conception of marriage that "fidelity in the

wife, and pre-marital chastity, begin to be insisted on with a new vehemence. Since love was ideally the basis of marriage, then the marriage must be inviolate" in order to ensure patrilineality (115). Significantly, Hill adds, "Insistence on absolute premarital chastity goes hand-in-hand with the bourgeois conception of absolute property" (116). While suggesting that the privatization of property mediated in the development of the marriage system of the deployment of sexuality in England, Hill points to the value of chastity as a much-coveted property in the female. In Richardson's scheme, virtue, as the privileging of the chaste mind over the body, constitutes female sexuality in a manner that rigorously maintains her social desirability. As such, virtue represents the source of a woman's potential empowerment within the confines of eighteenth-century English society.

As the dominant and privileged sex, only the male was socially sanctioned in making a marriage proposal. Since women were defined as essentially passive, they were strictly prohibited from seeking out a husband in a manner that could be construed as overtly active or aggressive. A woman could only respond to the advances of the male in so far as she remained discreet in her expression of interest, without making her desire known, and, like Pamela, protected her chastity at all costs.

Certainly, it is worth commenting on how the eighteenth-century code of femininity allowed a contradictory exception

to the essentialized passivity of the virtuous female. Both Pamela and Clarissa become actively assertive in their duty to guard their virtue, thus demonstrating the extent to which their passivity is conditional. As Mr. B.'s servant, Pamela informs him:

I will bear anything you can inflict upon me with patience, even to the laying down of my life, to shew my obedience to you in other cases; but I cannot be patient, I cannot be passive, when my virtue is at stake! It would be criminal in me, if I was. (220-221)

Pamela's words reveal that the "law" of the patriarchal order is still effective; it has been internalized. After having been raped by Lovelace, Clarissa expresses her sense of overwhelming guilt in terms of patriarchal law: "My Crime was the corresponding with him at first, when prohibited so to do by those who had the right to my obedience" (985). She is, of course, referring to her family, ruled by her father. In fact, Richardson singles out this act of filial disobedience as Clarissa's crucial error (Eaves and Kimpel 276). Although Richardson challenged the old patriarchal values of alliance, he did not abandon patriarchal ideology altogether.

In protecting her chastity, Pamela, like Clarissa, is desperately trying to preserve the site of her body's social value. Pamela clearly understands the socioeconomic value of her body as a commodity, as her response to Mr. B.'s articles in his written proposal that she live as his kept mistress indicates: "to lose the best jewel, my virtue, would be poorly recompensed by those you propose to give me" (199). Although

Pamela believes that her virtue is worth more than what Mr. B. is offering her, she, too, expresses the value of her chastity in tangible, material terms. Effectively, she is holding out for a better proposal, one that would be socially sanctioned. For Pamela is acutely aware of the consequences of living as Mr. B.'s kept mistress: it would lead to rejection by her family and her social ruin. Although she denies that she hopes to marry Mr. B., telling him, "I have not the presumption to hope such an honour" (229), a few pages later, when she finds out about his plan for a "sham wicked marriage," she writes her parents, "Here should I have been deluded with the hopes of a happiness that my highest ambition could have had aspired to!" (235). Indeed, Pamela does entertain hopes of marrying Mr. B. After all, her virtue is meant to make her socially desirable by signalling the purity of her sexualized body.

Effectively, Richardson's ideology of virtue, reflected in the veil of femininity as women's spiritual essence, helped disguise the commodification of women. Moreover, as "metaphysical objects," women, such as Pamela and Clarissa, continued to serve a masculinist economy. As Irigaray suggests, as "commodities, women are a mirror of value of and for man.... They yield to him their natural and social value as a locus of imprints, marks, and mirage of his activity" (177). The veil of feminine virtue, as inscribed by Richardson, served to mask the commodification of women by

spiritualizing the process.

Armstrong argues that by the eighteenth century, the "gendered field of information contested a dominant political order which depended, among other things, on representing women as economic and political objects" (15). In this literature, which would include both Pamela and Clarissa, women, in their newly emerging role, may not have figured directly as the "economic and political objects" that women of the aristocracy or propertied classes were perceived to be under the regime of alliance, but women clearly remained such within the ideological framework of the new sexual politics. The unfolding of sexual identity under the regime of sexuality parallels the process of commodification. In other words, gendered identity is a manifestation of commodification.

In apparent agreement with Locke's assertion that "every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself" (19), Richardson advocated a woman's sovereignty over her person or body as a property, in particular, as the site of her treasured chastity. Significantly, Locke qualifies his use of property as that "which men have in their persons as well as goods" (90), which includes their individual "life, liberty and estate" (45). Although Pamela, as a mere commoner, had no goods or estate, she vigorously fought for her right to liberty, which, for women, consisted mainly of the right to preserve their chastity for marriage. Both Pamela and Clarissa repeatedly

insist on this right when confronted by the old patriarchal values of the morally corrupt aristocracy. In distinct contrast to Pamela's conception of being her "own" person, Mr. B., prior to his reformation, treats Pamela as if she were an extension of his property as his servant girl and takes "liberties" with her, such as touching her neck, kissing her and freely sliding his hand into her bosom, as previously noted. Lovelace also abuses his position of power until, as he relates to Belford, he can go no farther (883). As a rake or libertine, Lovelace perceives Clarissa's body as an erotic object he can claim as his own, outside of marriage, either through seduction or rape.

The one advantage women gained in being able to claim sovereignty over their bodies was that it made it possible for them to have some say in their choice of a marriage partner. Under the regime of sexuality, women could either accept or reject a proposal, which provided them with a degree of authority over their bodies and their lives that women had previously been denied under the regime of alliance. Nevertheless, in 1706, Mary Astell, one of the earliest feminists writers, argued, "a woman ... can't properly be said to choose, all that is allowed her is to refuse or accept what is offered" (Stone 275). Furthermore, Eagleton points out:

If the burgeoning ideology of romantic love loosened the constraints of patriarchy, with its respect for the child's individual choice of a marriage partner, it also emotionally blackmailed the woman into even deeper bondage to her husband. (16)

As we have seen, not only did Pamela's moral authority derive from an ideology that remained patriarchal in its fundamental arrangement, but her exalted social status also derived entirely from her husband. Although Pamela herself came to understand how thoroughly dependent she was on Mr. B. for her "equal" status within marriage, Richardson did not have her contest this contradiction.

Harris cites Locke's argument, in which he claims that men, specifically, "[h]usbands and fathers ... had no natural authority over women" in line with "the Christian doctrine of souls and his own theory of mind, for if all are born equal and equally capable of reason, then none is innately superior" (18). Evidently, the application of Locke's principles did not extend with full equality to women in practice. In fact, English law "made the husband the exclusive owner of all property in marriage" (Beebee 103), which proved problematic for Clarissa. Because Clarissa's paternal grandfather leaves her a substantial inheritance for having proven exceptional, Clarissa's patriarchal family come to deny her the right to choose a husband in order to maintain control of the family fortune.

In accordance with Richardson's views on the eighteenth-century female's role within society, Clarissa does not want material or financial independence and obligingly turns her inheritance over to her father, so that he can determine its best use, thus ensuring that it remain in the Harlowe family.

At the same time, Clarissa's father is to provide her with an allowance, which he is free to determine. In this manner, Clarissa hopes to partially minimize her financial dependence on her family, since she would like to be able to consider the single life as an option to marriage. Effectively, Clarissa gave up her claim to the legacy, while confirming her absolute fidelity and dependence on her family.

Although Richardson was arguing in favour of a woman's sovereignty over her body, he was not advocating her financial independence. In citing his letters, Felicity Nussbaum points out that Richardson considered independence "improper" for a woman, since it left her "vulnerable to victimization." Indeed, Clarissa's victimization is triggered by her inheritance, but ironically, her vulnerability is greatly increased after she relinquishes it. Her victimization is largely due to her family's rigid adherence to the old-fashioned, patriarchal values of alliance, which precipitates her dependence on Lovelace. The Harlowes practically deliver Clarissa into the hands of this hopelessly corrupt aristocrat, who, as her protector, becomes her rapist.

Immediately prior to the novel's commencement, Lovelace makes his appearance on the scene. Having heard of Clarissa's charms, in particular her famed virtue, Lovelace arranges to meet her through her Uncle Anthony; instead, he is introduced to Clarissa's older sister, Arabella. Realizing the mistake, Lovelace promptly distances himself from Arabella in order to

pursue Clarissa. Although Arabella resents this slight, the Harlowes initially encourage Lovelace's interest, since they are not yet fully convinced of his corrupt character, believing him to be simply an aristocrat of "faulty morals." Moreover, they perceive him as excellent marriage material in light of his social status: his uncle is a Lord, a title Lovelace is to inherit. Since the matter of Clarissa's inheritance has not been legally settled, the Harlowes are afraid that if she marries, her inheritance will be transferred into her husband's hands; therefore, it becomes imperative that she make the most of her assets.

The Harlowes' intentions for Clarissa are informed by the fact that their original plans for their only son, James, were overturned when the grandfather left his entire estate to Clarissa. Furthermore, the very inheritance that makes Clarissa financially independent threatens to undermine the authority of her family's patriarchal structure and results in considerable jealousy and resentment on the part of her two older siblings, since "[t]here was always the possibility that the uncles might follow their father's example" and concentrate their resources on her (104). When Clarissa's brother, James, exposes Lovelace and is wounded in the ensuing duel, the Harlowes quickly seek an alternate match for Clarissa. Convinced of her prepossession for Lovelace, they forbid her to continue to write to him, a correspondence they had initially encouraged.

The issue of a woman's right to choose a marriage partner figures prominently in Clarissa: it produces a direct conflict between Clarissa and her socially ambitious family when they decide she must marry Solmes, whom she finds physically repulsive as well as intellectually and morally deficient. The Harlowes consider Solmes to be the ideal match: his substantial estate assures them of increased power. In exchange for Clarissa's hand in marriage, Solmes promises to settle all he is worth upon Clarissa; and if she were to die childless, and he has no children by any other marriage, to leave everything to the Harlowes instead of to his own despised family, thus finalizing her family's decision (Clarissa 81). For the Harlowes, the motives of affection do not figure prominently in marriage; fortune and rank hold priority.

What we find in Clarissa is familial denial of a woman's sovereignty over her body, a prerequisite to marriage under the regime of sexuality. In contrast to Pamela, in this novel, the old patriarchal values of alliance and progressive ideology are irreconcilably polarized. Although the Harlowe family, who began their social ascent as mercantile capitalists, are now part of the rising middle class, they represent the landed interests of the ruling-class patriarchy. As Eagleton pointedly notes:

Richardson writes at a transition point in this history, where a growing regard for the free affections of the subject deadlocks with a still vigorous patriarchal tyranny. If the general eighteenth-century trend was

towards the rights of women in choosing their husbands, *Clarissa* would suggest that older patriarchal attitudes were still lethally active. It is because that novel is produced at a transitional point that it can dramatize the contradictions of ruling-class patriarchy as vividly as it does. (16)

In *Clarissa*, Richardson exposes the dark side of the regime of alliance while exploring the female's vulnerability to sexual exploitation as a means of furthering his argument in favour of a more progressive ideology. Eagleton suggests that although Richardson himself "was by no means adverse to a sound profit, that motive took second place to the nurturing of Christian virtue" (8), which Edward Said describes as "the art of connecting principle with profit over time" (83). Richardson was not opposed to the social ambitions of the rising middle class, rather he wanted them to conform to what he considered to be the higher principles of Christianity in their pursuit of power.

Looking back on the Harlowe's family history, we find that *Clarissa's* father made a socially advantageous marriage, in which he increased his land holdings substantially and advanced his status among the gentry or "lesser" nobility. His two brothers, John and Anthony, did not marry; instead, as successful mercantile capitalists, they devoted their time and energy to financial gain. Anthony, in fact, "had acquired a great fortune in the Indies" (37). However, once their brother married, John and Anthony assisted in the management of the estate he acquired.

Since all the Harlowe family's assets were to be

mobilized behind Clarissa's brother, in accordance with the patrilineal function of traditional marriages of property or alliance, he was freely granted the authority and power this role engenders, authority which overshadows that of the father. Consequently, James is able to manipulate his father at Clarissa's expense and to turn the whole family against her. For James was to provide the Harlowe family with a peerage in order to raise their status to a "greater" nobility. As McKeon points out:

toward the end of the Middle Ages, the peerage was separated from the rest of the nobility by the creation of the ranks of duke, marquess, viscount, and baron, a "greater nobility" that is sharply distinguished from the "lesser" by being hereditary in title and by entailing the legal right to sit in the House of Lords. And on this precedent, "greater" and "lesser" nobility might be understood to express the difference between "peers" or "aristocracy," and "gentry." (159)

By the eighteenth-century, this distinction was no longer clear cut, since, as McKeon adds, many contemporary writers conflated gentility with gentry, thereby treating the latter as part of the aristocracy or nobility. Nevertheless, it seems that a very real distinction can be made between the lesser and greater nobility in terms of their respective political power.

Relying on Habakkuk's essay, "Marriage Settlements in the 18th century," Hill maintains that the chief motivation for the increase in property marriages during the early part of that century was determined by the fact that

[p]olitical power was becoming more dependent on the possession of landed wealth than it had been in the

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when it owed more to royal favour; and so among the upper classes marriage was bent more systematically to the accumulation of landed wealth. (102)

Of course, this was "at the expense of other motives for marriage" (Hill 102), which included love and affection, mutual compatibility and sexual desirability. Evidently, the system of marriage of the deployment of sexuality was not achieved without resistance and often at odds with marriages of alliance, a timely factor which Richardson seems to have been keenly aware of, since this conflict corresponds to Clarissa's actual point of departure.

As Richardson presents it, Clarissa's estrangement from her upwardly mobile family, her subsequent rape and eventual death are all the tragic consequences of the failure of the old patriarchal order of alliance, whose values were now dominated by greed and lust. Both the Harlowes and Lovelace view Clarissa as property they can claim as their own, refusing her sovereignty over her chaste body. As rich property owners who want to raise their family's status through alliance, the Harlowes effectively offer up Clarissa for a legally framed rape within marriage. As a corrupt aristocrat, Lovelace views women as sex objects to be freely exploited outside of marriage.

Towards the end of the novel, Lovelace's claim to ownership of Clarissa's body is gruesomely expressed in his desire "to preserve the charmer from decay" (1383), to have her embalmed and her heart preserved in spirits. Lovelace

perceives Clarissa's body as an object or property he, too, can claim as his own, particularly after having "possessed" her, even if through rape. However, once Clarissa is dead, he fetishizes that body, clearly revealing his inability to relate to Clarissa as a human being with her own rights. Although Richardson tries to demonstrate that Clarissa had the ultimate right to ownership of her body, once raped, he too has her reject it, reducing it to a "nothing" (1421), so that her virtuous feminine essence can dominate triumphantly.

As a tragic enactment of resistance to the female's sovereignty over her body, the conflict central to Clarissa revolves around the class struggle between the old patriarchal values of alliance and the progressive ideology of the middle-class, which plays itself out in the struggle for ownership of Clarissa's chaste body. Harris, in fact, describes Clarissa as a "Lockean woman in a household of Filmerian men" of absolutist, "Supreme Power" (52). Locke's principles inform both Pamela and Clarissa; moreover, they serve as a means of advancing the social position of women in accordance with Christian principles of virtue, thereby enabling the system of marriage of the regime of sexuality. In contradistinction, Filmer, author of Patriarcha, is clearly aligned with the regime of alliance, of absolute patriarchal authority.

Although Clarissa's father accuses her of being "perverse" when she will not yield to his choice of husband, Richardson repeatedly emphasizes that she would gladly have

submitted to his authority had he only adopted that distinguishing characteristic of the newly defined male and been "reasonable." Richardson makes it clear that Clarissa sincerely wanted to be a dutiful daughter, but could not fulfil her father's tyrannical order for "filial obedience" as "an absolute and peremptory requirement" (Harris 52) and marry Solmes. The underlying notion that Clarissa would make the ideal wife to "a man of sense and honour," one worthy of her affections, were the deployment of her sexuality not obstructed by reactionary and corrupt forces is, of course, implicit.

Clarissa's ruin can be viewed as a consequence of her family's rejection of progressive, middle-class values, as propounded by Richardson, since Clarissa exemplifies the ideal eighteenth-century woman. Clarissa's domestic talents are trivialized according to her family's scheme and her writing actually becomes a point of contention in the eyes of her father, who persists in the belief that writing remain strictly a male occupation. The tragedy in Clarissa is that her family only comes to realize the destructive consequences of their actions once it has proven too late. As Hill puts it, Clarissa "represents the supreme criticism of property marriage" (115) or marriages of alliance. In advancing the need for social change, Richardson was arguing for a woman's sovereignty over her body, although he was clearly attempting to impose his own construction of the principle of chastity of

mind on the female, thereby constituting female sexuality for its subsequent deployment.

Despite Richardson's support of a woman's sovereignty over her body as the site of her chastity, because a woman "owns" her body, it was clearly her social obligation or duty to protect its value. Clarissa's death underscores this reality, since her body had lost its social value. As Hill points out: "There was no room in a commercial society for flawed goods" (117). Clarissa's rape comes to signify an outward stain on her virtue that society would not willingly overlook, unless she married her rapist. But, as Hill suggests, "Clarissa had advanced beyond the conventional marriage-covers-all morality which makes Pamela so nauseating" (107).

Although rejected by her family and a social outcast, legally Clarissa was still entitled to her inheritance. She could have fought to reclaim it and become independent; however, this was not a possibility Richardson was willing to pursue, although Clarissa's most cherished friend, Anna Howe, encourages her to do so. Instead, Clarissa spirals downward in her role as victim and loses almost all control over the world around her. Finally, in accord with Locke's principles, the sole thing Clarissa can claim as her own is her life, so death becomes her last resort, the only means she has of asserting her will. In having Clarissa choose death, Richardson idealized the victimization of women.

IV

Female Sexuality: Uncovering the Violence of Its Constitution

Richardson's novels evidently participate in what Laura Brown identifies as the eighteenth-century "cultural concern to penetrate the mystery of the commodity" (120). Brown proposes that in early eighteenth-century English literary culture within the context of mercantile capitalist ideology, the "enigmatic character" of the commodity is represented by the problematic female figure (120). Following her Marxist readings of the literature of that period, Richardson's discursive production of femininity's essence can be seen as an attempt to retrieve the human essence that was lost in a society in the early stages of commodification. However, Brown presupposes that there is a human essence to be retrieved. Indeed, an examination of Pamela and Clarissa, in particular, reveals the extent to which this essence is a product of discourse, an effect of the process of spiritualization that constitutes the imaginary ground of Richardson's discursive production of female sexuality.

In her examination of the representation of women in early eighteenth-century English literature, Brown argues that commodification "is offered as a natural and essential extension of female sexuality, and even of the female body

itself" (85). Her analysis of the constellation of contradictions embodied in the constitution of female sexuality is powerfully drawn. In distinct contrast to Armstrong, Brown's emphasis is on the violence implicit in the constitution of female sexuality. She determines that

female sexuality is both discursively passive and structurally threatening, an object of violence both on account of its vulnerability and on account of its power; the violence that it programmatically elicits both constitutes it and is provoked by it, and its violation is both a source of pleasure and an assertion of vengeance. (74)

Because female sexuality is defined as essentially passive in opposition to male sexuality, the spectre of female desire remains a threat to the patriarchal order within the structural arrangement of this "artificial binary relation between the sexes." Should female desire emerge as active in its own right, it would destabilize the fragile construction of masculine identity, undermine male privilege and "disrupt stable male relationships and hierarchies" (73). Hence, the female body becomes an object of violence; it systematically provokes male aggression in order to reinforce and perpetuate masculine domination.

Of particular relevance is that Brown's definition of female sexuality fits Lovelace's perception of Clarissa precisely: not only does Clarissa's beautiful and chaste body represent a source of pleasure to Lovelace, but his violent penetration of that body asserts vengeance as well as an attempt to destroy the source of Clarissa's power -- her

virtue. In the very first letter of Lovelace's that we come to in Clarissa, addressed to his friend and fellow rake, John Belford, Lovelace declares his love for "the divine Clarissa Harlowe," describing her as "this angel of a woman." Overwhelmed by Clarissa's presence, Lovelace, quite out of character, finds himself momentarily at a loss for words as he struggles to express the extent to which her exceptional virtue has increased and intensified his desire for her: "And the devil of it, that love increasing, with her -- what shall I call it? -- 'tis not scorn -- 'tis not pride -- 'tis not the insolence of an adored beauty -- but 'tis to virtue" (142). Fully inspired, Lovelace even suggests that it may now be possible for him to reform.

Lovelace interprets Clarissa's virtue as an indication that she is devoid of sexual desire, which is what makes her an angel, since "there is no sex in ethereals" (704). However, he still wants tangible proof: "All that's excellent in her sex is this lady! -- Until by *matrimonial* or *equal* intimacies I have found her less than angel, it is impossible to think of any other" (147). Although in awe of Clarissa's virtue, Lovelace is also aroused by it; in fact, he wants to have sex with her in order to verify that her virtue is, indeed, genuine and not yet another instance of female duplicity. If Clarissa were to prove less than an angel, it would mean that she is like other woman, sexually yielding and desirous. Despite the eighteenth-century notion that women

were devoid of sexual desire, it seems empirical evidence persistently dictated otherwise. As we shall see, Richardson interpreted bodily desire in a woman as physical evidence of her moral corruption.

Of course, as a rake, Lovelace has every intention of testing Clarissa's virtue before marrying her: "shall I not try the virtue I intend upon full proof, to reward...?" (608). He wants "the grand proof," that is sexual proof of her lack of desire, so as to determine "whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome" (657). Lovelace believes that if Clarissa yields to him once, she will yield again, since he is convinced that "*once subdued, always subdued*" (675). So far this has been his experience with women. Consequently, if Clarissa proves to be merely a "woman" and not an angel, there is no point in marrying her. Lovelace fully expects that in having sex with Clarissa, even if it means raping her, she will be forced to surrender to her desire for him.

However, should Clarissa prove devoid of sexual desire while being raped, then Lovelace can safely marry her without any fear that she will be unfaithful. Lovelace wants to be absolutely certain that Clarissa does not have any sexual feelings or bodily desire because this would threaten his ability to dominate and control her within marriage. According to Lovelace's reasoning, if Clarissa were to prove an angel, his obsessive fears and insecurities, along with his felt need for vengeance, could finally be laid to rest. He

refers to his first love,

that quality-jilt, whose infidelity I have vowed to revenge upon as many of the sex as shall come into my power.... But upon recollecting what I was then, and comparing it with what I find in myself now, I cannot say that I was ever in love before. (143)

Apparently Lovelace's first "love" committed one of the greatest offenses a female can perpetrate on a male: she desired another man. For this Lovelace has resolved to make all women pay. Lovelace's attitude highlights the dominant, eighteenth-century male perception of female desire as potentially threatening, since it is socially subversive, that is, it undermines male power.

Although Lovelace wants to believe that his love for Clarissa has changed him, he explicitly states:

there are so many stimulatives to such a spirit as mine in this affair, besides love: such a field for stratagem and contrivance, which thou knowest to be the delight of my heart. Then the rewarding end of all -- to carry off such a girl as this, in spite of all her watchful and implacable friends; and in spite of a prudence and reserve that I never met with in any of the sex. What a triumph! -- What a triumph over the whole sex! And then such a revenge to gratify, which is only at present politically reined in, eventually to break forth with the greater fury. (147)

And break forth it does. Sometime later, just prior to the actual rape, which is long deferred, Lovelace writes Belford, "My revenge, my sworn revenge, is nevertheless (adore her as I will) uppermost in my heart! ... I am half sorry to say that I find a pleasure in playing the tyrant over what I love" (789). Quoting Edmund Waller, "*Women are born to be controlled*," Lovelace maintains that a "tyrant husband makes

a dutiful wife" (670). Indeed, Mr. B., who, as a rake, proved decidedly less ruthless than Lovelace, also knew the pleasure he could derive from his position of power by making Pamela suffer. Subsequently, within this master/slave configuration, he found the most dutiful of wives.

In her readings of theatrical representations of the period, Brown goes on to demonstrate how, by mid century, "commodification takes the place of violence against women; in other words, the figure of commodification is superimposed upon the brutal violation of the female body, and through that superimposition, comes to supersede it" (85). Evidence of this figuration can be found in Pamela. As we have seen, Pamela's transformation from a sexually desirable object vulnerable to Mr. B.'s violent exploitation into a commodity that is socially valuable hinges on his recognition of her virtue, her essentialized femininity, a process that parallels Mr. B.'s reformation, when his attempts to physically violate Pamela's chaste body cease. More precisely, Pamela maintains the status of a sexually desirable commodity either way, but becomes politically and economically valuable once Mr. B. accepts that her virtue is indeed genuine. For Richardson's discursive production of female sexuality participates in the process of commodification.

Although McKeon argues that Richardson attempted to establish "that Pamela's value is located in her person, not in her ability to transmit the value of others" (368),

Pamela's marriage to Mr. B. did eventually lead to his use of her body as a site of patrilineality, although Richardson seems to have deliberately postponed this occurrence, since it is only in the sequel that Pamela bears seven children to Mr. B., the first of which is, tellingly, male (McKeon 498n15). If Richardson was attempting to repudiate the commodification of the female body, he succeeded in veiling its commodification more densely by projecting Pamela's "spiritualized" inner depths onto the sexual significations of the surface of her body. Consequently, he rendered the veil of femininity more opaque, thereby glossing over the underlying violence by which female sexuality was being constituted. Fundamentally what changes is the form in which the violence against her is manifest.

Certainly, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that Mr. B. continues to transgress Pamela's boundaries by demanding access to her letters and journal, a violation of her "goods" and "person" that Richardson clearly endorses, since it produces the truth of her sex, that is, proof of her virtue, and eventuates in Mr. B.'s reform. In fact, Pamela's existence depends on this transgression, which signals Richardson's collusion in the violence by which female sexuality is constituted. Moreover, as Gwilliam points out:

In Richardson's fictions ... the woman is produced to some degree by an imaginative transvestism on Richardson's part, which sometimes gives the effect of a masquerade. However, this masquerade, because it is seen as primarily an attribute of femininity, seems for many readers to revert to the female character who is its

object, rather than originating in its male author. Feminine hypocrisy and duplicity are thus convenient fictions potentially covering masculine identification with femininity. (20)

In redefining femininity as the incommensurate opposite of masculinity, Richardson himself may very well have been resisting the conscious assimilation of this identification, which would have revealed the masquerade of masculinity and exposed the threatening spectre of female desire underlying the construction of virtue. Indeed, Watt points out that "there is much in [Richardson's] letters to suggest that he had a deep personal identification with the opposite sex which went far beyond social preference or cultural rapport" (153).

Remarkably, the assumption that masquerade is a feminine attribute became part of the Freudian psychoanalytic tradition, which accepts femininity as being essentially just that -- a masquerade. Although Joan Riviere, in her 1929 analysis, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," comes to recognize that the masquerade and womanliness are identical, she does not accept that so-called "masculine" characteristics may be attributed to both sexes; instead, she interprets these traits in women as evidence of Freud's theory of "penis envy," the female's "wish for masculinity," meaning, specifically, the desire for power and authority in the public sphere, thereby demonstrating just how deeply the oppositional and mutually exclusive definitions of the sexes had been inscribed by the twentieth century.

Stephen Heath, in response to Riviere's essay, rightfully

deduces that the central issue "is the question of the feminine identity," but concludes that "to be a woman is to dissimulate a fundamental masculinity"; therefore, "femininity is that dissimulation" (49). Because masculinity is prohibited in a woman, for a woman to reveal her masculinity would be to invite retribution for having appropriated male power, that is, in Freudian terms, for having "castrated" the male. As Heath points out, in psychoanalytic theory, "[t]he attainment of full heterosexuality, which coincides with genitality, is at ... the price of the masquerade that is the woman" (49). In other words, a woman's "masculinity" is erased within the heterosexual matrix of binary opposites in order for her to achieve a socially sanctioned feminine identity that reproduces male primacy, the heterosexual power relation that, in turn, produces desire.

Butler continues the analysis, arguing that the masculine subject's "seemingly self-grounded autonomy ... requires that women reflect that masculine power and everywhere reassure that power of the reality of its illusory autonomy" (Gender 45). This means that the purpose of the masquerade of womanliness is for women to deny their own autonomy and power by establishing womanliness or "femininity" as the absence of "masculine" autonomy and power, which includes the necessary absence of desire for those attributes, thereby eliminating any potential threat to the fragile construction of masculinity.

Masquerading as feminine, women veil their masculinity, and it is precisely this veil which reflects their lack, while at the same time projecting their disowned and displaced masculinity onto the male for him to claim as "essentially" and exclusively his own, which "thus, becomes the basis of a radical dependency that effectively undercuts the function it serves" (Gender 45). Paradoxically, for men to preserve their masculine identity, which is constructed on the illusion that desire, power and autonomy are exclusive male prerogatives, men are made dependent on women's perpetuation of the masquerade of femininity, that is, on women assuming the veil of illusion that renders the feminine powerless in relation to the masculine. Certainly, this suggests the vested interest a male author like Richardson would have in targeting a female audience and prescribing virtue as the essence of femininity. In redefining the sexes according to a system of binary opposites, Richardson's own assumed masculine identity was at stake; its maintenance depended on the perpetuation of the illusion of male dominance. Perhaps unwittingly, Richardson nevertheless enabled the violence the female body inevitably and programmatically elicits.

Furthermore, both Pamela and Clarissa clearly demonstrate how virtue creates a contradictory effect by increasing the male's desire to possess the female body. This paradox produces a nasty corollary to the constitution of female sexuality: Not only does the internalization of Christian

principles of virtue repress desire in a woman, but it renders that woman all the more desirable by generating desire in the male, which leaves a virtuous woman in a position of increased vulnerability to male persecution, as evidenced in Clarissa. Richardson is clearly implicated in the perpetuation of this dilemma, since he seems to be arguing that virtue increases the female's desirability. As Eagleton points out: "The novel sees well enough that if virtue is necessary it is also an encumbrance, since to behave well in a predatory society is the surest way to unleash its violence" (82-83).

Despite this apparent realization, Richardson seems to have firmly believed that his was a righteous design, since Clarissa insists that *the cause of virtue is the cause of God* (1185). Richardson created his own personal conception of the ideal, Christian female in Clarissa, whose "noble virtue" he wanted other young, eighteenth-century women to emulate. Clarissa's example was intended as instruction: her sacrifice was meant to provide a graphic illustration of the potentially ruinous consequences of a woman's trusting in a rake, regardless of how virtuous that woman may be. Evidently, Richardson revised his earlier views on Pamela's slavish submission to the reformed rake, Mr. B., and, as Eagleton suggests, created "an inversion of *Pamela*" in Clarissa (90, 89). In allowing this paragon of virtue to be rejected by her family, viciously raped and then having her die, Richardson effectively shamed her oppressors by leaving them with blood

on their hands (91). Evidently, Richardson was sincere in his attempts to inculcate Christian principles of virtue over both the unruly licentiousness of a corrupt aristocracy and the ruthless ambition and avarice of the rising middle class, focused as they were on the acquisition of property and power. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Richardson's idealization of femininity, in which female sexuality is constituted through virtue, produced a double-edged sword.

Significantly, few interpreters of Richardson's texts have called attention to the aggression or violence implicit in his constructions of femininity in either Pamela or Clarissa, representations in which Richardson imposes his own "phallogocentric" interpretation of femininity onto women. Although Castle investigates this violence, she does not implicate Richardson. Gwilliam, however, provides a reading of Clarissa in which Lovelace's and Richardson's parallel functions are clearly suggested:

Lovelace claims at several moments to be responsible for Clarissa's glory; without his trials of her, hers would have remained an obscure, domestic life. Lovelace's boasts damn him, but they also seem to speak for Richardson himself, who imagined these scenes of suffering for the greater glory of Clarissa and of women. (102)

Ironically, while Lovelace is damned for having made Clarissa suffer, Richardson, his creator, reaps the rewards and praise of his readers for having envisaged the trials and tribulations by which he defined femininity's essence as a form of spiritualized virtue.

Although he was attempting to repudiate the commodification of the female body by making Clarissa's essentialized virtue the highest, spiritual consideration, in actuality Richardson succeeded in reintroducing the role of female as victim, in which femininity is defined through suffering. As Clarissa herself recognizes, "I am but a cipher, to give him significance, and myself pain" (567), a startling insight that neither Clarissa nor Richardson explains, but which becomes the point of departure for Castle's study, Clarissa's Ciphers. Castle maintains:

In uncovering the crucial metaphor of reading, she [Clarissa] stumbles, half-consciously, on a precise symbol for her bondage. She has become a cipher to Lovelace, a sort of text -- and he, her exegete. "Clarissa Harlowe" is but a sign -- the letter -- from which, obscurely, he takes away significance. She herself receives nothing from this act of penetration -- nothing, that is, except grief. She remains the subject of his interpretation, without pleasure or power as such: a hermeneutic casualty. (15-16)

Castle sees well enough that within the novel "the matter of exegesis ... operates ... both as a mode of human contact and as a mode of violence" (Ciphers 16). Central to Castle's "thematicization of interpretation" is that the text, Clarissa, "is another sort of cipher," since it, too, "opens itself equally to interpretation, that of real readers" (Ciphers 19). Castle determines that the reading that is privileged is the one that carries the most authority, the power to assert its claim on truth "by destroying previous readings" (Ciphers 184). She also suggests that Clarissa encourages us to "read our own reading" in order to discern

our own motives and desires, which would prevent our imposing a construction on others (Ciphers 186). Although this is certainly an interesting proposal in that it attempts to avoid the imposition of violence, in contrast to Gwilliam's reading, Castle glosses over the fact that it is Richardson who exalts Clarissa through her suffering.

With Clarissa, Richardson created the sign of femininity itself, signifying nothing less than indivisible, essentialized virtue. Clarissa is foremost Richardson's cipher, his key to the code of femininity. Clarissa's effacement provides the "nothing" on which male significance can be inscribed and reflected, ironically beginning with Richardson's own. In The Rape of Clarissa, Eagleton concludes that in the end, Clarissa possesses "the inscrutability of a cypher" (76); once dead, her spirit remains inviolable. For his part, Eagleton is a little too willing to accept Clarissa's "artificial coherence," being blind to the imposed limitations of the heterosexual matrix of the regime of sexuality.

In Reading Clarissa, Warner deconstructs Clarissa, freeing the text from Richardson's editorially sanctioned interpretation. However, in exposing Clarissa's virtue as a construct, he uncovers the spectre of female desire. Remarkably, over two centuries later, female sexuality still elicits male violence. For Warner, Clarissa is demoted to the status of an "artful slut." Effectively assuming Lovelace's

stance, his detection of female desire becomes the shocking rationale for rape.

Following Warner's deconstructive lead, Castle rightly insists that "the act of reading" is primary in Clarissa. She points out that reading, as an act that produces meaning, is directly linked to interpretation; accordingly, it provides "a paradigm for the way in which characters [within the novel] interpret the world" (Ciphers 48). In particular, Clarissa, her hardhearted family and, most flagrantly, Lovelace, all demonstrate that they are projecting their own desires onto their constructions of meaning through their writing, since letter writing functions as a reading of experience (Ciphers 50). Like letters, events and persons within Clarissa are read as texts of indeterminate meaning, generating "a kind of hermeneutic anarchy" that provokes human conflict and leads, finally, to "violent consequences," specifically, Clarissa's rape and eventual death (Ciphers 21).

In his "reading" of Clarissa, Lovelace projects his own desires onto her, desires that privilege and determine the significations of his interpretation, to which Clarissa, like Clarissa, is then subjugated. According to Castle, rape becomes "a form of articulation for Lovelace" (Ciphers 114). "It elaborates, on the plane of the physical, the semantic violation [Clarissa] has already suffered" (Ciphers 25). For Castle, Clarissa's rape is the "ultimate demonstration of the violence inherent in reading itself" (Ciphers 115). She

argues convincingly that reading or interpretation, as a form of penetration, is an aggressive act by which we impose our own constructions of meaning onto others according to our own interests and desires. However, Castle does not investigate how the rape is a form of articulation for Richardson, since it provides the means by which he can impose his own construction of femininity on Clarissa.

Yet Castle recognizes that Clarissa's "tragic status is inseparable from her representation ... as an exemplary victim of hermeneutic violence," pointing out that "[a]cross the text, hers is that voice which repeatedly fails to make itself heard" (Ciphers 22). Within the text, Clarissa's voice is continually silenced: "She must struggle to speak," to articulate her "Story," which "is doomed to suppression, interruption, incompletions," misinterpretations and finally, "suspension" (Ciphers 22). Castle draws attention to the fact that Clarissa is consistently undermined in her attempts to tell her story precisely because she lacks the authority of "the patriarchal discourse of the Harlowes and Lovelace" (Ciphers 25).

In distinct contrast, Pamela's words are granted this authority precisely because Mr. B. marries her instead of raping her. The actual rape of Clarissa is figured as "a primal act of silencing," since she is unconscious, rendered mute under the influence of opiates (Castle, Ciphers 115). Lovelace himself fully expects that Clarissa's modesty "will

lock up her speech" after the rape (Clarissa 879). Indeed, Castle suggests that it is at this point that "Clarissa foregoes discourse," moving "out of the realm of human interpretation into silence" (Ciphers 26). After being raped, Clarissa withdraws into herself, into her inner depths, where she seeks communion with God. Her desire is to reclaim her honour, to establish her essential worth by casting off the mortal rags of her rape-stained body so as to escape the cruel constraints of English eighteenth-century society altogether.

Of course, Belford, to whom the responsibility of making Clarissa's story known is deferred, possesses the patriarchal authority necessary to make her voice heard. Significantly, a male must speak on behalf of women, just as Pamela depended on being granted the moral authority of the patriarchy through marriage in order to substantiate her story. Had Mr. B. raped Pamela, her story would have proven decidedly less consequential than Clarissa's, since, as a mere commoner, Pamela is socially insignificant. Indeed, Pamela's story would have lost all significance if she had not married her rapist.

Like Pamela, Clarissa is spiritualized through her suffering; however, her trials are much more extreme: not only is she abducted, she is actually raped, then relentlessly pursued by her perpetrator and temporarily jailed, all the while rejected by her entire family, cursed by her father, and effectively rendered a social outcast. Her spirituality is

thereby heightened and intensified through the relentless suffering her author imposes on her in order to reduce her to an essentialized self. In fact, Clarissa compares herself to Job, which highlights her unwavering faith in and love of God in the face of senseless suffering. As the female embodiment of "virtue for virtue's sake," Clarissa represents the ultimate eighteenth-century, feminine ideal. Even the apparently incorrigible rake, Lovelace, finds his view of women affected by her extraordinary example, admitting, "till I knew her, I questioned a soul in a sex, created, as I was willing to suppose, only for temporary purposes" (1037). In other words, as a typically corrupt aristocrat or libertine, Lovelace perceived women as merely sex objects, to be exploited for his own sexual gratification and discarded at will.

It seems that Richardson was making a sincere attempt to mitigate the commodification of the female body by illuminating what he believed to be a woman's essential worth. However, as Richardson's creations, Pamela's and Clarissa's desires have been channelled through the internalization of Christian principles of virtue despite the pretence that they fully and deliberately reveal themselves through their incessant and prolific "scribbling." Consequently, neither we nor they really know the full extent of their desires.

As a Marxist feminist, Eagleton is critical of the social inequalities Richardson's exaltation of Clarissa failed to

resolve and recognizes the extent to which Clarissa's social identity is ideologically determined. "It is not exactly that her writing reflects her experience but her experience is, as it were, already 'written,' decorously conformed to allowable discourse, imprinted by the web of power relations to which she 'freely' submits" (51). Somewhat ironically, Richardson's paragon of virtue understands that she is not the author of the virtuous thoughts to which she willingly submits; Clarissa attributes their authorship to a higher authority -- God -- when we, as readers, know that Richardson is her author. As a good Christian, Richardson has Clarissa adhere to the principles of virtue because there is no conceivable, socially acceptable, alternate means for an unmarried, eighteenth-century English woman to establish her worthiness as a female, which, in itself, tacitly suggests the extent to which the female had been devalued under the regime of alliance.

Because Christian principles dictate that desire is both morally and socially unacceptable in a woman outside of marriage, Clarissa initially denies any such desire, since it conflicts with her virtuous self-image. Early in the novel, Clarissa relates to her friend, Anna Howe, that because she has put in a good word for Lovelace, defending his character against her family's attacks on him, the Harlowes are convinced that Clarissa has "a prepossession in his favour that I would not own" (49). Anna responds that she also suspects as much. She writes:

I would advise you (as you would wish to manage on an occasion so critical with that prudence which governs all your actions) not to be afraid of entering upon a close examination into the true springs and grounds of this your generosity to that happy man. It is my humble opinion, I tell you frankly, that on inquiry it will come out to be LOVE. (71)

After due consideration, Clarissa determines that there is no basis of truth to this allegation.

Later, after Lovelace has tricked Clarissa into leaving Harlowe Place and they are living at Mrs. Sinclair's, he feigns illness in an attempt to uncover Clarissa's love for him. Acutely aware of the advantage this will provide him, Lovelace declares, "Love, when found out or acknowledged, authorizes freedom; and freedom begets freedom; and I shall then see how far I can go" (673). For a woman to admit to love or desire for a man of "faulty morals" would leave her vulnerable to seduction or coercion, which is precisely why Lovelace is determined to produce evidence of desire in Clarissa: he would then be free to exploit her.

Lovelace achieves the desired result. In a letter to Anna, Clarissa admits that she now perceives things differently; she was indeed "too much affected" by Lovelace's seemingly precarious condition, which made her desire or "love" for him self-evident. Nevertheless, her letter also suggests that Clarissa's reaction may be due to her sense of guilt, since she starts off by justifying her response in these terms: "I was the more affected with it, as I am afraid it was occasioned by the violent contention between us" (678).

Alternately, her reaction can also be attributed to her Christian belief in forgiveness, since she reminds Anna: "One cannot, my dear, hate people in danger of death" (678).

Clarissa continues her self-examination:

I am really very uneasy. For I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him, and to the women below. They indeed will excuse me, as they think us married. But if he be not generous, I shall have cause to regret this surprise; which has taught me more than I knew of myself; as I had reason to think myself unaccountably treated by him.

Nevertheless let me tell you ... that if again he give me cause to resume distance and reserve, I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections (for Mr Lovelace, my dear, is not a wise man in all his ways) to enable me to keep my passions under -- What can we do more than govern ourselves by the temporary lights lent us?

You will not wonder that I am grave on this detection -- *Detection*, must I call it? What can I call it? -- I have not had heart's ease enough to inspect that heart as I ought. (679)

This letter suggests that Clarissa is fully prepared to transform her desire into discourse once it achieves consciousness, as if her desire for Lovelace is prediscursive.

However, in line with Foucault's analytic approach, Clarissa's detection of desire can be read as a product of her self-investigation. In this letter to Anna, all Clarissa reveals is that she was deeply affected by Lovelace's state. Most significantly, she interprets her reaction as evidence of desire, thus demonstrating that her desire for Lovelace is indeed a product of discourse. Castle, in fact, proposes that Clarissa accepts the constructions others have imposed on her (Ciphers 78-79), which is certainly plausible. For his part, Eagleton astutely notes that "Lovelace begins by exploiting

Clarissa's passion for scribbling rather than sexual affections, but the two impulses are intimately allied" (47). Lovelace fully understands how their initial correspondence renders Clarissa vulnerable by involving her in a relationship with him that he can manipulate, particularly after she maintains an illicit correspondence with him in the face of her family's prohibition. Lovelace not only gains access to Clarissa's thoughts and fears but invades her thinking.

Nevertheless, as Clarissa predicts, Lovelace provides her with sufficient "cause to resume distance and reserve" and the required strength to consciously overcome any desire she may have developed for him. Characteristically, when composed and in full control of her faculties, Clarissa never discloses any desire for Lovelace. Like Lovelace, we, as readers, find very little tangible evidence of Clarissa's desire. Significantly, what we do find is discursively produced and therefore surfaces after the fact, once it is too late to be acted upon and exploited by Lovelace. In distinct contrast to Pamela, who discovers her desire for Mr. B. in the process of recording the suffering he has cruelly inflicted on her, Clarissa's desire for Lovelace is not augmented by the suffering he imposes on her: only her virtue is.

For his part, Lovelace initially perceives that, as a virtuous "frost piece," Clarissa is detached from her physical, desiring body. Lovelace is convinced that if he can seduce Clarissa, he can penetrate this detachment to reveal

her true desiring self and thereby forego "the shackles of marriage" in order to have Clarissa on his own terms. Certain that feminine virtue is merely a pretence, he claims, "I have not found a virtue that cannot be corrupted.... Is not then the whole sex concerned that this trial should be made?" (429). Lovelace justifies raping Clarissa, not just as a test of her virtue, but as "the trial of the virtue of her whole sex" (878). Most accurately, the rape of Clarissa is Richardson's test of feminine virtue.

In the event that Clarissa proves to be truly virtuous, that is, not succumb to desire, Lovelace assumes he can make it up to her by marrying her. But prior to the rape, Lovelace comes to believe that Clarissa's virtue is indeed genuine, so there is no need to proceed. Ironically, his own duplicitous character has been exposed during this time. Consequently, Clarissa rejects him as beneath her, but, as Lovelace relates to Belford, "her triumph has not diminished my love for her; yet has it stimulated me more than ever to revenge, as thou will be apt to call it. But victory or conquest is the more proper name" (691). Lovelace now intends to rape the morally superior Clarissa as a means of humbling her, desperately hoping the rape will provide the humiliating defeat by which she will submit to his dominance once and for all.

Immediately following the rape, in one of Clarissa's "mad papers," written before she has fully recovered from the affects of the opiates Lovelace used to render her

"senseless," Clarissa reveals that she was indeed "prepossessed" by Lovelace right from the start, but hoped for his reformation. She addresses Lovelace directly:

At first I saw something in your air and person that displeased me not. Your birth and fortunes were no small advantages to you.... Everybody said you were brave: everybody said you were generous. A brave man, I thought, could not be a base man: a generous man could not, I believed, be ungenerous where he acknowledged obligation.... You seemed frank, as well as generous: frankness and generosity ever attracted me: whoever kept up those appearances, I judged of their hearts by my own; and whatever qualities I wished to find in them, I was ready to find; and when found, I believed them to be natives of the soil. (892)

Clarissa projected her own benevolence onto Lovelace, who in turn manipulated appearances so as to impress her in his favour. She closes with the declaration: "I honoured virtue! -- I hated vice! -- But I knew not that you were vice itself!" As Lovelace feared, by raping Clarissa he has destroyed any chance he had of winning her heart.

To Lovelace's despair, when Clarissa regains full control of her mind, her feelings for him are transformed into moral contempt. As in the procedures of the confession, whatever desire Clarissa may have had for Lovelace has been mastered. She refuses Lovelace's offer outright, without reservation:

[T]hinkest thou that marriage will satisfy for a guilt like thine? Destitute as thou hast made me both of friends and fortune, I too much despise the wretch who could rob himself of his wife's virtue, to endure the thoughts of thee in the light thou seemest to hope I will accept thee in! (901)

Although Lovelace succeeds in violating Clarissa bodily, he soon comes to realize that "her will is unviolated" (916).

Clarissa does prove exemplary in her self-possession, despite the heartless attempts of Lovelace and her family to possess her. However, her self-possession exacts an exorbitant price -- her life. This price therefore measures the relocation of self-possession from its bodily location, impossible under patriarchy, to a spiritual location.

Richardson's obsession with representational detail brought his novel dangerously close to the realm of scandalous literature by including a rape. But the "dark transaction" at the heart of Clarissa is eclipsed. In its place, the reader is referred to Clarissa's later letters, addressed to Anna Howe, in which Clarissa relates how she was tricked and drugged by Lovelace. Following the rape, when Lovelace informs Belford of his use of "some little art" and complains, "have not I the worst of it; since her insensibility has made me but a thief to my own joys?" (887), there is still no evidence of bodily desire in Clarissa, since she was unconscious, rendered senseless, effectively "dead." Moreover, Clarissa's rejection of Lovelace and her eventual death reinforce the moral usefulness of the rape. As Lovelace concludes after questioning why this singular woman crossed his path, she did so "to double my guilt; and at the same time to convince all that should hear of her story that there are angels as well as devils in the flesh" (972). As an angel in the flesh, Clarissa proves devoid of bodily desire. For her virtuous, spiritualized essence to dominate, Clarissa's rape-

stained body must be dispensed with because it threatens to deny her difference, to make her like other women. Like Clarissa's coffin, Clarissa is her textual embodiment, which provides a testament to feminine virtue while displacing her body. In defining femininity, Clarissa is the site of the female body's erasure.

Since Clarissa only confesses to her desire while still under the influence of opiates, in a state of temporary "madness" in which her mind is "disordered," Eagleton seems right to suggest that her repression "be seen in Freudian terms." Significantly, he qualifies repression as "those bodily impulses which have failed to achieve representation at all, severed as they are from inward as well as social discourse" (51). Crucially, even though Clarissa admits to desire for Lovelace, her desire is never represented as physical, bodily desire, which ostensibly, appears to be the exclusive prerogative of masculinity. In Clarissa the taint of "masculine" desire marks women as perverse, signifying vice, the corruption of virtue. Furthermore, in Foucaultian terms, Clarissa's confession serves as a persuasive means of producing the truth of her sex, that is, proof of her lack of bodily desire.

In distinct contrast to Clarissa's feminine sexuality almost all the other women in the novel are portrayed as either vicious females or corrupt whores, with the notable exception of her virtuous friend, Anna Howe. Clarissa's

exemplarity depends on differentiating her from the other women in the novel. Warner, in fact, castigates Clarissa for being superior; however, he consistently fails to recognize that it is Richardson's impossibly ideal representation of femininity that places her above all other women. Moreover, Richardson's definition of virtue is effectively a renunciation of the body, in which bodily desire becomes a sign of corruption in both men and women.

As Gwilliam points out: "First Arabella, then Mrs. Sinclair and the whores serve as antitypes of Clarissa, but they sometimes also become parodies or imitations of her, compounding the problems of resemblance and distinction that absorb Lovelace" (88). Gwilliam refers to Lovelace's description of Sally Martin's imitation of the virtuous Clarissa, which is reminiscent of Pamela: "the little devil ... fell a crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, fainting, so that I never saw my lovely girl so well aped; and I was almost taken in..." (1217). Gwilliam recognizes that "[a]lthough Lovelace justifies his trials of Clarissa by claiming a need to distinguish the false feminine from the real, the novel itself also evinces a genuine concern with the issue" (88). However, she concludes that "the basis for moral distinction between the sexes becomes hopelessly confused" (88). Sexual differentiation does indeed become confused amidst all the cross-gender identifications. Nevertheless, there is an "artificial coherence" within the binary structure

Richardson is attempting to impose on the relation between the sexes. According to Richardson's project, true femininity and, by extension, true masculinity are clearly delineated through virtue.

In one of Anna Howe's letters to Clarissa prior to the rape, in which she discusses her mother's character, we also find a detailed description of what Anna determines to be the ideal wife, ideas that surely correspond to Richardson's. Although Anna claims "there is not a better manager of her affairs in the sex than my mamma," she thinks that such "a notable wife" is harder to control than "an indolent one" (475). She proposes,

were I a man, and a man who loved my quiet, I would not have one of these managing wives on any consideration. I would make it a matter of serious inquiry beforehand, whether my mistress's qualifications, if I heard she was notable, were masculine or feminine ones.... Indeed, my dear, I do not think a man-woman a pretty character at all... (475-6)

In other words, the female must not dominate or attempt to dominate the male, for this would be a transgression of the feminine, middle-class role. Specifically, Anna adds that a woman should

know how to confine herself within her own respectable rounds of the needle, the pen, the housekeeper's bills, the dairy, for her amusement; to see the poor fed from superfluities that would otherwise be wasted; and exert herself in all the really useful branches of domestic management; then would she move in her proper sphere; then would she render herself amiably useful and respectably necessary; then would she become the mistress-wheel of the family (whatever you think of your Anna Howe, I would not have her be the master-wheel); and everybody would love her... (476)

Clarissa demonstrates that Richardson was rigid in his belief that the female should be passionless, devoid of bodily desire. Only submissive women who prove to be essentially virtuous merit social valorization in his scheme. Crucially, as opposed to bodily desire or lust, Clarissa's desire is expressed as "love," affections stemming from the heart, the source of "true" feeling. For his part, Lovelace is contaminated with the negative, rejected attribute of femininity -- duplicity. Therefore, as a vile rake or libertine, his masculinity is corrupt, manifest as rampant, uncontrollable desire, which, remarkably, resists clear gender differentiation.

Although Lovelace resorts to disguise, he does not dress up as a woman in order to gain access to Clarissa's bed as Mr. B. does prior to his reformation. Nevertheless, after the rape, Lovelace has a dream in which Clarissa has managed to solicit the protection of a matronly lady, who is transformed into a woman he knows, Mother H. Much to Lovelace's astonishment and delight, when Clarissa retires for the night with Mother H., this woman is magically transformed into his own self, suggesting that Lovelace's sexual identity is not fixed but amorphous or confused in its excess. Precisely because Lovelace is so corrupt, Richardson feminizes him, just as he feminized Mr. B. by having him cross-dress. As we have seen in Part I, men who broke the patriarchal code of masculine domination were stigmatized as sodomites in the

eighteenth century. Despite the fact that there is no evidence that Lovelace participates in sexual acts with other males in Clarissa, Lovelace does come to see himself as a kind of sex machine, driven by the women he has made into whores. Effectively, these women, whom Richardson taints with masculine characteristics, render Lovelace a sodomite by dominating him and manipulating his sexuality. Foucault himself points to the uncertain status of sodomy: "that utterly confused category" (101). As a "vile" rake or rapist, Lovelace well exceeds the boundaries of the new, middle-class male Richardson is beginning to etch out, thus pushing Lovelace into that confused category. For in Richardson's narrow conception of early modern sexual identity, confined as it is to the heterosexual matrix, not only is "true" femininity constituted by the internalization of Christian principles of virtue but, in sharp juxtaposition to Lovelace's confused sexual identity, so is "true" masculinity.

Eagleton offers an analysis of what he defines as "the Richardsonian ideology of writing" which strongly suggests that Richardson believed his discursive production of sexual identity secured the real rather than generated the illusion of its reality. Moreover, Eagleton determines that Richardson's discourse can also be called a kind of "anti-writing" in that it "strives to abolish the materiality of the sign, its treacherous power to divide and displace meaning, by reducing it to a humble receptacle of the 'real'" (40).

However, Eagleton adds that "the 'real' is body only in the sense of corpse. Only the death of the referent will release the soul of its meaning" (44). As a humanist, for whom "conceptions of the subject tend to assume a substantive person who is the bearer of various essential and nonessential attributes" (Butler, Gender 10), Eagleton is taken in by Richardson's discursive production of femininity's essence in Clarissa. Despite acknowledging "the impossible ideal nature of Clarissa's virtue" (77), Eagleton does not investigate the long-term effects such a model generates.

Of considerable relevance, however, is what Eagleton identifies as Richardson's incessant "sex/text metaphor." Because Clarissa transforms her desire into written discourse, it leaves traces: her letters. Eagleton determines that the letter

lies on some troubled frontier between private and public worlds, symbol at once of the self and of its violent appropriation. Nothing could be at once more intimate and more alienable, flushed with the desire of the subject yet always ripe for distortion and dishonour. In this sense, the letter comes to signify nothing quite so much as female sexuality itself, that folded, secret place which is always open to violent intrusion. (54)

He adds,

the letter of Clarissa can be seen not only as sign of female sexuality but as nothing less than the woman herself, that circulating property which cements the system of male dominance.... Clarissa's body is itself the discourse of the text. (56)

Since the text is also about the struggle to possess her body, Eagleton argues that Richardson's textual embodiment of Clarissa transforms that body into the Phallus of the Symbolic

Order, the transcendental "signifier which distributes others to their positions of power and desire, fixing them in some fraught relation to her own mysteriously inviolable being" (56). Eagleton interprets Clarissa's death as a radical indictment of eighteenth-century political society (76). His insights are undoubtedly powerful: "The savage irony of *Clarissa* is that the sexual integrity of an independent woman can be imaged only in the fetishistic symbol of male power" (Eagleton 57). However, Eagleton overlooks the fact that Richardson is idealizing victimization in his repudiation of the sexual significations of the female body and fails to recognize that the violence the constitution of female sexuality elicits is programmatic.

Although Richardson dogmatically maintains "the purity of authorial intention," Eagleton sees that

his pen exceeds his intentions, conjuring a levelling sub-text from beneath the carefully policed script of his novel. Standard Christian values ... of female subordination are themselves interrogated by an altogether more subversive voice. (77-78)

Of particular relevance is the voice that Eagleton recognizes, which belongs to Anna Howe, whose "lack of charity," Eagleton argues, "is politically justified" (79). For Anna shrewdly realizes that the values of absolute truth and justice are indissociable from the shifting power strategies in which they are embedded (Eagleton 79). As Richardson's text demonstrates so well, truth is the discursive product of power. By concentrating on the possible erotic trajectories that exceed

Richardson's heterosexist matrix, we can uncover the ideological workings of his narrative.

The intense relationship between Clarissa and Anna certainly merits comment, particularly in view of the fact that Anna makes it clear that she despises the male sex (474). Furthermore, were it not for their friendship, Clarissa would not exist in the form that it does, for the novel opens with Clarissa's response to Anna's inquiry into the developments at Harlowe Place. Clarissa and Anna love each other dearly; indeed, Anna maintains that two women have never before loved as they do. Like Lovelace, Anna is in awe of Clarissa's virtue; however, she is genuinely moved by Clarissa's goodness and tries to protect her, while Clarissa appreciates Anna's more pragmatic perspective on things. As virtuous women, both attempt to be rigorously honest with each other, to be straightforward in their criticisms of each other's weaknesses while respecting the other's feelings. Although both these women correspond to Richardson's conception of the eighteenth-century, middle-class woman of virtue, as distinct personalities each embodies qualities the other aspires to. Despite the fact that Anna appears to be the more rebellious of the two, it is Clarissa who must take drastic action in order to avoid the property marriage her ruthless authoritarian family have planned for her.

As we have seen, Anna believed all along that Clarissa maintained a prepossession for Lovelace. More significant is

that she urged Clarissa to reclaim her inheritance, clearly perceiving just how callous Clarissa's family were capable of being, while recognizing the critical importance of financial independence for a woman. Clarissa, on the other hand, was supportive of Anna's widowed mother and joined her in encouraging Anna's courtship of Hickman. In the end, Anna settles for this arrangement. Although Richardson did not provide the exact "happy ending" so many of his readers desired, Clarissa does culminate in a marriage. Furthermore, in having Anna marry Hickman, Richardson could effectively settle the potentially threatening aspects of Anna's sexual identity, which Lovelace draws attention to, by safely containing her within the heterosexual model.

Considering the exceptional feelings these two women shared for each other, it is interesting to speculate on the nature of passionate friendship.¹ Lovelace, in fact, calls Anna a libertine and sometimes describes her as termagant. Watt points out how Lady Davers' impropriety makes her "one of those 'termagant, hermaphrodite minds' attacked in the 'Introduction to the Second Edition'" of Pamela (163). The implication here is that Anna's sexual identity also exceeds the eighteenth-century norm of femininity despite her aversion to a "man-woman" character. Although Anna claims that she

¹ Trumbach reports that a significant number of aristocratic women found happiness with each other in the early eighteenth century. Although these women were obliged to marry, they reserved their hearts for "their fair friend" (126).

would not allow a wife to be the dominant "master-wheel" if she were a man, she does acknowledge that Clarissa may very well perceive her in this light. Perhaps Anna loved Clarissa a little more than Richardson intended; for, as Trumbach points out, up until the eighteenth century, the bisexual woman was an acceptable libertine norm (129). Clearly, this was not Richardson's conscious intention when he constellated the relation between Clarissa and Anna. Nevertheless, in attempting to impose his own rigid ideological apparatus onto the constitution of sexual identity, what Butler defines as deconstituting "gaps" or "fissures" seem to have opened up. The passion the letters between Clarissa and Anna generate suggests the possibility of a love that was never allowed fulfillment.

Clarissa's death is undoubtedly a terrible loss for Anna; moreover, it represents a defeat -- the defeat of the female's right to sovereignty over her person and life within eighteenth-century English society. Prior to Clarissa's death, Anna made her views on marriage perfectly clear: she perceived it as a form of bondage for woman. Richardson himself makes it clear that there were very few options for women outside of marriage. Nevertheless, Clarissa's desire for the single life is buried along with her in the absence of nunneries for Protestant women to turn to. Rather than desiring marriage to Hickman, it is as if Anna resigns herself to this fate, now that her sauciness and high spirits have

been deflated. One can surmise that Anna finally agrees to marry Hickman because the true object of her desire is no longer available.

Although Anna does not join Clarissa once she has left Harlowe Place, Richardson is not entirely convincing in the excuses he fabricates in order to prevent her from doing so. Even when Clarissa insists that Anna remain at home with her mother, one cannot help but wonder what would have happened had Anna joined her. At one point, Anna even offers to go with Clarissa to the American colonies. Had they escaped to a new life together, Clarissa would not have provided the testament to virtue that Richardson wanted to produce. For the epistolary result of Clarissa's extreme trials at the hands of Lovelace -- his obsessive inquisition into the truth of her virtue or sex -- coincides with what Foucault describes as "a literature ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage" (59). Indeed, the imagery of "a shimmering mirage" evokes an apt description of Clarissa, whose essentialized self hovers somewhere in between the words of the text of Clarissa, safely out of reach and forever untouchable.

As Richardson attempted to prove, essentialized femininity, in the form of spiritualized virtue, escapes and transcends both physical penetration and possession by

removing itself from the material world, which, clearly, did not increase the options of an eighteenth-century woman. In exalting the feminine, Richardson debased women. By privileging internal moral goodness, Richardson was trying to impose his own ideology of feminine virtue onto the deployment of sexuality, by making what he determined to be female sexuality's essential features "correspond to the functional requirements of a discourse that must produce its truth" (Foucault 68). What we have in Clarissa are the "circular ruins" of Richardson's discursive production of "true" femininity. Richardson's discursive product was meant to displace female desire through the reification of femininity as virtue. But, as Butler points out:

If the morphological distinction of "the feminine" depends on its purification of all masculinity, and if this bodily boundary and distinctness is instituted in the service of the laws of a heterosexual symbolic, then that repudiated masculinity is *presumed* by the feminized morphology, and will emerge either as an impossible ideal that shadows and thwarts the feminine or as a disparaged signifier of a patriarchal order. (Bodies 87)

Richardson's definition of femininity produces just such an impossible ideal, representing "the heterosexual constraint that compels the assumption of sex," which "operates through the regulation of phantasmatic identification" (Bodies 97). In Clarissa, the phantasmic identification is with an angel, a disembodied voice. Indeed, the feminine continues to haunt the margins of the body of Richardson's massive text in the hope of finally being included without being violently disparaged or misinterpreted as an invitation to rape.

Although Clarissa is a phantasm, she is not simply the product of a cheap conjurer's trick: Clarissa attests to the power of religious ideology as a means of seducing the collective imagination through the production of "truth." As Foucault points out, the great "ruse of confession" is that it succeeded in joining truth and sex. As the basic reproductive mechanism, sex became invested with the mystery of life itself. Therefore, confession, as the source of discourse on sex, does not so much yield "truth" as produce it. By investing sex with the mysterious truth of one's being, one's sex became the imaginary ground of identity. After all, it is the truth of Clarissa's sex -- her testament to feminine virtue -- that produces the truth of her being, her heterosexually determined identity, an identity that sentences its subjects to a discursively produced, ideologically determined form of subjugation. Foucault concludes that in Western culture at least, truth has come to serve "as a medium for sex and its manifestations," since it is falsely assumed that "truth does not belong to the order of power" and, therefore, frees us from its constraints, when, in actuality, it delivers us into the hands of power (61, 60). This is precisely the great ruse of Clarissa: while ostensibly appearing to determine truth, it produces and generates its own truth. Clarissa's power lies in its ability to seduce the reader into believing in the virtuous ideal Clarissa represents, a belief that will facilitate the internalization

of Christian principles of virtue, by which both male and female sexuality are constituted within the heterosexual matrix, thereby effectively regulating sexuality.

Eagleton points out that initially "Clarissa's own faith is that truth and propriety are not fundamentally at odds" (80). Crucially, however, Clarissa does come to perceive that "[t]ruth may not be compatible with virtue" (Eagleton 81). To deter Lovelace, she finally resorts to duplicity, writing to him that she is going to her "Father's House." Although not a complete lie, Clarissa deliberately misleads Lovelace, having understood all too well that in order to break free of him, she must play his semantic game, a game Richardson had mastered. In his obstinacy, it seems that Richardson underestimated the subversive power of the unconscious, yet clearly understood the printed word's ability to deflect significance and the power the manipulation of language engendered.

Conclusion

In applying the analytic paradigm Foucault supplies in The History of Sexuality to Richardson's texts, we have seen how the early novel participates in the development of the deployment of sexuality. Pamela provides a clear example of how Richardson's reinscription of the eighteenth-century code of femininity deployed virtue as a means of privileging female sexual identity rather than class and political affiliations as a basis for marriage. We have also seen how Richardson's progressive, Puritan ideology promotes middle-class values, thereby contributing to the advancement of that social group.

Although Clarissa does not end with her marriage but with her death, in this novel Richardson managed to create a much more powerful model than in Pamela, one that could effectively regulate female sexuality by defining its essential "nature," while displacing the female body altogether. In participating in the relocation of the source of identity from the body to the mind, a process of spiritualization already relied on in Pamela, Richardson was able to discursively displace female desire, where it could be produced through the process of self-investigation according to the dominant ideology and then mastered, a much more effective means of regulating female

sexuality than relying solely on the constraints of the existent code of femininity, which concentrated on bodily chastity. In making virtue the essence of femininity itself, Richardson apprehended one of the most powerful ideological means of constituting female sexuality within the artificial coherence of the heterosexual matrix.

In determining that femininity is an ideological construct, one that excludes women, we need to ask how today's women can identify themselves as feminists. Butler points out how "the construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject [is] an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations" contrary to feminist aims (Gender 5). She proposes a new political goal, one that will take the variable constructions of identity into account (Gender 5), surely a reasonable suggestion. Within the all pervasive regime of sexuality, it would certainly be interesting if men and women alike were to begin questioning the way in which our identities have been constituted. Perhaps the value of investigating the imaginary grounds of our subjectivity is that it suggests we can attach less value to the meaning or presumed truth of sex as the basis of identity and begin, once again, to shift identity's ground.

Works Cited

- Armstrong, Nancy. Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Beebee, Thomas O. Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction. University Park and London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1990.
- Bray, Alan. Homosexuality in Renaissance England. London: Gay Men's Press, 1982.
- Brown, Laura. Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1993.
- Butler, Judith. Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex". New York & London: Routledge, 1993.
- . Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York & London: Routledge, 1990.
- Castle, Terry. Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's Clarissa. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1982.
- . Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1986.
- Eaves, T.C. Duncan and Kimpel, Ben D. Samuel Richardson: A Biography. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

- Eagleton, Terry. The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982.
- Fielding, Henry. Joseph Andrews and Shamela. GB: Oxford UP, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- Gwilliam, Tassie. Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993.
- Harris, Jocelyn. Samuel Richardson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Heath, Stephen. "Joan Riviere and the Masquerade." Formations of Fantasy. Ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Hill, Christopher. "Clarissa Harlowe and Her Times," Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. John Carroll. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- Hunt, Lynn. "Foucault's Subject in *The History of Sexuality*." Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to Aids. Ed. Donna C. Stanton. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- Irigaray, Luce. This Sex Which is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter, with Carolyn Burke. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.

- Laqueur, Thomas. Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard UP, 1990.
- Locke, John. Second Treatise of Government. Ed. and Introduction. C.B. Macpherson. Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1980.
- McKeon, Michael. The Origins of the English Novel: 1600 - 1740. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1987.
- Nussbaum, Felicity. "Heteroclitics: The Gender of Character in the Scandalous Memoirs." The New Eighteenth Century. Ed. Laura Brown and Felicity Nussbaum. New York and London: Methuen, 1987.
- Richardson, Samuel. Clarissa or The History of a Young Lady. Ed. and Introduction. Angus Ross. UK: Penguin Books, 1985.
- . Pamela or Virtue Rewarded. New York and London: WW. Norton & Co., 1958.
- Riviere, Joan. "Womanliness as Masquerade." Formations of Fantasy. Ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Said, Edward W. Culture and Imperialism. GB: Vintage. 1993.
- Shevelov, Kathryn. Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

- Stone, Lawrence. The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Todd, Janet. Gender, Art and Death. GB: Polity Press, 1993.
- Trumbach, Randolph. "London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture." Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity. Ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub. New York & London: Routledge, 1991.
- Turner, Cheryl. Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Warner, William Beatty. Reading Clarissa: The Struggles of Interpretation. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979.
- Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.