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SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND FEMINISM: A STUDY OF THE SECONDARY RELATIONSHIPS IN CLARISSA

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1979

ABSTRACT

SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND FEMINISM: A STUDY
OF THE SECONDARY RELATIONSHIPS
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The secondary characters in Samuel Richardson's Clarissa manifest psychological tensions resulting from the prevailing beliefs in the inferiority of woman and the sovereignty of man; and their relationships are blighted by the harmful effects of the woman's subordination. In Clarissa Harlowe's world, the dutiful woman is expected to submit her will and judgment to the man's, and therefore, is subject to exploitation, especially through the arranged marriage. Clarissa tries to fulfill the conventional ideal of what a woman should be, accepting obedience to men as her social and religious duty. But as a genuinely virtuous woman, Clarissa believes also that it is her duty--and her human right--to make her own moral choices. Subordination to the will of others and responsibility for one's own virtue impose contradictory obligations. Richardson's fidelity to psychological realism compels him to provide strong emotional reinforcement for Clarissa's adherence to

absolute standards. He portrays her, therefore, as motivated by a perfectionism that allows her no deviation from either of her contradictory duties and that wields a self-destructive power capable of eroding her will to live. Clarissa's death is a spiritual triumph, but a worldly and psychic defeat.

While celebrating the virtue that Clarissa represents and condemning the inequities of her society, Richardson is also searching for ways to neutralize the harmful potential in the woman's secondary status. This study proposes the thesis that Richardson is offering contemporary feminist goals as an alternative to the eighteenth-century approval of woman's dependency. Richardson explores and endorses some important feminist principles through those characters in the novel who embody them. And he envisions a marriage of mutuality to replace the conventional marriage based on the woman's subjection to her husband.

This inquiry approaches Richardson's realistic novel as a world in itself, analyzing the behavior and feelings of the mimetic characters as if they were their counterparts in the actual world. Richardson's secondary characters contribute substantially to the artistry and meaning of the novel and merit exploration for their psychological interest as well as for the social reforms they recommend. As an observer of human behavior and motive, Richardson underscores the cost of the prevailing sexist

attitudes by incorporating in his characterizations the resulting psychological distortions of personality. As an aid in evaluating these distortions, the Introduction to this study includes some twentieth-century explanations of common psychological processes. As an aid in comparing the eighteenth-century attitudes towards women with those dramatized in the novel, the Introduction reviews some relevant contemporary documents, demonstrating that the status of woman was a controversial issue at the time that Richardson wrote Clarissa.

The first two sections of the study analyze relationships between members of the same sex, and the third section deals with relationships between men and women. The benevolent friendship of Belford and Clarissa illustrates Richardson's conviction that generosity is as necessary in the male as in the female for a harmonious relationship. And the marriage of Anna Howe and Hickman is Richardson's strongest affirmation of a marriage based on balanced concessions. But Richardson emphasizes the need for changes in the overbearing masculine attitudes before the marriage of equality can become a common reality. He punishes the aggressive Lovelace with violent death, but, rewards the compliant men, Belford and Hickman, with happy marriages.

Richardson offers Anna Howe's feminist sympathies as his most persuasive alternative to Clarissa's dutiful acceptance of feminine subordination. In Clarissa's tragic

experience, he illustrates the potential for destructive violence in the prevailing customs. In his resolution of Anna Howe's more commonplace problems, he demonstrates the possibility of achieving, under the same conditions, an approximation of the feminist vision of equality in marriage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I welcome this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. Howard Anderson for his unstinting support and advice throughout the planning and writing of my dissertation. As chairman of my guidance committee, Dr. Anderson has directed my work with informed judgment, with sensitivity to the subject, and with inexhaustible patience. In particular, I am indebted to him for turning my attention to the secondary relationships in the novel, an area that has proved a provocative and rewarding one for investigation. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Robert Uphaus for his encouragement, for his emphasis on scholarly procedures, and for his interest in my subject. In addition, I thank Dr. Sam Baskett for his assistance in the early planning of my program and Dr. Richard Benvenuto for his evaluation of my project at its completion.

I would also like to thank Ms. Lorraine Hart for her ready and efficient answers to all technical questions concerning deadlines and regulations. And finally, I am deeply grateful for the support of my husband Bob and my son Dan, without whose encouragement this study could neither have been started nor completed.

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INTRODUCTION

In choosing to write the history of a young woman, Richardson dedicates himself in Clarissa to a focus on feminine interests. And in selecting the form of a history--that is, a novel--for his purposes, he pledges himself to a realistic portrayal of human nature and an accurate representation of a specific social environment. The background for his authentic characters is the rich upper middle class in eighteenth-century England, a class that flourishes under the traditional belief that men are inherently superior to women. Clarissa and the other women in the novel live in the shadow of their masculine protectors, and the action of the novel dramatizes the distresses the women are subject to because of their dependent position.

The Harlowes' stratum of society is composed of wealthy families who have amassed huge fortunes from the combination of inherited property and profitable enterprises. Made greedy by success, these families have learned to increase their holdings and to "raise" their rank through marriages that consolidate several fortunes into one. The men who control the commercial ventures and who make the marriage arrangements expect the women to give full support

to all projects that benefit the family as a whole. Ingrained eighteenth-century customs demand obedience and dependency from the women while granting extensive freedom and power to the governing men. Richardson's novel presents a picture of a world that accepts sexual inequality as a fact of nature, ordained by God, and that regulates its legal and social practices on that principle. Prominent among other important issues that animate this large work is Richardson's deep concern for the injurious effects on both men and women of the sexual inequities that he observes in the society.

Central to the novel is the relationship of Clarissa and Lovelace, two highly individualized characters whose conformity to their conventional sexual roles assures their fatal separation. Richardson's creation of these two powerful personalities of tragic incompatibility has long been recognized as a unique artistic achievement. Other relationships in the novel have received relatively less attention, but the subsidiary characters have a psychological depth comparable to that of the central pair, and their associations, too, are blighted by the materialistic and sexist society.

Relationships between members of the same sex are as susceptible to the vitiating social influences as are those between members of the two sexes. The first part of this study examines the relationships between women, looking first at the hostile interdependence of Clarissa and her

sister Arabella and next at the friendship of Clarissa and Anna Howe. The second part of the study deals with the associations between men, beginning with the close companionship of the libertines, Lovelace and Belford, and turning to the interaction of Lovelace, the man of pleasure, and Hickman, the man of probity. The third part of the study inquires into the relationships between the sexes, analyzing first the bond between Clarissa and the benevolent protector that Belford has become, and next the courtship of Anna Howe and Hickman. The study attempts to identify the distinct ways in which these important characters have ingested and responded psychologically to the prevailing sexist values of the society, and to note the precise ways in which the sexual bias has warped their interactions with other people.

Antagonism created by the inequities becomes a problem for both sexes, as the excessive masculine privileges increase feminine liabilities, bringing temptations to the man and generating fear and suspicion in the woman. Richardson presents one way of handling the woman's dilemma in the behavior of his heroine. Clarissa tries to rise above the avaricious and dishonorable practices of her society in an uncompromising stand for virtue, adhering strictly to her moral standards even though her governing protectors try to force her to relinquish them. She walks a thin line between obedient conformity and defensive

individualism, for she endeavors to fulfill the conventional ideal of feminine amiability, but refuses, even under great pressure, to give up her human right to exercise her own judgment. She is subjected to tyrannical exploitation by her family and Lovelace, but does not voluntarily abandon her standards of virtue. Though she is brought eventually to social disgrace and isolation from her family, she is victorious in her knowledge that she has not yielded her integrity, and she triumphs over her misfortunes and her enemies in a death made glorious by her Christian hope of heavenly rewards.

In many significant ways, Clarissa's blissful death is a fitting culmination to her virtuous perseverance in the face of inordinate trials and outrages. But an ambiguity surrounds the event, as Richardson's respect for realism compels him to intimate, beneath the triumph, the contradictorily self-destructive nature of her death. Richardson's intuitive understanding of human psychology requires him to incorporate in the characterization of his heroine those symptoms of psychic distress that reveal the human organism's struggle with repressed resentments. Clarissa's blasted hopes and ideals, her disappointments, her dethroned pride, all resist violently her efforts to repress them, and internal mutinous forces summon to combat-duty the vital energies she needs to continue living. As these warring factions within her accomplish her gradual physical dissolution, her studied religious

purification prepares her for the joyous life she anticipates in another world. The ambiguous nature of Clarissa's death keeps it from being a wholly satisfying expression of victory over her painful experiences and suggests an uncertainty in Richardson himself about its full adequacy as an answer to her oppression.

Richardson's mimetically accurate representation of Clarissa's compulsive need to punish herself and others does not invalidate the exultation of her ascent to glory, but neither does her spiritual success cancel out her defeat in the realistic eighteenth-century world. Her composure and elation as she awaits death suggest that she has triumphed over all worldly impediments to virtuous action. But the Christian redemption she has earned through her struggle to repent and forgive does not return her to a vital Christian life in society where she can continue her charitable works: instead she is drawn away from the hostile world into a spiritual realm more suited to her angelic purity. Through Clarissa's withdrawal from life and her eager anticipation of death, Richardson casts doubt on the effectiveness of her heroism as an answer to her psychological needs or as a means of dealing with the secular world.

The novel as a whole is a celebration of incorruptible virtue, and Clarissa's dedication to righteousness in theory justifies her martyrdom and in practice betters the lives of several characters. It brings about Belford's reform and moderates Anna Howe's impetuosity. But the full

adequacy of her heroism as an answer to her world is called into question by its negative components. The sacrifice of her life is a tragic waste when recognized as vindictive punishment of herself and others, or when seen as the consequence of her rigid adherence to the conventional ideal of femininity. Her steadfast rectitude is tragically unsuccessful in averting the real dangers of the real world. In the crucial episodes of the narrative, Richardson exposes the inefficacy of Clarissa's steadiness as a pragmatic defense against the superior advantages of her opponents. Clarissa's virtue includes a reverence for duty that requires her to obey unreservedly the men in authority over her, and Richardson implies that society and Clarissa need to alter the established concept of feminine duty--not of feminine virtue--when he shows Clarissa prevented by her masculine protectors from living up to her moral code. The action of the novel dramatizes the quixotic futility of trying to defend personal standards against an authority invested with excessive power and willing to abuse that power. Clarissa's death, overwhelming in its aura of wasted potential, challenges the wisdom--but not the nobility--of her heroism, while it condemns unequivocally the sexist values of her society.

The tragic outcome of this impasse between corrupt social practices and uncompromising idealism raises the question of whether or not, considering the slow progress

of social change, Clarissa's heroic adherence to her vision of feminine perfection could be replaced by an ethical outlook more effective within the existing mores. Richardson's interest in such an alternative becomes apparent when he uses other individuals in the novel to embody attitudes that differ from Clarissa's. Through the actions and opinions of several of his secondary characters, Richardson explores and evaluates different methods of solving the woman's dilemma. He includes some obviously unacceptable solutions, such as Mrs. Harlowe's abject resignation to the will of her husband, but he presents others that are thoughtfully worked-out alternatives to Clarissa's extreme position.

A number of Richardson's auxiliary characters are fully-developed personalities, exhibiting the traits and motives of actual human beings. These people are more than a strategic supporting cast of characters; they make contributions in their own right to the meaning of the novel. When their behavior and attitudes are checked with the contemporary controversy over woman's domain, some are found to reflect the vigorous strand of opinion that persists in eighteenth-century publications attacking the conventional view of feminine propriety. The liberal view asks for woman the right to exercise her own judgment in matters vital to her personal happiness. A review of the contemporary literature and a close study of the fictional relationships, in combination, supply evidence that Richardson is proposing for serious consideration the

acceptance of some of the eighteenth-century feminist goals--which he embodies in the characters he approves--as an alternative to the traditional concept of femininity that Clarissa upholds at such great cost.

The purpose of this investigation is, first, to examine the effects of the deeply sexist eighteenth-century culture on the individual characters and their relationships. Secondly, the study acknowledges the limitations and unsatisfactory nature of Clarissa's heroism and attempts to demonstrate that Richardson is developing, in several of his secondary figures, carefully worked out alternatives to Clarissa's courageous, but disastrous, perfectionism. Supporting material is presented in the following three sections of the Introduction. Section I offers, as a useful means for analyzing the relationships, a brief survey of a few significant feminine issues aired in popular eighteenth-century literature. These contemporary documents show that Richardson's novel was not created in a vacuum but grew out of the active issues of the times, reflecting the development of a lively controversy over the status of woman. Section II discusses a few twentieth-century psychological insights that offer another useful approach to an evaluation of the relationships. Because Richardson was a close and accurate observer of human behavior and motive, his delineation of character reveals the operation of psychological processes that are described and accounted for in modern psychological theory. Section III supports the proposition

that Richardson has woven feminist concepts into the basic structure of his novel, expressing strong feminist sympathies through Clarissa's resistance to the tyrannical methods used against her. When Clarissa's death is scrutinized for its worldly, rather than its spiritual, significance, the sacrifice of her life seems too high a price to pay to preserve the conventional image of woman. But her martyrdom becomes heroic when it is seen as a courageous protest in defense of her human rights. And this worldly interpretation need not infringe on the overpowering spiritual meaning of her death.

This concept on which the present thesis rests does not lack the support of recent twentieth-century critics. The premise that Clarissa's struggle is basically to preserve her integrity as a person is upheld unequivocally by Elizabeth Brophy, who maintains that to attribute Clarissa's death to her Puritan horror of having been physically violated is to circumscribe her tragedy within too narrow bounds. Richardson intends, in Brophy's view, to make Clarissa's sexual battle signify a much larger theme: "the integrity of the individual" (Brophy, p. 97). In her study of Richardson's novels, Margaret Doody describes Clarissa not only as "a personality possessing spiritual genuis," but as one manifesting:

> a strength of will and desire which resists all obstacles and humiliations, and fiercely asserting her integrity, refuses to be a mere victim.(Doody, A Natural Passion, p. 101)

The insight of yet another important late twentieth-century critic, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, identifies the central action of the novel as Richardson's assertion of Clarissa's right to be what she wishes to be. The rape, in Kinkeade-Weekes' view, is the novelist's affirmation of "the sacredness of a human being's innermost self" (Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson, p. 241). These critics ascribe one of the important meanings of the novel to Clarissa's maintenance of a core of integrity in spite of exploitation and violation. And her isolation is necessary to reinforce and protect her personal identity, for, as Leo Braudy explains, her lonely "impenetrability" is her required defense against the urge of the people in her avaricious society to "penetrate," control, and even destroy others (Braudy, p. 186).

The approach taken in this study of the secondary relationships in Clarissa follows the inclination of today's scholarship to engage in a careful examination of the text itself. Shirley Van Marter's collation of the four versions of the novel published in Richardson's lifetime provides indisputable evidence that Richardson was a conscious artist and a conscientious craftsman, and her work has directed attention to Richardson's skillful structuring of his novels. In his discriminating analyses of Richardson's three novels, Kinkead-Weekes duplicates Van Marter's meticulous methods and puts into practice his own theories of the most rewarding path to a full appreciation of Richardson's nuances of meaning and expression. Kinkead-Weekes believes that

Richardson's exploratory method of writing "to the moment" demands a similar exploratory reading "to the moment" (Kinkead-Weekes, p. 1). In conformity to Kinkead-Weekes' suggestion that "only reading in the way that Richardson wrote could do him an overdue justice" (Kinkead-Weekes, viii), the following analyses try to enter the psychological worlds of each character in turn with the aim of achieving a comprehensive view of Richardson's ultimate convictions about the nature and status of woman. This exploratory method finds at times--as Kinkead-Weekes' theories predict--a different view of woman's obligations when Richardson's "dramatic imagination takes flight" from that expressed in his didactic explanations "when that imagination lapses" (Kinkead-Weekes, p. 2). However, the exploratory method has uncovered persuasive evidence that Richardson endorses feminist principles through his embodiment of them in his characterizations and through his vision of a marriage of mutuality. And this evaluation of Richardson's genuine sympathies has been made, not on any one of his dramatizations of an aspect of the woman's problems, but "in the light of the complex creation as a whole" (Kinkead-Weekes, p. 347).

I

The secondary status of women is described, approved, and protested in essays, books, and pamphlets published in the late seventeenth and the first half of the

eighteenth centuries. The belief in woman's inferiority to man was the accepted view of the conventional society, but opposition to woman's dependent position was also expressed by those supporting the theory of feminism. In her research of the Gentleman's Magazine, "the most popular . . . eighteenth-century journal," Jean E. Hunter finds that "three out of every four writers who touched on the woman question bemoaned the plight of women, and suggested concrete reform measures" (Jean E. Hunter, "The 18th-Century Englishwoman," p. 87). Hunter concludes that "there was a great deal of sympathy with non-traditional, non-ideal views of womanhood" (Hunter, p. 87).

In its pragmatic usage, feminism is the theory that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men. Philosophically, the theory claims that woman is a reasoning being inherently equal to man in mind and morality, possessing powers of judgment equivalent to his. In The English Women Novelists and Their Connection with the Feminist Movement (1688-1797), Joyce M. Horner states that there is no record of usage of the word feminism before 1851. The principles encompassed in the concept, however, were disputed in England long before the coinage of the word. The restrictions on women most frequently complained of are: woman's economic dependency, her confinement to domestic occupations, her inadequate education, and the double standard of sexual freedom. Rarely does the English woman before 1747 ask to participate in government

or in the important business of the world, nor does she look for changes in her legal standing. The legal status of a wife under English common law was that of "a permanent minor," and under "the legal fiction of unity of person," a concept meaning the husband and wife are one person in law, the husband could "alienate his wife's property without her having any redress by common law" (Arthur M. Wilson, "Treated Like Imbecile Children," p. 92). The English woman accepts her legal status and is more concerned about her limited opportunity for education: this is the grievance that receives the most attention in writing before 1747.

The controversy over the proper sphere of activity for women that flourished in the early eighteenth century has been traced by Myra Reynolds in The Learned Lady in England 1650-1760. Reynolds explains that "Renascence ideas concerning the education of women came into England from Spain" through the highly educated Catherine of Aragon (Reynolds, p. 5). The Spaniard Juan Luis Vives, who directed the studies of Catherine's daughter, Princess Mary, wrote treatises favoring learning for women. Vives advises the woman "to learn her book," but he also declares that "the keeping and ordering of an house" is "the ornament" of a woman's soul, recommending that she learn "cookery" and "to handle wool and flax" (Foster Watson, Vives and the Renascence Education of Women, p. 43). Vives decrees that "obedience to parents and husbands" is obligatory and that the essential feminine virtues are "piety and modesty"

(Reynolds, p. 7). Aiming to educate women for either marriage or the church, Vives makes a firm connection between piety and erudition. However, he designates as inappropriate for women all occupations involving any sort of publicity, declaring that "it neither becometh a woman to rule a school, nor to live amongst men, or to speak abroad . . . "; instead she should in company "hold her tongue demurely" (Vives, p. 55). Rather than teaching, the woman must be the humble recipient of instruction, for the husband "doeth not his duty that doth not instruct and teach his wife" (Vives, p. 202). The influential Vives prescribes the repressive rules of conduct and the narrow areas of activity for women that remain unassailable in conservative English thought at the time that Richardson portrays Clarissa's oppressive environment.

With the Restoration, a new interest in the improvement of women's status appears in England, and a number of serious writers give support to the feminist principles that had long been endorsed by continental women. The writings of those who wish the intellectual emancipation of women are bitterly opposed by those who wish to preserve the traditional restraints. The work and personalities of the two most prominent women writing in the mid-seventeenth century illustrate in extreme form the two competing attitudes. The "Matchless Orinda" represents the epitome of amiable conformity to the established

restraints and "Mad Madge of Newcastle" represents the height of angry rebellion against them.

"Orinda," Mrs. Katherine Phillips (1631-1664), was a poetess whose excessive modesty charmed both the public and contemporary masculine authors. Abashed when her intimate poems of idealistic friendship were published in 1662 without her "knowledge or consent" (Ballard, p. 289), she wrote:

> I am so far from expecting Applause for anything I scribble, that I can hardly expect Pardon; and sometimes I think that Employment so far above my Reach, and unfit for my Sex, that I am going to resolve against it for ever. (Philips, Preface, Poems, pp. A3-A4)

Men of letters rewarded her diffidence with elaborate flattery, but Cowley's flowery compliment, for one, does not mask the masculine condescension beneath it:

> We allow'd you Beauty, and we did submit
> To all the tyrannies of it.
> Ah! cruel Sex, will you depose us too in Wit?
> (Philips, Poems, p. a)

Gracious and modest, "Orinda" made no enemies and enjoyed an extraordinary vogue, receiving enthusiastic praise from authoritative sources. Nevertheless, the combination of gallantry and patronage in the attitude of the Restoration gentleman towards the lady interested in learning is plain in the masculine eulogies honoring her.

"Mad Madge," Margaret Cavendish (1624-1674), the notorious Duchess of Newcastle, manifests the new feminine energy associated with the Restoration when she attacks with vigor the repression disguised by gallantry like that

offered to "Orinda." The Duchess had become an object of ridicule because she wrote books that pretended to philosophize, and behaved extravagantly. But she exhibits a faith in woman's intelligence comparable to that of the feminist writers on the continent when she pleads for her sex and resentfully enumerates the indignities women endure. In her Address to the Two Universities, she hopes

> . . . for the good incouragement of our sex, lest in time we should grow irrational as idiots, by the dejectednesse of our spirits, through the careless neglects, and despisements of the masculine sex to the effeminate, thinking it impossible we should have either learning or understanding, wit or judgment, as if we had not rational souls as well as men, . . . for we are kept like birds in cages to hop up and down in our houses . . . we are shut out of all power, and Authority by reason we are never imployed either in civil nor marshall affaires, our counsels are despised, and laughed at, the best of our actions are troden down with scorn . . .
>
> (Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, Appendix IX, p. 209)

In her defiant complaints, Margaret raises the major objections of the feminist position and goes beyond it in her request to participate in "civil and marshall affaires."

A very significant figure in the continuous line of support for intellectual freedom for women is Mary Astell (1666-1739), a writer of special relevance to this study because of the close affinity of her ideas to Richardson's particular moral concerns. Astell produced two works dealing specifically with women: A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their true and greatest

interest (1694), and Some Reflections upon Marriage (1700), both of which reached a wide audience. In A Serious Proposal, Astell offers an original concept in feminine education, for she envisions a Religious Retirement, that would provide education and "a serene and ordered life" for women with the option "to return at will to the world" (Reynolds, p. 301). A similar plan came concurrently from Defoe in his Essay on Projects (1697), but he puts more emphasis on secular training than Astell. His strong statement in favor of education for women shows that masculine support was not lacking for the progressive point of view:

> I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous Customs in the world, considering us as a Civiliz'd and Christian Countrey, that we deny the advantages of Learning to Women. (Defoe, "An Academy for Women," An Essay on Projects, p. 282)

The energetic progressive thought advocating improvements for women met with resistance in the body of conservative objections to any change in woman's secondary status, continuing to mold and revere the diffident and helpless woman. Near the end of the seventeenth century, the conventional viewpoint was expressed in numerous pamphlets that attracted a large audience of readers. One of the most influential is The Ladies' Calling, of disputed authorship. This book endorses the ideas concerning women that are held by that portion of the English middle and upper classes represented by the Harlowes in the novel.

The author of The Ladies' Calling exalts as the "genuine and proper Ornaments of Women" (The Ladies' Calling,

p. 4) the same qualities that are the "virtues" of Richardson's well-bred women. Chapter headings are: Meekness, Modesty, Compassion, Affability, and Piety. The author also condemns the faults contrary to these charms, as if to reprimand the fashionable ladies of the Restoration Court. He protests that women "take up the Confidence, the Boldness of Men" (The Ladies' Calling, p. 13), complaining of "their Gesture, their Language, nay sometimes their Habit too being affectedly masculine" (The Ladies' Calling, p. 13). On the other hand, he commends those women who cultivate "a will duly submissive to lawful Superiors" (The Ladies' Calling, p. 43), declaring that "since Gods assignation has thus determined subjection to be womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitness, or for their acquiescence" (The Ladies Calling, p. 44). Refusing "to oppose a received opinion," the author admits that, though "in respect of their intellects, they are below men," yet "they have souls of as divine an Original" (The Ladies' Calling, Preface, p. b).

The controversy over the appropriate education, duties, and position for women reached its peak in what have been called the "Sophia Pamphlets," where the convictions of both sides were aired and polarized. The dates of the Pamphlets place them before the public about the time that Richardson began work on Clarissa in 1744. The first pamphlet follows closely the ideas of an earlier treatise from France, Poulain de la Barre's The Woman as

Good as the Man (1673). Sophia demands for women the opportunity to practice in all those fields of power and dignity for which Poulain claims they are qualified. The gentleman author of the second pamphlet, Man Superior to Woman, replies in a "serio-comic tone," with scoffs about learning for women, while Sophia seems earnest in her "protest and propaganda" (Reynolds, p. 315). This literary skirmish between the sexes shows the lively interest in the subject at the time Richardson conceived his dramatic situations.

II

The findings of twentieth-century psychological research support Richardson's indictment of the Harlowes' society as unhealthy. Modern psychologists describe some of the processes that Richardson represents mimetically in the mental life of his characters and in their interactions with one another. Even a cursory glance at some recent psychological theories indicates that many of the behavior patterns that Richardson illustrates are manifestations of neurotic tendencies.

The close connection between early parental influences and the development of neurosis is generally recognized, and Richardson provides revealing derogatory information about the childhood of a number of his important personalities. Lovelace is raised by an over-indulgent mother, Anna Howe by an imperious one. The psychic deficiency in Clarissa that leads her towards death rather than

life can be traced back to her early home life. The twentieth-century psychologist Carl Jung asserts that "all parental difficulties reflect themselves without fail in the psyche of the child, sometimes with pathological results" (Jung, "Analytical Psychology and Education," p. 53).

Karen Horney in Neurosis and Human Growth bases her theory of the neurotic character-structure on the child's initial efforts to fit himself into an untrustworthy environment, such as that produced by a mother's resentment of her subordination. Horney explains that the neurotic individual experiences painful conflicts within himself when he tries to adapt to the contradictory pressures of his early family life. The child's normal instincts prompt him to move towards, against, or away from people, as the situation demands. But when he begins life in an environment of psychic uncertainty, he experiences intolerable conflicts in choosing between the three possible responses to others, becoming anxious about his choices and losing "the spontaneity of his real feelings" (Horney, p. 18). Horney maintains that the nuclear problem in neurosis is this alienation from the living center of the self.

The self-alienated person desperately needs "a feeling of identity," and to provide this, his imagination creates "an idealized image of himself" which endows him with "unlimited powers" and "exalted faculties" (Horney, pp. 21-22). Since he views himself as a supreme being, he not only makes severe demands on himself, but also feels

he is entitled to special consideration, transforming his neurotic needs into presumptuous claims on others. The neurotic's associates become overimportant to him because he needs them to confirm his "fictitious values" and to vindicate him from his guilt feelings and his self-contempt (Horney, p. 297).

Abraham Maslow contrasts the "deficiency needs" of the neurotic with the "growth needs" of the healthy person, explaining that the psychological life of a person is "lived out differently" when he is motivated by deficiency than when he is motivated by growth (Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 25). Since deficiency needs can only be satisfied by people other than the subject, the self-protective person must appease those who are the source of his supply, becoming hostile to them in his "anxious dependency." And he becomes afraid of his environment because at any time it "may fail or disappoint him" (Maslow, p. 32). Maslow has discovered that, when safety is endangered, people usually choose to regress backwards to a more secure foundation, where basic needs are assured fulfillment, so that "in a choice between giving up safety and giving up growth, safety will ordinarily win out" (Maslow, p. 47). Distinctions between psychological health and illness are important in evaluating the nature of Clarissa's heroism as well as in analyzing the relationships in the novel. Both Maslow and Horney define psychological health as transcendence of the environment, for a person

must be free to fight his environment, neglect it, or adapt to it, as circumstances demand.

III

Richardson has woven an endorsement of feminist principles into the basic structure of his novel and has built his story of courtship and marriage around three situations that expose the harshness of the conventional demands on women. The narrative falls into three main divisions involving Clarissa in three trials of her virtue, in each of which Richardson denounces the conventional feminine ideal that in essence requires the woman to accept graciously her secondary status. In each trial, the specific feminist material can be identified and sorted out from the complexity of its psychological and moral content.

Clarissa's first trial is a testing of her filial obedience when her father demands that she marry Solmes to further the family's wealth and advancement. Clarissa is shocked at her father's disregard of her personal preferences, but she is equally disturbed by his deafness to her moral objections. When she fails her test of obedience, she is not opposing the principle of masculine authority; she is rather protesting the use of that authority to force her to break its own rules and to ignore its own standards. When Clarissa fails as a daughter, she succeeds as a woman, because she refuses to yield her right to make her own

moral choices, and in so doing she preserves her integrity as a person, as a feminine individual.

Clarissa's second ordeal is a trial of her chastity. Her wish is to comply as strictly with the masculine standards in regard to her marital duties as to her filial duties, and she accepts wholeheartedly the traditional concept of the wife as the obedient possession of the husband. Baffled by Clarissa's frenzied reaction to her violation, Lovelace reminds Belford that society does not expect more than a visible obedience to its injunctions and that the ideal of chastity is not upheld literally. Clarissa is again forced by man to disobey his own law, a law which she honors in her heart. In the trial of her chastity, she again fails literally, but she strengthens her feminine integrity by withholding her consent.

In the third section of the novel, Richardson gives a Christian base to Clarissa's problems and to her solution of them, and he makes her final trial a testing of her obedience to the high Christian command that she forgive her enemies. She achieves a forgiving spirit toward her family through the gradual suppression of her resentments, but she cannot forget Lovelace's offence and prove her forgiveness by accepting him as her husband--though her society recognizes that the cloak of marriage is the most satisfactory solution to an elopement or a seduction. Aside from the powerful psychological processes that inhibit Clarissa's acceptance of Lovelace, Richardson provides a rational

feminist justification for her rejection of him. Marriage is for Clarissa the most material article of her life: she will not undermine the man-made institution by sanctioning Lovelace's cavalier disregard for it; and she will not sanction the violation of her sex in general through the concealmeant of rape in marriage. Her forgiveness of Lovelace is a qualified abstract forgiveness lacking concrete proof, though in her heart she aspires to the high Christian concept. In her third trial, then, she again fails literally by refusing to obey the demand that she forgive and forget his injury in marriage.

As in her other two trials, her failure to comply with what she sees as an immoral demand fortifies her feminine integrity. In the abduction and the rape, she was the victim, but in her rejection of Lovelace, she is the active agent. By escaping from tyrannical masculine control into Belford's benevolent protection, she creates circumstances that give her the illusion of deciding for herself what her future will be. Deserted by friends, unfit for marriage, unwilling to seize her estate, dispossessed of a place on earth, she chooses disgrace and death rather than desert her sex and herself in a luxurious but personally demeaning marriage. She refuses to support the customary expediency of concealing under the cloak of marriage either insults to woman or what could be woman's own self-indulgence. Her refusal to marry Lovelace is the most significant feminist action in the novel. Reynolds gives Richardson credit for

being "the first to make feminism an issue in fiction" (Reynolds, p. 337), and his feminist sympathies are evident when he demonstrates through Clarissa's three trials that the eighteenth-century woman could perform her social role as a woman only at the expense of her integrity.

PART I

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL INEQUALITY ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN IN CLARISSA

Chapter I Two Sisters: Arabella and Clarissa

Chapter II Two Friends: Anna Howe and Clarissa

CHAPTER I

TWO SISTERS: ARABELLA AND CLARISSA

The two Harlowe sisters, Arabella, the elder, and Clarissa, the younger, occupy places in the family structure that were determined for them at birth by the traditional assumption that women are inferior to men. James, the only son and Harlowe heir, who will convey the family name to posterity, has been educated at the University, while Bella and Clarissa have been provided, not with university educations, but with handsome sitting rooms of their own. This different emphasis points the two sexes in different directions from the start. James will take over the family estates, hoping to build up the family name "and augment the honour of it" (I: 58), while Bella and Clarissa will move toward "the most material article" of their lives: marriage (I: 379).

The Harlowe family is structured like an ancient patriarchy, for it calculates its descent through the male line, and it is presided over by a father whose authority must not be disputed by women and children. The other males in the family, the uncles, support the hierarchy wholeheartedly, entertaining "as high notions of a child's duty

as of a wife's obedience" (I: 60), and the women themselves accept as natural and deserved the domination of the masculine figures. The imbalance of power permeates every aspect of the Harlowes' domestic life, and the entrenched sexual inequality is the direct cause of the matrimonial controversy that tears the family apart, as it is the primary source of the grievous enmity that develops between the sisters.

The unequal evaluation of the sexes has shaped James' imperious personality, making him capable of flaunting his jest "that daughters were but encumbrances and drawbacks upon a family" (I: 54). His vulgar and even more self-complacent aspersion is "that a man who has sons brings up chickens for his own table, whereas daughters are chickens brought up for the tables of other men" (I: 54). The easy inference from James' flippant assessment of daughters--as James well knows--is that "other men" will be willing to pay extravagantly for these delicacies that have been cultivated to grace their tables. James is reflecting the commercial bias of his society when he views persons as commodities to be consumed and daughters as either potential drains on the family fortunes or as potential goods for barter.

James' demeaning remarks signify that a higher value is placed on the son than on the daughter in the typical eighteenth-century patriarchal family, and Clarissa testifies to this prejudice in her posthumous letter that

refers to him as "their best hope, and only son, more worth in the family account than several daughters" (IV: 362). Mary Astell, in A Serious Proposal, verifies the currency of this sexual discrimination, and her observations, noting the arrogance of sons in response to the favoritism and advantages they enjoy, give contemporary backing to Richardson's characterization of James:

> Were the Men as much neglected, and as little care taken to cultivate and improve them, perhaps they wou'd be so far from surpassing those whom they now despise, that they themselves wou'd sink into the greatest stupidity and brutality. The preposterous returns that the most of them make, to all the care and pains that is bestow'd on them, renders this no uncharitable, nor improbable Conjecture. (Astell, Proposal, p. 5).

James' behavior is typical of that of other young men of his day and class, and the Harlowes are true to their culture in their concessions to their only son and in their insatiable accumulation of the wealth he will inherit.

In their shrewd recognition of woman's capacity to serve as an effective means to their materialistic ends, the Harlowes are also following cultural trends and reflecting cultural attitudes that affect profoundly the relationship between the sisters. The reduction of woman to a commodity and her dependency on men for subsistence and status are two contemporary conditions that automatically set up a competitive situation between women, who must vie with each other for masculine approval. Richardson uses the inevitable competition between the sisters as a

key element in his plot and as a vehicle for his significant themes.

This examination of the relationship of Arabella and Clarissa begins with a comparison of the personalities of the two girls and then surveys the specific circumstances within the Harlowe family that prepare the ground for animosity between them. Discussion follows of the psychological interaction between the sisters as mimetic characters caught in the family situation and locked in battle over Solmes' proposals. Attention is drawn to the eighteenth-century definition of feminine prudence as the repression of passion, a concept which functions, in relation to marriage, as the suppression of woman's preference in the choice of suitors. The opposite reactions of the two girls to the sexual inequities are contrasted as Bella gains advantages by conforming to the usual feminine strategies, while Clarissa becomes a victim in her refusal to compromise her integrity. Consideration is given next to the effects of Bella's persecution on Clarissa's personal growth and Christian development, and to the option of legal prosecution as a means of bringing justice to Clarissa. Finally, the conclusion is reached that sexual inequality fosters abnormal behavior in both sisters and prevents them from giving genuine affection or benevolent assistance to each other.

Using the epistolary method to collect testimony from various characters, Richardson establishes Clarissa's

inherited and acquired superiority to Arabella. Clarissa's beauty, her amiable disposition, her graceful accomplishments, all enhance her value as a family ornament and as a prospective wife: in short, as a commodity. Bella's awkwardness, her sullen disposition, and her violent temper, on the other hand, detract from her worth as a matrimonial candidate. Clarissa's superiority is acknowledged by her grandfather in the Preamble to his will when he describes her as "from her infancy a matchless young creature in her duty to me, and admired by all who knew her, as a very extraordinary child," while he mentions Arabella as merely "a very hopeful and dutiful child" (I: 21).

Anna Howe provides a comparison of the two sisters as part of her posthumous portrait of Clarissa, prepared at Belford's request to accompany the collection of letters that will reveal Clarissa's tragic story to the world. The portrait is a long, tedious intrusion near the end of Volume IV that resembles in tone and content the popular conduct book for young ladies, but it reveals, among other things, Richardson's purpose in building his narrative around the discrepancy between the sisters. The description of Clarissa is a painstaking reconstruction of the conventional feminine ideal in every attribute and aspect of behavior; and the natural foil for "the incomparable Clarissa" is "the tawdry and awkward Bella" (IV: 498).

Anna Howe compares the two sisters as they come downstairs to receive company, Clarissa descending with

"graceful ease and tranquility," and Bella "rustling and bustling" and "disordering more her native disorderliness at the sight of her serene sister, by her sullen envy, to see herself so much surpassed with such little pains" (IV: 498). The close relationship between the dissimilar sisters makes possible for Richardson the juxtaposition of the commonplace and the ideal. Arabella represents the ordinary woman, exhibiting predictable feminine behavior, and Clarissa represents the ideal woman, possessing all of the feminine virtues and charms that the society demands of her and following as well high principles of her own. Praises of Clarissa abound throughout the novel, granting her impressive qualities and leaving no doubt that Richardson is creating in his heroine a gifted person as well as the conventional ideal.

Clarissa has yet another advantage over the older and less fortunate Arabella. The younger daughter has received an education superior to that of most young ladies of her class and century. In her infancy and childhood, she was nursed by Mrs. Norton, a clergyman's daughter who had absorbed her father's learning and his Christian principles and who, as Clarissa's tutor, handed both on to her pupil. As a young girl, Clarissa also received frequent instructive visits from Dr. Lewen, a learned divine to whose "conversation and correspondence she owed many of her valuable acquirements" (IV: 495). These two wise and pious surrogate parents--a feminine and a masculine figure--

developed her powers of reasoning and her dedication to virtue. Mrs. Norton, the maternal figure, advises feminine accommodation to the patriarchal system, urging strict observance of the highest conventional standards for women. Dr. Lewen, the paternal figure, emphasizes the importance of self-respect and individuality, urging the "steadiness of mind" (I: 93) that scorns abject servility and resists encroachment. Both counselors support Clarissa in her stand for principle and integrity, although they offer her contradictory definitions of her feminine duty. In his Postscript, Richardson explains that Clarissa's education "from early childhood" was "the foundation of all her excellencies" and that the combined influences of Mrs. Norton and Dr. Lewen and her own good mother on her susceptible mind and spirit led to "improvements and attainments, which gave her . . . a distinction that caused it to be said, that when she . . . out of her family, it was considered but as a common family" (IV: 564).

The natural reaction of an inferior elder sister to this aggregate of superiorities in a younger sister would include resentment, and envy is the paramount emotion in Bella's relationship with Clarissa. Richardson uses Anna Howe--who is herself a rival with Arabella for the lion's share of Clarissa's sisterly affections--to identify the two powerful emotions that drive Bella and James to join forces against their beautiful and amiable sister. Anna lets James represent Avarice and Bella Envy as she advises

her friend on how to handle these stormy passions that are working against her:

> I think you might have known that AVARICE and ENVY are two passions that are not to be satisfied the one by giving, the other by the envied person's continuing to deserve and excel. Fuel, fuel both, all the world over, to flames insatiate and devouring (I: 40).

The brother and sister function through the novel with the consistency of personifications, Bella as ENVY and James as AVARICE, but they are also well-rounded characterizations, expressing these two very human emotions as their animosity towards Clarissa builds over the marriage settlements and inheritances.

Avarice has been stimulated in both Bella and James by the practical matter of the grandfather's will. Clarissa's grandfather has bestowed on the "precious" child, who was the delight of his old age (I: 21), a fortune in money and property, depriving James of expectations related to a part of the family-estate that he, "as an only son" and rightful male heir, had hoped ultimately to inherit (I: 66), and providing Bella with another disadvantage in the rivalry for suitors: her sister now has great wealth as well as beauty. The legacy raises still another issue directly related to sexual inequality: the will entitles Clarissa to personal independence, a privilege rarely enjoyed by a single woman in the eighteenth century.

The grandfather's caprice has defied the patriarchal system by robbing the elder children of their birthright

in favor of the youngest, and it has added insult to injury by bestowing this blessing upon a youngest child who is a female. Clarissa is aware of the seriousness of this affront to custom, and foreseeing its emotional impact on her patriarchal father, she finds a way to remedy the transferal of undue power to a female. "To obviate therefore every one's jealousy" she gives up to her father's management, "not only the estate, but the money bequeathed me . . . , contenting myself to take as from his bounty what he was pleased to allow me" (I: 55). As a young daughter, accustomed to being dependent on the men of the family, using the women of the family as models and desiring only to be an example of feminine decorum for other young ladies of her class, she can imagine no occasion that would impel her to seek independence from the parental generosity she enjoys.

But her grandfather's unconventional bequest sets in motion more complicated machinations against her, adding an Esau-like animosity to the practical motivations in James' and Bella's opposition. She soon finds that her brother and sister are "every now and then" doing her "covert ill offices" (I: 55). The covert ill offices soon become overt and specific with James' proposal of the preposterous Solmes for his elegant sister Clarissa. Since the proposal gratifies the intense emotions of James and Bella and also appeals to the excessive ambitions and greed

of the Harlowe family, it brings on a conflict with Clarissa that grows into the fissuring family crisis.

As the girls reach marriageable age, Arabella faces a formidable array of advantages in her younger sister. Because of her disagreeable nature and lesser talents, Bella has already fought a losing battle for parental favoritism on the domestic front. Renowned for her beauty and virtue, Clarissa has received several proposals, while Lovelace's suit is Arabella's first. Richardson has fixed the odds in advance to favor Clarissa over Bella in the marriage market, a condition that heightens Clarissa's consciousness of her talents and duties and builds up in Bella an angry awareness of her inadequacies. Richardson shows both sisters to be damaged by the understanding--instilled in them from birth--that their value to the Harlowe family and to society resides in their external attributes and not in their basic human worth. Growing up in the unhealthy climate of a mother's self-effacing subservience to an imperious father, the sisters manifest fixed patterns of behavior that suggest the development within them of rigid character-structures to compensate for a lack of esteem for themselves as women. The methods they have adopted to defend their impaired egos reflect the discrepancies between them: Clarissa strives for a perfectionism that tolerates no criticism from herself or others, while Bella engages in vindictive aggression against the rival whom she sees as the cause of all her inner discontent.

Clarissa is "a young lady, whose distinguished merits have made her the public care" (I: I). Thus obligated beyond herself and her family to a larger social body, Clarissa is determined to preserve outwardly her reputation and to support it inwardly with genuine virtue. She aspires to an Absolute Virtue that allows her no more deviation from filial and religious duties than from conventional decorum. For eighteen years she has enjoyed control of the people around her because her desires and her self-image have coincided with the wishes of her family and friends. And these people have provided the excessive admiration and basic approval necessary to reinforce her inner image of herself as a model of feminine perfection. Dependent on external ratification and on conditions that permit her to maintain her standards, Clarissa's exalted image of herself stands on precarious grounds. But so far her claims have been honored, and by making herself useful, charming, and generous, she has brought happiness and distinction to her family.

Though warranted in their delight in Clarissa as a person, the Harlowes have put too much value on her as an ornament, because of their need to use her as a commodity. For the same reason, they have undervalued Bella as a human being; and the older sister, too, must integrate her personality around an inner image of herself that will compensate for her damaged ego. Bella cannot fail to be aware

of the family's partiality to her superior sister, expressed openly in tactless comparisons of the two. Mrs. Harlowe's favoritism for the daughter who has "eased" her "of all family cares" (I: 77) must be as plain to Bella as it is to Clarissa. Bella exposes her resentful consciousness of her mother's preference in a letter of abuse written to Clarissa after the abduction:

> O Wretch! what has not your ungrateful folly cost my poor Mother! Had you been less a darling, you would not, perhaps, have been so graceless: but I never in my life saw a cockered favourite come to good. (IV: 83)

The courtship rivalries are rooted in earlier childhood emotions, stemming from unequal endowments and fed by sexist evaluations. In an argument over suitors, Bella admits that her envy began with her parents' early indulgences to Clarissa. She asks her sister, "For did you ever give up any thing? Had you not the art to make them think all was right you asked, though my brother and I were frequently refused favours of no greater import?" (I: 217) Clarissa has dated the envy of her brother and sister from her grandfather's legacy, believing that distinction estranged their affection from her, but Bella's remarks indicate that the sibling rivalry now surfacing over courtship matters has been festering in her since childhood. Clarissa answers in surprise, "All you speak of, Bella, was a long time ago. I cannot go so far back into childish follies. Little did I think of how long-standing this your late-shown antipathy is" (I: 217). Further evidence of

remote antecedents to the present troubles appears in Bella's jealousy of the affection and education Clarissa received from her childhood nurse. Bella casts reflections on Mrs. Norton whenever possible, referring to her sarcastically as "Your mamma Norton, your oracle . . . " (I: 230) and to Clarissa as "Mamma Norton's sweet dear" (I: 236). The Harlowes have made no secret of their admiration of Clarissa as the jewel of the family, and their favoritism has swelled the normal sibling rivalry of Arabella into seething hostility.

After Lovelace has been introduced to Bella and she hopes for his approval, she shows her ingrained sense of inferiority to Clarissa in her free admissions of self-doubt. Bella is pathetic when she looks in the glass and assesses herself in terms of her superior sister: "He was too handsome a man for her!--Were she but as amiable as somebody, there would be a possibility of holding his affections!" (I: 5) Bella's predicament calls for sympathy while she lives in the shadow of Clarissa's splendor and before she chooses to respond with spite and vindictiveness. Clarissa describes these early scenes after they have happened and when she is displeased with Bella, but her reports show less compassion than might be expected for her sister's misgivings over deficiencies not of Bella's own making.

In her accounts to Anna Howe, Clarissa shows herself as not completely blameless of flaunting her superiority

over her less fortunate sister. She ridicules Bella's high spirits over her hoped-for success with Lovelace and congratulates herself on her own contrasting sharpness as she makes fun of Bella for attributing "Bashfulness" to the worldly Lovelace (I: 6). Bella's early perception of her sister's conscious superiority is evident in her later readiness to accuse Clarissa unfairly of self-importance. In the contest over Solmes, Bella writes insultingly to Clarissa:

> I only desire that you will not, while you seem to have such an opinion of your wit, think every one else a fool; and that you can at pleasure, by your whining flourishes, make us all dance after your lead. (I: 141)

Bella's frustrations over her inability to match her sister's wit and charm would tend to reinforce any ego-uncertainties, and by the time Lovelace shifts his attention to Clarissa, Bella has developed a compelling need to triumph over her younger sister.

Bella has inherited the "violent spirits" (I: 40) of the Harlowes, and with repeated rejections in favor of her younger sister, from parents, from grandfather, and now from Lovelace, she has accumulated a backlog of rage that is ready to erupt. Her anger over the series of defeats bursts out in passionate retaliations as she joins James to carry their mutual resentment against Lovelace "beyond all bounds of probability" (I: 15) and to propose the "preposterous" Solmes (I: 40) as a serious suitor for Clarissa. Bella's energies are concentrated in seeking the

exhilaration of malicious triumph over others as a substitute for the sense of self-worth she lacks initially and has not been able to attain through pleasing those in authority over her. She has integrated her personality around the gratifications of malice, revenging the injuries done to herself, while punishing Clarissa for possessing superiorities.

The heated arguments between the sisters during Clarissa's confinement at Harlowe Place bring out the particular ways in which the home atmosphere and the cultural prejudices have damaged both personalities. Bella gives vent to her animosity towards Clarissa in sneers, mockery, and sarcasm, exposing her need "to exult over her" (I: 213) by calling her "child" and by claiming the prerogative of age to justify her imperious manner. Her taunts are often crude and childish, showing her ineptitude in contrast to Clarissa's sharp retorts that hit their mark. And Bella is easily reduced to name-calling when she can think of nothing clever to say. Displaying the indiscriminate character of her vindictive aggression, she mimics Clarissa's genuine grief, wiping away her sister's sincere tears ostentatiously with her handkerchief.

In one angry exchange, Bella accuses Clarissa of a secret passion for the rake who has spilled the blood of her brother, and Clarissa retaliates by reminding Bella that she was once willing to accept that rake as a suitor.

When provoked, Clarissa returns spite for spite, but she is also compelled to obey strong drives to obtain love and approval. Clarissa quickly apologizes for her self-assertion, asking "Will you forgive me; and let me find a sister in you, as I am sorry, if you have reason to think me unsisterly in what I have said?" (I: 214) Bella becomes violently angry and interprets Clarissa's gentleness as "a triumph of temper over her" (I: 214).

The thin line between what appears to Bella as self-righteous condescension and what Clarissa feels to be generosity can only be established through a knowledge of the intentions behind the apology. Any peace-making is commendable on Clarissa's part, considering the insults she endures, but since she usually qualifies her apologies and makes no outright admission of being in the wrong, she gets the double satisfaction of feeling herself in the right and of congratulating herself on being magnanimous enough to apologize. The amends she endeavors to make serve as well to exonerate Clarissa as to soothe Bella. Richardson provides ample evidence that Clarissa's motives are mixed, not pure. Ashamed of sparring with her sister in front of Aunt Hervey, Clarissa attempts to cancel out her offence by assuring her aunt that her barbed comments have "not proceeded from inward rancour to the poor Bella" (I: 237). As Clarissa oscillates between self-defense and self-effacing good-will, she displays a forgiving spirit that

elevates herself and demeans Bella as the recipient of her magnanimity.

On a different psychic level from that of her irrational contradictory feelings, Clarissa's rational faculties endorse the act of forgiveness. In her discussion of dueling, she states her view explicitly, condemning the dauntless challengers, who know not "how much nobler it is to forgive, and even how much more manly to despise, than to resent an injury" (I: 282). In Clarissa's apologetic defenses, Richardson supplies no evidence that she is consciously seeking hidden gratifications or that she is hypocritically betraying her rational beliefs, but his mimetic portrayal of her indicates that she is obeying the demands of her perfectionist standards. She is compelled simultaneously to declare her superiority and to practice unselfish deference to others. Clarissa's suspicions of her own ambiguous motives cause her to write to Anna Howe, recording the dialogues, and asking for her friend's "approbation or disapprobation" of her conduct (I: 212).

Clarissa's inner uncertainty emerges in the crisis over Solmes, which puts a strain on her admired meekness and encourages her latent aggressiveness. She now faces a contradiction in her ideal vision of herself, which demands absolute filial obedience in strict adherence to the patriarchal system, but also demands maintenance of a superiority that cannot tolerate the offence of being

offered so inferior a suitor as the illiterate and ugly Solmes. More significantly, her innermost biological instincts recoil at the thought of the repulsive Solmes, and they become the dominant force in her rejection of him, overpowering even her neurotic compulsion to be perfect. Her image of herself as the model of feminine conduct is threatened by the need for self-preservation in the face of real oppression.

In the controversy over Solmes, the Harlowes rely on Clarissa's recognized prudence and virtue to bring them the obedience they demand. The prudence for which Clarissa is acclaimed involves the eighteenth-century generalization that reason should control the passions. Mary Astell, in A Serious Proposal, an inspirational treatise for women, explains that the Art of Prudence requires the woman to be "on her Guard" against her passions and that Vertue "consists in governing Animal Impressions" (Astell, Proposal, pp. 141-142). The prudence attributed to Clarissa refers specifically to her attitude towards her suitors. It includes her intention--and capacity--to accept as a husband only the deserving man of merit. She is not expected to judge on the evidence of "the eye" or the emotions, but on a rational assessment of the man's suitability. When sent by the Harlowes to persuade Clarissa to accept their proposals, Mrs. Norton tells Clarissa that it is her duty to acquiesce to her father's choice of Solmes. Clarissa's

foster mother ends her efforts at persuasion by nourishing Clarissa's self-glorification with a tribute to prudence and to Clarissa's capacity to apply it in the service of virtue.

The emotion that Mrs. Norton is asking Clarissa to suppress in obedience to her family is not a wayward infatuation for Lovelace, but an instinctive revulsion for the man Solmes--not an attraction, but an aversion--a biological recoiling from a despicable specimen of humanity. In Clarissa's words, which Mrs. Norton seems not to hear: "But death will I choose, in any shape, rather than that man" (I: 196). Clarissa is asked not only to control what is believed to be a strong passion for a preferred suitor but to suppress all natural responses to any suitor in order to mold herself into suitable matrimonial barter. The Harlowes carry the woman's expected suppression of her preferences to extremes in the proposal of Solmes, and Clarissa laments bitterly, "PERSON in a man is nothing, because I am supposed to be prudent; so my eye is to be disgusted and my reason not convinced" (I: 79). Custom has made the concealment of feminine preference--the outward sign of the repression of normal sexual instincts--a basic requirement of the ideal woman.

The Harlowes' conventional society relies on this concept of Vertue to sustain the customary demand that the woman consent to the family's marriage arrangements. The

Harlowes and their class follow without compunction the traditional anti-feminist practices that intensify any insecurities that may already be established in the young woman by the time she reaches marriageable age. However, Jean E. Hunter points out that new attitudes more sympathetic to women were emerging in the eighteenth century:

> In the past marriages had been a family affair, and a young woman accepted her parents' choice without demur. But now, the opinion grew more and more prevalent that love should accompany marriage, that a young lady should have a say in whom she married, and that parents should not force their daughters to marry men they could not esteem. . . . . Eighteenth-century marriage, even with love, could and did pose serious problems for women. But, the new insistence on marital love and freedom of choice was a step forward for women, since marriage remained the only career open to most of them. (Hunter, pp. 75-76)

The individual's right to choose a marital partner is an issue of serious concern to Richardson, and the conflict between the old and new attitudes supplies much of the tension of the novel. He condemns the injustice of the custom that allows the daughter little choice in the selection of her suitors, while the son, as James illustrates, is given freedom to make his own selection. When his father recommends a young lady, Miss Nelly D'Oily, to James, the son need only say he "<u>did not like her</u>," and "that was thought sufficient" for the suit to be dismissed (I: 137).

The new attitude of respect for the woman's preference has reached the consciousness of the Harlowe daughters, but they are still bound by the ingrained custom that restrains the lady from admitting an interest in a

suitor. The sisters are caught between the old and the new attitudes, feeling entitled to a preference but restrained by training and custom from the expression of it. When subjected to Lovelace's humiliating anti-proposal, Arabella, bound by society's conventional rules of courtship decorum, is helpless to accept his ill-timed offer or to protest his free-handed withdrawal of it.

Lovelace's indifference to the woman's freedom of choice allows him to dismiss Arabella in a cavalier fashion, and the frustration of her preference for him accounts in part for her violent resentment of his attentions to Clarissa. Richardson creates in Arabella a despicable personality, overflowing with venom and spite, but he shows clearly that these destructive characteristics derive not only from her inferior, self-centered nature but also from her frustrations as a woman, dependent solely on marriage for fulfillment in life. Bella is denied the right to choose her husband--and furthermore, forced by stringent mores to conceal any partiality. In the crucial encounter with her first suitor, Arabella undergoes a mortifying experience, and her defensive reaction undoubtedly duplicates the behavior of countless other young women of her day who lost the man of their choice because the ultimate decision rested with others.

Both sisters react to Lovelace's perversion of the traditional marriage proposal by following certain courtship

rituals that express the conventional concept of Vertue: that the woman subdue all passion and preference. The customary formality of the first refusal represents restraint, but it also preserves the woman's pride, giving her an illusion of choice as a bribe for her cheerful acceptance of the suitor chosen by her family. Lovelace is able to engage in his psychologically cruel behavior because the social codes have programmed into the young women the need for the subterfuge of delayed acceptance. Eighteenth-century society had names for these expected first refusals, which trusted in an unspoken guarantee that the offer would be renewed. Clarissa refers to them as "encouraging denials" and "consenting negatives" (I: 8). In this most important event of her life--the proposal of marriage--on which hangs her future security and happiness, her destiny, the woman is trained to be indirect and deceitful.

Richardson illustrates the everyday practice of the defensive feminine duplicity, symbolized in the "consenting negative," when Mrs. Harlowe and Aunt Hervey accommodate themselves to the intimidations of the Harlowe men by pretending to oblige through making trivial concessions. They absolve themselves from blame by fabricating plausible excuses and acceptable motives for their wilful actions, and they support one another in their subterfuges. Bella, in her grasping for personal advantage, follows shrewdly the example of her female elders, but Clarissa rebels

against the deceptions to the full extent of her perfectionism. During the long period of negotiations with her mother, who tries unsuccessfully to persuade her to accept Solmes, Clarissa refuses to accede to the usual feminine pretenses urged upon her by Mrs. Harlowe or to disguise her true feelings and future intentions under the conventional excuses.

In her relentless campaign to destroy Clarissa, Bella understands that her most effective tactic is to undermine the family's belief in her sister's honesty. For this purpose, she supplies her own contrived and unverified interpretations of Clarissa's motives and meanings. Bella's misrepresentations give her the advantage of the card shark who has the honest player at his mercy, and they render Clarissa powerless to erase the impressions they create. Richardson counterbalances Clarissa's superior personal assets with the power Arabella gains, not only through her distortions of the truth, but also through aligning herself with James and the masculine opposition in the bitter contest over Solmes.

Bella justifies her misrepresentations by claiming that Clarissa's forthright disclosures of her own motives are false explanations calculated in woman's customary way to deceive and to procure favor. Bella's arrival at this assessment of Clarissa's intentions is in part a defensive move to alleviate her long-standing sense of inferiority.

She recognizes that she is not only surpassed in beauty and amiability by her talented sister, but that she is outstripped in still another way: in eloquence of speech. When Bella describes to Clarissa the humiliation her role as loser has caused her, Clarissa reports to Anna Howe her disgruntled sister's exact claims:

> That I half-bewitched people by my insinuating address: that nobody could be valued or respected, but must stand like cyphers wherever I came. How often, said she, have I and my brother been talking on a subject, and had everybody's attention till you came in with your bewitching meek pride, and humble significance; and then have we either been stopped by references to Miss Clary's opinion, for sooth; or been forced to stop ourselves, or must have talked on unattended to by everybody.(I: 215-216)

Smarting under her own inadequacy before her sister's charming fluency, Bella sees a way to retaliate by using Clarissa's natural eloquence against her. Bella insists that Clarissa's peculiar talent is that of moving others in her behalf with her "silver tongue" and her "smooth obligingness" (I: 216). Bella accuses her sister of assuming a pathetic stance, of resorting to the familiar feminine method of obtaining sympathy through appearing helpless and distressed. Impelled by envy, Bella plants seeds of suspicion in the minds of all the Harlowes that Clarissa will use her rhetoric when needed to sway them in her favor.

By convincing the family that they must not expose themselves to Clarissa's persuasive powers, James and Bella isolate Clarissa from any direct communication with

her parents, denying her the right to face her accusers, and gaining a powerful weapon for controlling the marriage arrangements with Solmes: the license to misrepresent Clarissa's intentions and to use themselves the clever strategies they accuse the innocent Clarissa of using. Their misinformation supplies the Harlowes with a plausible excuse for their inflexible behavior in urging Clarissa's acceptance of Solmes, for they are led to believe that they must save Clarissa from her uncontrollable passion for a disreputable libertine (who has scoffed at the family publicly) by offering her a man of probity (the opposite of a libertine). By throwing doubt on Clarissa's motives, the conspiring James and Bella have caused the family to distrust the favorite daughter, and on this initial distrust is built all the misunderstanding that leads to Clarissa's abduction, tragic ordeal, and death.

After Clarissa's abduction, Bella continues as her sister's only connecting link with her family. Bella is the person to whom the embarrassed Clarissa writes, requesting her belongings and a speedy reconciliation while her reputation is still retrievable. Trained in feminine modesty and filial duty, Clarissa does not presume to address the parents whom she has ostensibly disobeyed; therefore, it is through her peer Bella that Clarissa receives word of her father's curse, and it is through Bella that Clarissa pleads for the revocation of that curse, and for her parents'

forgiveness and "their last blessing" (IV: 64). In her role of intercessor, Bella retains her license to interpret as she pleases Clarissa's motives, behavior, and circumstances. Bella maintains to the end--or until it no longer matters--that Clarissa has eloped with her lover and is unworthy of her parents' notice or forgiveness. And in every letter, Bella tries to instill guilt in the family's cherished daughter by reminding her of the distress she is causing her formerly indulgent mother and father.

Bella passes on her own judgments of Clarissa's predicaments to the rest of the family. She insists that Clarissa's requests for the revocation of the curse, for forgiveness, and for a final blessing are hoaxes, and that Clarissa is actually seeking reinstatement within the family. And later she discredits Clarissa's sincere contrition with an equally degrading interpretation, claiming that her sister's penitence is owing

> more to disappointment than to a true conviction: for it is too probable, Miss Clary, that, had you gone on as swimmingly as you expected, and had not your feather-headed villain abandoned you, we should have heard nothing of these moving supplications; nor of anything but defiances from him, and a guilt gloried in from you. (IV: 83)

Bella projects on to her incorruptible sister her own dreams of how she would have behaved. She reaps enormous psychological benefits from her position as Clarissa's sole mediator, for it provides her with a gratifying source of vicarious experience and with a gratuitous outlet for her

vindictive impulses. But more expediently, she acquires from her advantageous position all the power she needs to achieve her immediate practical goal of preventing a reconciliation between Clarissa and her family. When Clarissa chooses Bella for her mediator, she turns over to her sister the control of her destiny.

In the sporadic letters that come from Arabella to her isolated sister, the same messages are repeated with little variation; the same disparagements are couched in the same carping language. The repetitious accusations remain petty and unverified and do not swerve from the original contentions. Even her final letter--that does not reach Clarissa before her death--is spattered with jabs that slip in inadvertently among the glowing phrases "of returning love" (IV: 352). Bella's failure to change her thinking or to subject her first opinions to the illumination of new evidence is a manifestation of her incapacity to learn or grow. Her shallow interpretations do not deepen, nor does her narrow selfishness broaden into compassion for her sister. Bella's habitual dependence on feminine strategies for security, guidance, and advantage, confines her in repetitive patterns of thought and conduct that inhibit progress in understanding herself or morality. Bella remains stationary, caught in a treadmill of monotonous recriminations.

Bella's aggravations of Clarissa's sufferings and difficulties contribute as substantially to Clarissa's spiritual growth as to her worldly disgrace, for they serve as part of the adversity that strengthens Clarissa's adherence to the Christian virtues. Richardson has formed his novel along the lines of Clarissa's advance toward a spiritual triumph, and much of the heroic mood he creates is owing to her extraordinary perseverance and courage in pursuit of Christian ideals. In contrast to Bella's moral stagnation, Clarissa's internal evolution is a continuing process, involving self-scrutiny, a growing awareness of imperfections in herself, and both successful and disastrous attempts at self-purification. As she gives form to Richardson's religious theme, Clarissa climbs the rungs of a ladder upward to Christian redemption. But her ascension could not have begun without the initial rung of the ladder: the Christian humility that is necessary to eradicate the sin of pride.

In the first section of the novel, Richardson uses Bella to inform Clarissa of the minor flaw in her charming character. It is Bella who first detects signs of vanity and self-satisfaction in her superior sister and provokes Clarissa to report to Anna Howe:

> A pert young creature, vain and conceited, she called me. I was the only judge, in my own wise opinion, of what was right and fit. She, for her part, had long seen into my specious ways; and now I should show everybody what I was at bottom.(I: 35)

Shocked after the rape into intense self-examination, and searching for justification for her self-loathing, Clarissa recognizes the grain of truth in Arabella's early accusations. She seizes upon the pride that Bella condemned in their girlish disputes and identifies it as the cause of her earthly punishment. Among the fragments scattered about her room in her distraction, Paper V, addressed to Arabella, gives credence to her sister's past criticism:

> Rejoice not now, my Bella, my sister, my friend; but pity the humbled creature, whose foolish heart you used to say you beheld through the thin veil of humility which covered it. I must have been so! My fall had not else been permitted. You penetrated my proud heart with the jealousy of an elder sister's searching eye. You knew me better than I knew myself.(III: 206-207)

In her letter to Lovelace after the rape, Clarissa admits what she now sees plainly, in the torment of self-revelation, to be her tragic flaw: the deadly sin of pride. Using Bella's words as verification of her insight, she accepts her punishment as deserved:

> I have been a very wicked creature--a vain, proud, poor creature--full of secret pride--which I carried off under humble guise, and deceived everybody--my sister says so--And now I am punished.(III: 212)

Richardson uses Arabella, not only as an instrument to generate the humility that is essential to Clarissa's Christian salvation, but also as a medium of truth to reveal Clarissa's vanity to herself.

In time, rumors of the rape reach Harlowe Place, and the possibility that Clarissa has met with violence changes the subject matter but not the spirit of Bella's

next letter. Authorized by the family to write to Clarissa urging prosecution, Bella--welcoming a chance for revenge on both her enemies--presses Clarissa to bring Lovelace "to the gallows," for that would be "a meritorious revenge . . . to our whole injured family, and to the innocents he has deluded" (IV: 188). If Clarissa does not agree to the prosecution, Bella proposes in the name of the family that her sister go to Pennsylvania to reside for "some years till all is blown over" (IV: 189), outlining specific arrangements for her voyage and for her residence on arrival in America. If denied the chance to expose her enemies to public censure, Bella is more than ready to conceal this instance of feminine exploitation by assisting in a cowardly flight that would salvage the family's reputation.

Dr. Lewen endorses motives diametrically opposite to those Bella stresses, when he recommends to Clarissa that she prosecute Lovelace "for his life" (IV: 181). Granting that her modesty will be her "great difficulty" (IV: 181), and arguing that violence may erupt at any time between either James or Colonel Morden and Lovelace, Dr. Lewen urges Clarissa to do justice to herself and her sex. He reminds her that the prevention of that violence should be of more concern to Clarissa than the protection of her feminine modesty. He assures her that "Rakes and ravishers would meet with encouragement <u>indeed</u> . . . if violated modesty were never to complain of the injury it received

from the villainous attempters of it" (IV: 182). His letter is a vigorous appeal to her to defend her rights and to "refuse to pass over so mortal an injury unresented" (IV: 182). When he asks her to conquer her feminine delicacy and to tell her shocking story "in a public court" (IV: 182), Dr. Lewen speaks with the civilized voice of reason, a masculine voice urging Clarissa to affirm her worth as an individual. However, neither sister is ready to accept such awesome responsibility for herself and her sex.

Clarissa's reply to Dr. Lewen contains her refusal to prosecute and declares that she is seeking, not the punishment and vengeance that Bella hungers for, but a way to make her devastating experience serve as a warning to other potential victims. The array of obstacles working against the likelihood of justice for Clarissa in a court of law is formidable, and she offers for her position sound practical reasons, deferring to popular opinion and common sense. But Clarissa's letter ends in an exuberant claim of personal triumph over Lovelace, as if her violation needs no further objective reparation:

> My will is unviolated . . . I have, through grace, triumphed over the deepest machinations. I have escaped from him. I have renounced him. The man whom once I could have loved, I have been enabled to despise: and shall not charity complete my triumph? And shall I not enjoy it? And where would be my triumph if he deserved my forgiveness? (IV: 186)

The jubilance of this statement, of course, expresses Clarissa's exhilarating confidence in her own fundamental

integrity as well as her joy in triumph over her violator. But the tone of exultation, as she affirms both her superiority and her magnanimity, suggests that her perfectionism still controls her psyche, demanding that she gratify both her aggressive need to conquer (and not to be conquered) and her need to see herself as generous.

Among the eighteenth-century obstacles to feminine justice, Clarissa sees a threat to herself in the masculine bias that brands the female as guilty of cooperation in any sexual indiscretion. The accuracy of her apprehension on this score is testified to by the automatic reactions of both Bella and Mrs. Howe. Bella's shallow and prejudiced judgment follows conventional patterns in her ready acceptance of the stereotyped assumption that the woman who charges the man with rape has actually contributed to her own seduction. Bella challenges Clarissa to refute this inference by appearing in a court against Lovelace, daring her with the warning: "If not, Sister Clary, we shall know what to think of you" (IV: 188). Mrs. Howe does not hesitate to give credence to the cliché that the raped woman has provoked the action, and asks Clarissa whether, if she is ashamed to appear in court, it will not "be surmised that she may be apprehensive that some weaknesses, or lurking love, will appear upon the trial of the strange cause?" (III: 378-379) The diffidence conditioned in the woman, when added to her fear of the unavoidable countercharges, renders the courts useless to her as a forum for exposing

feminine wrongs. Richardson is illustrating the irony that, by this absurd process, the modesty bred in woman as the essence of femininity prolongs her subordination. The Harlowe sisters, equally bound by rules of decorum, respond in character to the social restrictions: Bella exploits the conventional notions and Clarissa honors the feminine ideal.

When Clarissa's filial obedience is on trial, Bella joins with James to isolate Clarissa from the rest of the family and aids him in the threats and torments that stretch Clarissa's obedience to the breaking point so that she grants Lovelace the fatal meeting. In the trial of Clarissa's chastity, Bella again must bear much of the responsibility for her sister's calamity. By blocking any reconciliation with the family, any "intervention of the paternal authority" that alone could have saved her from the villain's "deep machinations" (III: 341), Bella leaves Clarissa completely in Lovelace's power and prepares the way for the rape. Clarissa's third trial tests her capacity to forgive; the action required of her is to forget her violation and to prove her forgiveness of the offence by marrying Lovelace. Bella continues as her mediator with the family: by discounting the reports that Lovelace's proposals are sincere and by proclaiming that Lovelace has actually deserted Clarissa, she prevents the family from offering sympathy to the ravished Clarissa. The family's

neglect increases the pressure on the disgraced daughter to forsake her principles and marry Lovelace.

Arabella has been thought "to be masculine in her air and in her spirit" (I: 386), and Clarissa uses the adjective hard-hearted to describe her sister's callous, unfeeling nature that is the opposite of her own generous one. In the Conclusion, Richardson hypothesizes, through Bella's fate, that the hard-hearted can only be restrained from abusing others by being confronted with their own kind. After Clarissa's death, Bella and James vent their animosity on one another, and with poetic justice, Bella is punished by her titled and cruel husband, who subjects her to public contempt, and it is rumored, to "personal abuses" (IV: 536). The encroacher can only be halted effectively by another encroacher, just as the generous can only live generously with its own kind. But Bella's retributive marriage and her eventual remorse cannot erase the impression of her negative personality. Even her tears at Clarissa's death seem only temporary pangs of conscience. She is soon again begrudging the legacy of Clarissa's library to Dolly Hervey as unsuitable and "the bequest to Mrs. Norton as excessive" (IV: 430). Bella's vindictiveness has become ingrained in her nature and is kept destructively alive by the prevailing sexual inequality that forces her to use defensive and devious methods to gratify her strong and importunate passions.

A number of feasible courses of action are open to Clarissa after the rape, but her perfectionism makes it impossible for her to choose any of the practical options. As she withdraws into her abstract world of magnanimous forgiveness, she transforms her stormy relationship with Bella into a Platonic vision of incorruptible sisterly devotion, impervious to all worldly disloyalties and insulated from Bella's vindictive abuses. By sheer will power, she succeeds in suppressing consciously her resentments under strained rationalizations and in achieving a spirit of forgiveness toward all of her family, including Bella. In her posthumous letter to Bella, she assures her sister of an affection that "no acts of unkindness, no misconstruction of her conduct could cancel!" (IV: 364) But Clarissa cannot annihilate her subconscious fury at the treatment she has received from family and lover. Ingrained self-hatred and irrepressible resentment have gained too much momentum to be stopped, and the destructive forces win in the ultimate conflict between life and death.

Neither sister finds an adequate method of dealing with the eighteenth-century sexist practices reflected in the world of the novel. Clarissa's triumph is subjective and spiritual, and her proud resistance to the masculine pressures is no more effective in achieving immediate justice for herself and her sex than is Bella's crafty and self-serving cooperation with the men. Since Clarissa, intimidated by her training and experience as a woman, cannot face

the public prosecution of Lovelace nor trust to the justice of its outcome, she can only make known her stand against rape (which is, of course, Richardson's metaphor for woman's traditional subordination) through the collection of her letters and papers. In his characterization of Bella, Richardson explores the behavior of the ordinary woman, governed by passions and immediate inclinations. And he demonstrates clearly that Bella's wilful aggressions beneath an outward conformity to conventional standards of feminine conduct do not constitute an acceptable alternative to Clarissa's dutiful adherence to the conventional ideal.

The sexual inequities of their society have damaged the dissimilar sisters in different ways, misdirecting Bella's vigor and passion into destructive behavior and wasting Clarissa's potential for creativity. By fixing woman's worth in artificial and external attributes, the commercial marriage has forced the sisters to develop unnatural character-structures. As a result, Bella's envious and greedy personality consigns her for life to a meaningless existence of petty animosities. And Clarissa's perfectionism dissipates her vital energies in service to superhuman demands, making her helpless to combat the internal contempt and external disgrace that lead inexorably to her early, wasteful death.

CHAPTER II

TWO FRIENDS: ANNA HOWE AND CLARISSA

The rivalry that shatters the sisterhood of Clarissa and Arabella is not a dominant element in the friendship of Clarissa and Anna Howe. Clarissa's confidante is fatherless and an only child, and therefore is not forced to submit to a masculine will, or to combat within her family a feminine rival whose matrimonial prospects are vastly superior to her own. The friend is not handicapped, as the sister is, with a slow wit and ill-favored appearance, and warped thereby with envy and greed. In contrast to the sullen and awkward Arabella, Anna Howe has many of the assets that distinguish Clarissa. She possesses a beauty comparable to Clarissa's, a lively wit, a good education, and more wealth than she needs. One of her distinctive characteristics is her warmth of temper, so that at times her impatience and impetuosity override her natural generosity and good judgment. She holds standards of virtue equal to Clarissa's, but lacks the excessively high ambitions that elevate her friend above ordinary worldly susceptibilities. With this combination of qualities, Anna Howe becomes

Richardson's illustration of a virtuous, but passionate and realistic woman.

Directed by a morality more flexible than Clarissa's, Anna Howe accepts herself and human nature as obviously, though regrettably, flawed and recognizes that all solutions to worldly problems are less than perfect. The subtle difference between the moral positions of the two friends is manifested in their opposite views towards the common human experience of having to choose between unacceptable alternatives. In weighing Clarissa's difficult choice between the despicable Solmes and the dangerous Lovelace, Anna Howe reassures Clarissa approvingly by asserting that whichever choice she makes is bound to follow

> the same uniform principle that has governed your whole conduct, ever since the contention between Lovelace and your brother has been on foot, that is to say, that you have chosen a lesser evil, in hope to prevent a greater. (I: 418)

But Clarissa scorns to admit that she would purposely stoop to "do evil that good may come of it," and responds proudly, "Forbid it, Heaven! that Clarissa Harlowe should have it in her thought to serve, or even to save herself . . . by a studied deceit" (I: 424). While Clarissa, guided by rigid notions of absolute virtue, strives to avoid any deviation from strict righteousness--even for self-preservation--Anna Howe looks more to the practical consequences of a proposed course of action. Anna Howe tailors her behavior and advice to further the most beneficial of possible outcomes.

Richardson's characterization of Anna Howe represents an ethical standpoint that is more effective in dealing with the contemporary woman's dilemma than Clarissa's extreme position. The heroic quality of the novel comes from the supreme value that Richardson places on Clarissa's courageous--though ambiguously motivated--adherence to virtue. However, Richardson treats with respect Anna Howe's genuinely humane, if at times misguided, attempts to find a realistic compromise between society's unattainable ideals and its corrupt practices. And he excites admiration for Anna Howe's passionate, if sometimes excessive, attacks on injustice.

The two friends are qualified by their superior educations and native capacities to be classified with the "learned ladies" of their day. However, they take opposite sides in the contemporary controversy over the proper sphere of activity for women and hold different opinions about how much and what kind of learning is appropriate for them. Clarissa conforms willingly to the traditional views of masculine supremacy and cheerfully devotes her talents to "family usefulness" (IV: 497), while Anna Howe, though not imagining herself "above all domestic usefulness" (IV: 497), envisions an ampler field for woman's mental energies. Richardson associates Clarissa with the conservative viewpoint that carries on the tradition of the Matchless Orinda, reinforcing woman's subjection to masculine authority. But Anna Howe supports the more

liberating viewpoint that reflects the rebellious spirit of Mad Madge of Newcastle, aiming to lessen woman's dependency on masculine protection.

When Richardson connects Clarissa and Anna Howe with the antithetical positions towards woman's domain, he establishes a consistency between the girls' inherent natures and the judgments they make. Their friendship can neither neutralize their constitutional differences nor cancel out their divergent perspectives on woman's social role. Personal and social concerns strain, but do not sever, the strong bonds between them. The present analysis of their relationship first describes the basis for their ideal friendship and then examines the two friends as mimetic characters, focusing on the sources of the ties and frictions between them. An evaluation follows of the ways in which each aids and supports the other. The contrasting dispositions of Clarissa and Anna Howe and their different stands on specific social and moral issues suggest that Richardson is dramatizing simultaneously two possible approaches to experience. Richardson's impartial exploration of both kinds of human behavior leads to the conclusion that, in the imaginary situations of the novel, Anna Howe's moral outlook is defensible. The inference is readily drawn that Richardson is offering Anna Howe's position as a possible healthy alternative to Clarissa's majestic, but self-defeating perfectionism.

Richardson makes clear his intention that Anna Howe should serve as a surrogate sister to Clarissa, assuming symbolically the sister's status of equality and difference. Along with sharing Arabella Harlowe's initials and her aggressive personality, the friend Anna Howe fills many of the sisterly offices abandoned by Bella early in the novel. As soon as Bella's avarice and envy are intensified by the grandfather's will and by Lovelace's transferal of his attention from herself to Clarissa, the natural sister becomes the enemy. Bella's abdication of her rightful sisterhood makes room for Anna Howe's eager usurpation of her position. It is the friend Anna Howe who sends gleeful proof to Clarissa that Bella is a vicious rival and not "an affectionate sister" (I: 65). Though Clarissa suffers over Bella's desertion, she fills the vacuum left by her disloyal sister with the affection of her loyal friend, referring to Anna Howe in her will as the "sister of my heart" (IV: 421).

Richardson reinforces the parallelism between the natural and the substitute sister with James' early courtship of Anna Howe, which takes place before the novel opens, and which, if successful, would have made Anna Howe indeed Clarissa's sister-in-law. Deploring James' "haughtiness and ill temper," Clarissa reminds her friend that

> Once, my dear, it was perhaps in your power to have moulded him as you pleased.--Could you have been my sister!--then had I had a friend in a sister. But no wonder that he does not love you now; who could nip in the bud, and that with a disdain, let me say, too much of kin to his haughtiness, a passion that would not

> have wanted a fervour worthy of the object, and which possibly would have made him so. (I: 24)

James, as the favored son and heir and a member of the dominant sex, has developed a high degree of arrogance. Anna Howe replies that

> his great independent acquisitions and still greater prospects . . . have given him more pride than reputation. The treatment you blame, he merited from one whom he addressed with the air of a person who presumes that he is about to confer a favour rather than to receive one. I ever loved to mortify proud and insolent spirits. (I: 41)

As a member of the subordinate sex, the bright Anna Howe responds to masculine condescension with an equivalent degree of feminine pride, adding fuel to her already angry defiance of all domination. The sexual inequality that promotes competition between sisters channels naturally high spirits like those of James and Anna Howe into bellicose contests of pride. In the aborted alliance of brother and friend, Richardson relates the warmth of Anna Howe to the violence of the Harlowes and suggests that the same passionate vitality can be employed to give sisterly support or to stir up sisterly animosity, to invigorate a marriage or to spice the battle of the sexes.

Richardson reinforces the relationship of Clarissa and Anna Howe with these formal parallelisms (associating Anna Howe in definite ways with both Arabella and James Harlowe), but he adds psychological authenticity to the friendship as he shows it filling the emotional needs of the two compatible--but very different--women. Their

attachment is remarkably free of the strife that pervades the culture, in part because the two girls have envisioned an ideal friendship and are determined to live up to their high-minded principles. Mary Astell, in A Serious Proposal, provides a pattern for their ideal in her vision of the "Vertuous and Disinterest'd Friendship" that would flourish in the benevolent atmosphere of her educational Retreat for women (Astell, Proposal, p. 16). In defense of such a relationship, Astell asks:

> what shou'd hinder, but that two Persons of sympathizing disposition, the make and frame of whose Souls bears an exact conformity to each other, and therefore one wou'd think were purposely design'd by Heaven to unite and mix; what shou'd hinder them from entering into a holy combination to watch over each other for Good, to advise, encourage and direct, and to observe the minutest fault in order to its amendment. The truest effect of love being to endeavour the bettering of the beloved Person. And therefore nothing is more likely to improve us in Virtue, and advance us to the very highest pitch of Goodness than unfeigned Friendship . . . (Astell, Proposal, p. 33)

The two girls set up standards of friendship that correspond to those of Astell, and they echo that feminist's language as they describe their regard for each other and define their goals for mutual improvement. In an early letter Anna Howe declares, "we have but one mind between us" (I: 128), and much later, when she stands beside Clarissa's coffin, she reaffirms the mystical conformity of their natures: "for we had but one heart, but one soul, between us" (IV: 404). At the end of a long letter of tedious preaching, Clarissa justifies her severity by

reminding her friend that the basis of their friendship is

> freely to give reproof, and thankfully to receive it as occasions arise; that so either may have opportunity to clear up mistakes, to acknowledge and amend errors, as well in behaviour as in words and deeds; and to rectify and confirm each other in the judgment each shall form upon persons, things, and circumstances. (II: 130)

The friendship that moves forward in confidential letters not only soothes with sympathy when needed, but also functions in three stimulating capacities: advisory, inspirational, and corrective. In their letters, the girls follow closely Astell's prescriptions as they exchange specific advice on specific problems, praise each other extravagantly to encourage improvement, and point out each other's faults, suggesting corrective measures. As they give and receive advice, they adhere to their pledge of complete candor in the full disclosure of the truth as each sees it, and in theory, they seek by impartial analysis to arrive at the most rational solution to the immediate problem. Anna Howe refers to Clarissa as "my lovely monitress!" (IV: 402), and Clarissa to Anna Howe as "my better pilot" (I: 346).

The inspirational aspect of their friendship comes from the desire each has to live up to the good opinion of the other. Anna Howe is flattered to be "ranked in the first class" of Clarissa's friends (I: 3), and claims that, in their circle, she is given "real significance in a second place" to her friend (III: 517). Anna Howe speaks

for herself as well as for their circle when she assures Clarissa that she is "our pattern" (I: 189). She often quotes Clarissa's own preachments and principles as guidelines for solving the immediate problem, but conceding that Clarissa represents an unattainable ideal for emulation only, she makes no claim that she can duplicate the model set by her noble friend.

The vivacity that fills Anna Howe's letters with teasing wit also gives rise to glowing praises of her friend as a superior being, an Angel. While Clarissa insists that she loves the pleasantry, she is acutely influenced by the adulation and takes literally her friend's intimations of infallibility in her model. Clarissa's longing for perfection is reflected in her desire to deserve Anna Howe's high estimate of her character. After receiving an unusually admiring letter from her friend, Clarissa describes her delight in the welcome praise, inadvertently revealing the heavy pressure she feels to be worthy of it:

> How soothing a thing is praise from those we love! Whether conscious or not of deserving it, it cannot but give us great delight to see ourselves stand high in the opinion of those we are ambitious to cultivate. An ingenious mind will make this further use of it, that if it be sensible, that it does not already deserve the charming attributes, it will hasten (before its friend finds herself mistaken) to obtain the graces it is complimented for . . . (I: 287)

Though sometimes of questionable benefit, the corrective function of the correspondence is exercised vigorously by both girls. In line with Astell's belief that no friends are "so acceptable as those who tell you

faithfully of your faults and take the properest method to amend 'em" (Astell, Proposal, p. 55), Clarissa assures her friend that

> I will love you the better for the correction you give me, be as severe as you will upon me. Spare me not therefore, my dear friend, whenever you think me in the least faulty. . . . One of the first conditions of our mutual friendship was, that each should say or write to the other what ever was upon her mind, without any offense to be taken: a condition that is indeed indispensable in friendship. (I: 134)

Although she bridles at Clarissa's reprimands for her sauciness to her mother, Anna Howe expresses gratitude for her friend's admonitions and expectation of improvement from them:

> I have always your reproofs upon these occasions: in your late letters stronger than ever. A good reason why, you'll say, because more deserved than ever. I thank you kindly for your correction. I hope to make correction of it. (I: 332)

Astell explains that the corrective frankness of friendship also counteracts the prevalent hypocritical flattery, for "the beloved Fault" is what true friends "chiefly strike at, and this the Flatterer always soothes" (Astell, Reflections, p. 76). But as Clarissa and Anna Howe circumvent the flattery, they fall into the opposite hazard of wounding each other with the severity of their observations. Anna Howe adds to her proud resolution the complaint that Clarissa's "stripes, whether deserved or not, have made me sensible deeper than the skin--" (I: 332). Nevertheless, the two friends abide by their agreement not to spare each other, and through the course

of the correspondence, they sincerely try, by pointing out each other's "beloved Fault" to promote each other's betterment.

As Richardson views the contemporary issue of feminine friendship from various angles, he explores the popular belief that the flighty feminine temperament makes women incapable of maintaining a relation of trust, presenting the antithesis of Astell's ideal in one of Lovelace's caustic parodies. In a flight of fancy, Lovelace reduces the pretensions of the usual feminine association to foolish delusions:

> Verily, Jack, these vehement friendships are nothing but chaff and stubble, liable to be blown away by the very wind that raises them. Apes! mere apes of us! they think the word friendship has a pretty sound with it; . . . the thing a mere name with them; a cork-bottomed shuttle cock, which they are fond of striking to and fro, to make one another glow in the frosty weather of a single state; but which, when a man comes in between the pretended inseparables, is given up, like their music, and other maidenly amusements; which, nevertheless, may be necessary to keep the pretty rogues out of more active mischief.(III: 169)

But Lovelace knows the difference between his jests and his solid observations, and he follows his vitriolic censure of the flighty stereotype with an astute analysis of the unique friendship of Clarissa and Anna Howe. As he employs his discerning faculties to identify the essential quality in each girl and to describe the way in which their opposite natures bind them together, he provides valuable insights into their characters:

> Thou has a mind, perhaps, to make exception for these two ladies. With all my heart. My Clarissa has, if

> woman has, a soul capable of friendship. Her flame is bright and steady. But Miss Howe's, were it not kept up by her mother's opposition, is too vehement to endure.
>
> . . . This much indeed, as to these two ladies, I will grant thee; that the active spirit of the one, and the meek disposition of the other, may make their friendship more durable than it would otherwise be; for this is certain, that in every friendship, whether male or female, there must be a man and a woman spirit (that is to say, one of them a forbearing one) to make it permanent. (III: 169)

Since Lovelace does not choose to question the conventional assumption that inequity is necessary for the endurance of a partnership--friendship or marriage--he has no trouble in perceiving Anna Howe as "the active spirit" and Clarissa as "the meek disposition." He obviously sees any relationship as an opportunity to exert power over a weaker person--his with Belford, with his servant Will, with Mrs. Sinclair's nymphs, are all of this nature--and relishing in anticipation such an unbalanced alliance with Clarissa, he miscalculates the degree of imposition her meekness will tolerate. Nevertheless, he notes, in his analysis, the conspicuous difference between the two girls that Richardson indicates in the beginning of the novel and preserves with modifications as long as Clarissa is concerned with the world and relies on Anna Howe's high spirits to bolster her courage against oppression.

Richardson establishes the mimetic personalities of Clarissa and Anna Howe on pronounced constitutional traits that consistently influence their behavior, and at times become drawbacks that must be fought, along with

external obstacles, in meeting the contingencies that arise. Early in the novel, Anna Howe corroborates the distinctions made by Lovelace when she comments to Clarissa: "sometimes you are a little too grave, methinks; I no doubt, a little too flippant in your opinion" (I: 128). But Anna Howe attributes their affection to this difference of temper and speculates that, since each loves "the other well enough to bear being told" of having "something amiss," and since "neither wishes to mend it," they avoid envy and ill-will (I: 128). She concludes that each should keep her fault, "for there is constitution in both to plead for it: and what a hero or heroine must he or she be who can conquer a constitutional fault?" (I: 128)

Clarissa and Anna Howe manifest dissimilar habits of thought that coincide with those used by Astell to differentiate between the witty and the wise woman, suggesting that Richardson found in the contemporary distinction between wit and wisdom a starting point for his characterizations. Richardson assigns to Anna Howe the specific attributes of impatience and volatility that Astell identifies with the wit, and to Clarissa the honesty and thoroughness that Astell identifies with the wise person. In many instances, Richardson contrasts the hazards of Anna Howe's hastiness with the soundness of Clarissa's thoughtfulness, to the discredit of the one and to the credit of the other. But as his characterizations evolve, he indicates that many of Anna Howe's penetrating intuitions challenge Astell's

distrust of the wit and that Clarissa's frequently abortive deliberations throw doubt on Astell's confidence in weighed evidence and suspended judgment.

When Anna Howe acknowledges to Clarissa that "warm imaginations" like her own "are not without a mixture of enthusiasm" (II: 282), she echoes Astell's description of these "People of warm Imaginations and Active Spirits" who "are hindred in their search after Truth . . . on account of the multitude and Impetuosity" of their "enquiries" (Astell, Proposal, p. 91). In Astell's view, this "Volatileness of Thought" is "very pernicious to true Science":

> Such a Temper is readily dispos'd to receive Errors and very well qualified to propagate them, especially if a volubility of Speech be join'd to it. . . . The vivacity of such Persons . . . procures for them the Character of Wit, but hinders them from being Wise. For truth is not often found by such as won't take Time . . . to distinguish between Evidence and Probability, Realities and Appearances, but who thro a conceit of their own sharp-sightedness think they can pierce to the bottom with their first glance. (Astell, Proposal, pp. 91-92)

The Rosebud incident provides a clear example of Anna Howe's tendency to jump to hasty conclusions. She sends posthaste to Clarissa (as Lovelace knows she will) the circumstantial evidence implying Lovelace's guilt, and then must retract it by the next post. With characteristic ingenuousness, she laughs at her mistake, and at her defensive desire to keep herself "in countenance for a rash judgment," by speculating (accurately!) that the whole thing was very likely "a plot set on foot to wash a blackmoor white" (I: 355). She then diverts attention away from her apparently foolish

blunder--restoring her self-esteem and diminishing Clarissa's--with her teasing prediction that the plot is certain to accomplish its purpose (which it does) of raising Lovelace in Clarissa's estimation. When Anna Howe's hasty judgments "pierce to the bottom" of the matter, they counteract Astell's disparagement of the Wit.

As a means of cooling impetuousity, Astell recommends a calm deliberation:

> To cure this Distemper perfectly perhaps it will be necessary to apply to the Body as well as to the Mind: The Animal Spirits must be . . . rendered more Calm and Manageable; . . . Contemplation requires a Governable Body, a sedate and steady Mind . . . without Attention and strict Examination we are liable to false Judgments on every occasion . . . and can never attain to true Wisdom.(Astell, Proposal, p. 92)

Prudence, control of the passions, and careful deliberation are the intrinsic elements in Clarissa's contemplative steadiness. If the volatile Anna Howe tends to respond impetuously and vehemently in all situations, Clarissa restrains action, assessing all sides of the situation, "weighing matters well" (I: 449), deliberating exhaustively until she finds rational support for the position her perfectionism forces her to take. Clarissa's carefully considered judgments, founded on truth and logic, are testaments to her wisdom, but they can also stray far afield of the crucial point. She perverts her considerable reasoning abilities when she employs painful rationalizations to justify her refusal to follow Dr. Lewen's advice that she prosecute Lovelace and obtain justice through the civilized processes of law.

Richardson's respect for the powers of reasoning cannot be questioned, nor can he be suspected of endorsing unthinking judgments. Rather, his acknowledgment of the possibility of accuracy in Anna Howe's quick perceptions and of misjudgment in Clarissa's over-extended reasoning cautions against the use of easy and artificial distinctions to account for the intricacies of human personality. Richardson increases the psychological authenticity of his characterizations when he makes Clarissa and Anna Howe subject to the weaknesses of their strengths and the strengths of their weaknesses. By qualifying the efficacy of both approaches to problem-solving, Richardson evaluates Anna Howe's way of thinking and behaving as equal in potential to Clarissa's.

In a comparison of herself and her friend, sent to Belford after Clarissa's death, Anna Howe uses the disparity in their dispositions to explain their different attitudes towards woman's submissiveness, repeating her claim that neither has wished to trade temperaments with the other:

> . . . I am haughty, uncontrollable, and violent in my temper . . . and aim not at that affability, that gentleness next to meekness, which, in the letter I was going to communicate, she tells me are the peculiar and indispensable characteristics of a real fine lady; who, she is pleased to say, should appear to be gall-less as a dove; and should never know what warmth or high spirit is, but in the cause of religion or virtue . . . (IV: 477)

Anna Howe scorns to be a gall-less dove, even though in the past she has suffered Clarissa's censure for dipping her pen

"in gall whenever she is offended" (I: 281). With a similar self-satisfaction, Clarissa prefers not to know what "warmth or high spirit"--her friend's confessed outstanding trait--is.

In the contrasting attitudes of the two friends, Richardson acknowledges both the need for an ideal and the need for a high degree of human vitality to apply that ideal to the complicated and imperfect conditions of everyday life. Anna Howe clarifies this radical difference in another comparison, commending her own faulty humanness and praising Clarissa's perfectionism, while noting its discouraging heights:

> But one observation I will add, that were your character and my character to be truly drawn, mine would be allowed to be the most natural. Shades and lights are equally necessary in a fine picture. Yours would be surrounded with such a flood of brightness, with such a glory, that it would indeed dazzle; but leave one heartless to imitate it.
>
> Oh, may you not suffer from a base world for your gentleness; while my temper, by its warmth keeping all imposition at distance, though less amiable in general, affords me not reason, . . . to wish to make an exchange with you! (II: 131-132)

The realistic Anna Howe chooses effective resistance to imposition over absolute generosity, but she understands instinctively the guiding function of the ideal, as expressed in Jung's twentieth-century comment: "But unattainability is no argument against the ideal, for ideals are only signposts, never the goal" (Jung, The Development of Personality, 1939, p. 172). Clarissa, however, interprets the feminine

ideal literally, to her own peril, illustrating the maxim applied to the other Harlowes that those people who aim at too much "will be refused the honours they may justly claim" (I: 247). In their relationship to the ideal, Clarissa and Anna Howe reveal their essential natures.

The constitutional differences that account for the enduring bond between the two friends also give rise to conflicting partialities. These dissimilarities automatically lead the girls to criticize each other's judgments and conduct and to make laudatory and derogatory appraisals in the cause of self-evaluation and improvement. Because the two friends agree to disclose their thoughts and feelings unreservedly in their letters and to evaluate candidly each other's conduct, the correspondence brings strains along with its enormous benefits. Both fear the uninhibited correction they ask for, and often in the correspondence show resentment of the slightest criticism in proud protests and subtle retaliations. At times, Anna Howe's hyperbole in praising Clarissa has undertones of sarcasm, and at times, Clarissa's high-minded instructions border on disguised accusations or become outright rebukes. The license to criticize operates as a double-edged sword, attacking all convenient targets. Clarissa finds appropriate outlets for her corrective impulses in Anna Howe's pert disrespect for her mother and tyrannical treatment of her suitor Hickman. And Anna Howe finds motes for her keen

critical eye in Clarissa's defense of the indefensible Harlowes and in her guilty denial of a love of Lovelace. When the two girls of unlike temperaments give free reign to their critical faculties, countercurrents of hurt pride and fault-finding flow beneath the predominating praise and encouragement of the letters.

At times Anna Howe's warmth of temper expands her commendable resistance to imposition into obtrusive aggressions of her own, and her immoderate attacks on the Harlowes are one cause of uneasiness between the friends. Her impatience with the irrational authority she has always known at home bursts out in her angry public abuse. And the heat of her attacks is intensified by private grievances: by her fear that Antony Harlowe may siphon off some of her mother's possessive attention; by her rivalry with Bella; by her resentment of James' arrogant courtship. But her militancy can be traced in great part to her pent-up resentment of her imperious mother.

From childhood, the bright Anna Howe has been dictated to by a wilful and unreasonable mother, who, as Colonel Morden observes, has "weakened her authority by the narrowness of her mind" (IV: 471). Mrs. Howe's maxim of "obedience without reserve" (I: 130) entitles the parent to rule by authority, not reason; and the mother's arbitrary exertion of power has developed in her daughter a hatred for all domination--and a corresponding love of liberty, bearing out Astell's insight that "we find a

Natural Liberty within us which checks at an Injunction that has nothing but Authority to back it" (Astell, Proposal, p. 128). Anna Howe is expressing deep personal and human emotions in her violent condemnation of the Harlowes' tyranny and in her vigorous recommendations to Clarissa that she resume her estate and assert her independence.

Anna Howe's contrariness in regard to Hickman is a predictable reaction to the exaggerated favor bestowed on him by her mother, as Lovelace points out in his remark that "poor Hickman would fare the better with this vixen, if her mother were as heartily against him, as she is for him" (III: 169). Lovelace recognizes that the contentious spirit, which Anna Howe shares with him, thrives on opposition, and he predicts that Anna Howe could not be happy with Hickman "were he to govern himself by her will, and have none of his own" (III: 172). Lovelace perceives accurately that Mrs. Howe's partiality to Hickman pushes her daughter away from the chosen suitor.

The jealous attachment of Anna Howe to her mother--which makes her uneasy over Antony Harlowe's courtship--is evident in an early conversation, when Mrs. Howe follows her extravagant praises of Clarissa with an unfavorable comparison between her Nancy's sauciness and the amiability of that "admirable young lady": "O my Nancy, that you had a little of her sweet obligingness!" (I: 43) Anna Howe quickly defends--and congratulates--herself, claiming that

she thinks herself "well as I am," and asserting that she would not bear what Clarissa bears from a brother and sister. At this point in her report of the conversation, Anna Howe makes her definitive statement of the difference between herself and her friend: "I am fitter for this world than you; you for the next than me--that's the difference" (I: 43). In this distinction, she announces her acceptance of herself as a happy, normal, self-respecting human being, who has no intentions of forcing herself to attain the heights aspired to by the admirable Clarissa. Her resentment of her mother's praise of her perfectionistic friend has helped her to define her own goals and affirm her own identity.

Much of the tension in the friendship is generated by the different attitudes of the two girls towards filial obedience and towards the particular personalities of their mothers. Clarissa's training in a family that cherishes her as its amiable "jewel" (I: 70) has led her to hold a respect for filial obedience comparable to Mrs. Howe's and to disapprove heartily of Anna Howe's impertinence to her mother. Clarissa's reprimands of her friend are made more severe by her failure to understand that a lack of reverence need not cancel out a daughter's love, that the maternal bond is stronger than either reverence or reason. In the Howe's household, the contention between mother and daughter has not diminished their affection for each other, and the sensible Anna Howe sees no reason to curb her sauciness when she is annoyed with her mother's foolishness.

After mimicking Mrs. Howe's imperious commands: "I will have it so. Don't I know best? I won't be disobeyed," she asks Clarissa, "How can a daughter of spirit bear such language . . . and not have a longing mind to disobey?" (I: 43)

The conventional, but straight-seeing, Morden identifies the core of Anna Howe's problem in handling her mother, when he reports to Belford:

> Miss Howe is indeed a woman of sense; but it requires a high degree of good understanding, as well as a sweet and gentle disposition of mind, and great discretion, in a child, when grown up, to let it be seen that she mingles reverence with her love, to a parent who has talents visibly inferior to her own.(IV: 470)

Confident that her attachment to her narrow-minded and overbearing mother has endured too much to be dissolved by temporary disputes, Anna Howe tells Clarissa, "Do not be concerned, my dearest friend, at the bickerings between my mother and me. We love one another dearly notwithstanding" (II: 42). Anna Howe's cheerful acceptance of the disharmony between her mother and herself sustains a permanent relationship, satisfactory to both. But Clarissa's demand for perfection in her relationship with her mother raises further barriers between them, increasing the suffering of both.

At the beginning of the trouble over Solmes, Clarissa sees as clearly as Anna Howe that Mrs. Harlowe has abdicated her responsibility to her children, explaining to her friend:

> yet would she but exert that authority which the superiority of her fine talents gives her, all these family feuds might perhaps be extinguished in their yet beginnings.(I: 22)

And Clarissa admits guiltily to Anna Howe her perception that Mrs. Harlowe's temperament invites imposition:

> For if I may say to you, my dear, what I would not to any other person living, it is my opinion that had she borne less, she would have had ten times less to bear than she has had.(I: 22)

Clarissa's rebukes to her friend for filial irreverence are rebukes to herself as well. And they ease her painful guilt for, in the first place, perceiving a weakness in "so excellent and so indulgent a mother" (I: 22), and in the second place, for resenting her mother's desertion of her to support her father's tyrannical demands that she marry Solmes. As the narrative proceeds, the intensity of Clarissa's guilt is heightened by Oedipal overtones, for in the mother-daughter contest for the father's love, Mrs. Harlowe wins through <u>obedience</u> Mr. Harlowe's approval and preference, while Clarissa loses them, provoking his curse, through <u>disobedience</u>. But Clarissa twists her resentments back upon herself, grieving over the distress she has caused her mother, as if she, not her mother, were the culprit: "But what then can I plead for a palliation to <u>myself</u> of my mother's sufferings on my account?" (I: 94) Her consciousness of her mother's pernicious weakness has undermined her respect, but since, in her code, the loved-one must deserve her love, she cannot give the love without the respect. She can retain her respect--and therefore her

love--for her mother only by accusing herself and by denying with the greater part of her mind until her death her knowledge of who is truly the injurer and who the injured. Anna Howe's attacks on her family become more and more offensive to her, not only because they contribute to her alienation by inflaming the Harlowes, but also because they imply the invalidity of her self-blame.

Anna Howe's early denunciation of the Harlowes is motivated by a genuine desire to prevent the same subjection in her friend that Mrs. Harlowe tolerates willingly. She asks Clarissa, "See you not in her passiveness, what boisterous spirits can obtain from gentler, merely by teasing and ill nature?" (I: 246) And she warns her friend repeatedly, "Depend upon it, my dear, you will have more of it, and more still, as you bear it" (I: 125). Astell describes Mrs. Harlowe's predicament exactly, as that defender of women commiserates with the wife of a tyrannical husband:

> The Husband is too Wise to be Advis'd, too Good to be Reform'd, she must follow all his Paces, and tread in all his unreasonable Steps, or there is no Peace, no Quiet for her; she must Obey with the greatest Exactness, 'tis in vain to expect any manner of Compliance on his Side, and the more she complies, the more she may . . . (Astell, Reflections, pp. 35-36)

Astell's sarcastic portrayal of the plight of those women "who groan under Tyranny" and have no "Redress" foreshadows both Clarissa's sympathetic assessment of her mother's predicament and Anna Howe's scornful impatience with Mrs. Harlowe's indolent resignation.

In theory, though not in practice, Clarissa adheres to the cultural ideal of filial obedience that demands blindness to the morality of the parental decisions. But the rebellious Anna Howe thinks independently and deplores both abnormal forms of parental behavior: her own mother's excessive use of her authority and Mrs. Harlowe's deficient application of hers. Though motivated in part by a perversity that pushes her into battle either way, Anna Howe represents a sensible position that rejects both extremes, in contrast to Clarissa's over-tolerant position that refuses to condemn either. Clarissa's generosity would be appropriate in an ideal world of benevolent parents, but in the Harlowes' society, a rebellious spirit like Anna Howe's is necessary to resist the irrational and tyrannical practices.

Their different attitudes towards Lovelace also substantiate Clarissa's devotion to the conventional view of woman's duty and Anna Howe's rebellion against it. Any leniency to Lovelace would require Clarissa to become involved with emotions that all of her training has aimed at suppressing in honor of the "Vertue" that Astell defines as the government of "Animal Impressions" (Astell, Proposal, p. 140). Clarissa feels that she must be in command of herself at all times, governed by her rational nature, and that she should be prudent enough to disdain the immorality of a notorious rake. Amused by Clarissa's cautious admission that Lovelace's "proved" innocence in the Rosebud affair has engaged her "generosity . . . in his favour"

(I: 356), Anna Howe restrains her inclination to tease her friend, and instead accuses Clarissa directly of believing herself too controlled to fall in love:

> I was going to give you a little flippant hint or two. But since you wish to be thought superior to our sex in the command of yourself; and since indeed you deserve to be thought so, I will spare you.(I: 362)

With her light touch, Anna Howe offers praise and blame in tandem in an effort to bring her exalted friend down to earth.

Anna Howe prides herself on her ability to see essential flaws and ulterior motives, on her penetration--like that of Astell's wit--"which can go to the bottom of any subject" (I: 456) But she offends Clarissa greatly when her "sagacity" discovers that Clarissa is in love with Lovelace. Clarissa's early attacks on Anna Howe for her haughty treatment of the devoted Hickman are in part retaliations for the shame she feels over her friend's bold inference. Clarissa resents deeply Mrs. Howe's implication that the prudent Clarissa Harlowe is capable of a "prepossession" for Lovelace (I: 134), an "imputation" that demotes her to the level of the ordinary woman who idolizes the rake (I: 135). She chides Anna Howe for attributing this folly "to one of your <u>own</u> sex, whether I be the person or not," and for giving up a friend "with an exultation over her weakness, as a silly lovesick creature!" (I: 135)

But Anna Howe is closer to "<u>this</u> world" (I: 43), to human reality, than her friend, and is able to project

her own attraction to Lovelace on to Clarissa and to see beneath her friend's brave rationalizations a potentiality to respond in the usual feminine way to Lovelace's vitality. Though Clarissa's suppression of her attraction to the unrestrained Lovelace is essential to the protection of her self-respect and her person, it is also a symptom of her repression of her erotic and emotional needs that can only be denied at the cost of life itself.

The psychological interaction between Clarissa and Anna Howe occurs within a social context that affects directly their beliefs and behavior. The conventional ideal of femininity not only persuades Clarissa that it is inappropriate for a woman to be governed by passionate love but also demands that both girls suppress their personal preferences and marry for economic and social reasons. The society's low estimation of women is especially injurious to these well-educated girls because custom destines them, as "learned ladies," for marriage with men who, even if deficient in learning or native capacity, will be "lord and master" (I: 127) of their wives.

Clarissa and Anna Howe have been brought up to expect domination in marriage, and both recognize the husband's authority over the wife as a reality in their culture. Clarissa does not question its fundamental morality and asks only that the husband not abuse his prerogatives in tyrannical behavior. The amiable Clarissa aspires to be

governed by a lord and master to whom she can give "that respect which a good wife . . . should pay him herself, and wish everybody to pay him" (I: 101). She expresses her horror to Anna Howe at the thought of being ruled for life by such a man as Solmes: a "wretch, vested with prerogatives, who will claim rule in virtue of them (and not to permit whose claim, will be as disgraceful to the prescribing wife, as to the governed husband) . . . (I: 287).

On the other hand, Anna Howe apprehends that obedience to the husband gives occasion for oppression in all marriages, saying defiantly to Clarissa:

> . . . you think more highly of a husband's prerogative than most people do of the royal one. These notions, my dear, . . . are noway advantageous to us; inasmuch as they justify that assuming sex in their insolence; . . . Look through all the families we know; and we shall not find one-third of them have half the sense of their wives. And yet these are to be vested with prerogatives! (IV: 46)

Disheartened at the abuses she observed in the marriages around them, Anna Howe recognizes the need for mutual concessions in marriage. Early in the novel, she makes a comparison between the domestic relationship and the British political system:

> The suiting of the tempers of two persons who are to come together is a great matter: and yet there should be boundaries fixed between them, by consent as it were, beyond which neither should go: and each should hold the other to it; or there would probably be encroachments in both . . . If the boundaries of the three estates that constitute our political union were not known, and occasionally asserted, what would become of the prerogatives and privileges of each? (I: 340-341)

Because she anticipates, instead of amicable consideration, the wife's usual ungallant connubial treatment, Anna Howe postpones her marriage to Hickman, treating him tyrannically during his courtship.

Clarissa understands that Anna Howe's public ridicule of Hickman comes in part from her fear of allowing any masculine advantage. And Anna Howe jokingly admits this motivation in her comment: "If I do not make Hickman quake now and then, he will endeavour to make me fear" (II: 134). Though she sympathizes with Anna Howe's insecurity, Clarissa rebukes her (in the tone of the conduct books) for exposing "so worthy and so sincere a man" to the scoffers who ridicule "those who are treated with or will bear indignity from a woman" (IV: 199). The affinity of Clarissa's nature with that of the gentle, compliant, and generous Hickman enables her to recognize his hidden worth. She sees from the beginning a suitability in the temperaments of Anna Howe and Hickman, discerning that the wills of both could be gratified in an alliance between them. She tells her friend that "the very faults you find in Mr. Hickman, admirably fit him to make <u>you</u> happy" and that "the infinite value he has for you" will make him "one of the profittest husbands in the world for a person of your vivacity and spirit" (I: 278-279).

In time, Clarissa convinces Anna Howe that the awkwardness of Hickman is due to commendable modesty and

not to an inferiority of understanding. Clarissa declares that he has "a worthy mind" or he would "never have found an advocate" in her for Anna Howe's favor to him (II: 126). But Clarissa also assures her friend that "the heart is what we women should judge by in the choice we make, as the best security for the party's good behavior in every relation of life" (I: 198). Though Anna Howe is impatient and proud of her sagacity, she is a sensible woman, who is capable of learning from her less aggressive friend the value of "the virtuous mind" (IV: 421) and compassionate heart of this man.

Clarissa gently guides her friend towards the exercise of reason, and the moderation of her warmth of temper, so that, as an educated and "learned woman," she can have her judgment respected by her husband. Clarissa advises that, if in courtship, Anna Howe

> lets reason be the principle guide of her actions--she will then never fail of that true respect, of that sincere veneration, which she wishes to meet with: and which will make her judgment after marriage consulted, sometimes with a preference to a man's own, at other times as a delightful confirmation of his.(IV: 199-200)

As Anna Howe becomes more tolerant of Hickman and more receptive to Clarissa's advice that she marry him, she sees the importance of establishing, through rational discussion, the ground rules for the prerogatives of the husband and the duties of the wife, in line with her earlier vision of mutual consideration:

> But Mr. Hickman and I may perhaps have a little discourse upon these sort of subjects, before I suffer him

> to talk of the day, and then I shall let him know what he has to trust to; as he will me, if he be a sincere man, what he pretends to expect from me. (IV: 46)

Clarissa, as Richardson's voice, persuades Anna Howe that the heart and mind of her suitor--his internal, not his external qualities--will make him a worthy husband.

Clarissa contributes to Anna Howe's future happiness in the specific way of leading her to appreciate Hickman. But Anna Howe is prevented, throughout Clarissa's trials, from bringing practical aid to her friend: by uncontrollable contingencies, by Lovelace's manipulations, by her own deference to her mother's commands and, ironically, by her own bondage to conventional decorum. Nevertheless, Anna Howe contributes substantially to her friend's psychological growth by reinforcing Clarissa's determination to withstand her persecutions and to resist exploitation. Anna Howe consistently urges Clarissa to set aside her cherished modesty for a healthy self-assertion and to modify her perfectionism so that she can make use of the experiences available to her. When Clarissa is Lovelace's prisoner before the outrage, and Hickman's conference with Uncle John Harlowe fails to bring the hoped-for reconciliation, Anna Howe recommends the expedient acceptance of Lovelace with the hope of reforming him:

> But let us stoop to take the wretch as he is, and make the best of him . . . He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you . . . Let us save the wretch then, if we can, though we soil our fingers in lifting him up from the dirt . . . But as your evil destiny has thrown you out of all protection and mediation, you must be father, mother, uncle to yourself; and enter upon the

> requisite points for yourself . . . Your situation requires it. What room for delicacy now? . . . I know the gentleness of your spirit; . . . and the just notion you have of the dignity of our sex in these delicate points. But . . . your honour is concerned that the dignity I speak of should be stood upon. (II: 294)

Anna Howe points out that Clarissa is being influenced by her regard for feminine modesty and decorum and not by a genuine concern for the higher morality of demanding honorable treatment of herself. Anna Howe acknowledges, too, the cost of compromise: their fingers will be soiled. And Clarissa's gentleness of spirit and the prized, but misguided "dignity of our sex" must be sacrificed. But in asking her friend to relinquish her feminine delicacy, like Dr. Lewen, Anna Howe speaks out for the growth and maturity of the feminine individual, encouraging Clarissa to give up her child-like reliance on parental judgment and masculine protection, and to accept, as a woman, the responsibility for and the consequences of her own actions.

When Anna Howe advises her friend "to make the best of things," she recommends compromises that are motivated by her courageous desire to preserve virtue, and that, therefore, can be distinguished from the compromises of the ordinary women, who seek in their complicity to escape from the rigors of virtue. After the rape, Anna Howe sees marriage as the only means left "to make your future life tolerably easy," reasoning that Lovelace "is a man of sense;

and it is not impossible but he may make you a good husband, and in time become no bad man" (II: 516). And, as Clarissa looks forward ecstatically to death, Anna Howe encourages a saner point of view, insisting that "there must still be a great deal for you to do for the good of all who have the happiness to know you" (IV: 17). Anna Howe implores her friend to let her see "by the effects that you are in earnest . . . and that you really have the courage to resolve to get above the sense of injuries you could not avoid" (IV: 17).

Manifestations of Clarissa's gradual retreat from reality begin with her impractical dreams of a family reconciliation and become more conspicuous in her frenzied efforts to obtain the abstract satisfactions of the lifted curse and the parental blessing that never comes. In her desire that Clarissa be brought to a tolerant acceptance of reality, Anna Howe tries unsuccessfully to divert her friend's attention from these futile preoccupations that are draining Clarissa's psychic energies away from more crucial problems. But Clarissa's psychological withdrawal advances quickly beyond the aid of her solicitous friend. As she separates herself from all close relationships, even Anna Howe's, Clarissa gains independence from the pressures of love and adulation as well as from avaricious worldly imposition.

In his realistic presentation of the interaction between Clarissa and Anna Howe, Richardson demonstrates that

much of the tension in their ideal friendship stems from the contemporary dispute over the proper domain for women. Their friendship and their destinies are profoundly affected by the conflict between the prevailing sexist values and the current resistance to them. Though both qualify as "learned ladies," they take opposite sides in the lively controversy over what a woman should be. Though both defy in spirit their society's decree that they submit to husbands who may well be their inferiors, they escape the domination they fear in divergent ways.

Clarissa is anxious to conform to the conservative view, but her calamity destroys her dream of a conventional marriage, along with her identity in a society that values the woman only in terms of the man who possesses her. In her will, Clarissa announces poignantly, "I am nobody's" (IV: 416). Before the loss of her "worldly hopes and prospects" (IV: 510), she has envisioned herself as an obedient wife--as charming and amiable as the Matchless Orinda--married to a benevolent and generous protector. In her death, she escapes the opposite fate of a luxurious, but demeaning, marriage to an ungovernable man, and rises above all earthly concerns to realize her vision of perfection in another world. In contrast, Anna Howe does not evade the problem of the arranged marriage, but faces it realistically. She discards her girlish dream of a lively rake to accept Hickman, the man who is not her first

choice, but who will allow her an intellectual freedom not unlike that sought by Mad Madge of Newcastle.

As Clarissa ascends to an abstract, more perfect realm, she leaves Anna Howe behind to deal with the morality of the world, to involve herself in the marriage of mutuality both girls have envisioned from their opposite perspectives. In her posthumous letter to her friend, Clarissa prays "that all the earthly blessings they used to wish each other, may singly devolve upon her" (IV: 367). It is Anna Howe who administers Clarissa's poor fund--with Hickman's help--carrying on the charities that, in the "bloom of youth" (IV: 365), Clarissa began with joy and a sense of purpose in living. Anna Howe's successful marriage to Hickman, with boundaries set to protect prerogatives and privileges, affirms Richardson's belief in the possibility of a relationship of mutuality to replace the masculine domination of the conventional marriage.

Richardson bestows on the two friends the equality of sisters, and he gives their opposite approaches to life the status of alternatives, meriting equally his admiration and respect. In following literally an abstract ideal, Clarissa, the "guide" (IV: 510), handles worldly experience heroically. But Anna Howe, her emulator, deals more flexibly with the obstacles inherent in their corrupt society, and thereby handles experience more effectively. Clarissa represents the pure metal, Anna Howe the tougher

alloy. Appropriately, the resolution of the novel brings ideal rewards and worldly tragedy to the visionary and conservative Clarissa and a promising earthly future to the realistic and progressive Anna Howe. Clarissa's dying assessment of the friendship suggests that Richardson recognizes that, in creating his truly virtuous woman, he has endowed her with a perfectionism that, in its dazzling purity, blots out the fascinating multiplicity of the everyday world, and in its rigid control, sidesteps the difficult moral choices of actual life. When Anna Howe's last letter is read aloud by Mrs. Lovick, Clarissa remarks:

> How uninterruptedly sweet and noble has been our friendship! But we shall one day meet . . . never to part again! Then, divested of the shades of body, shall we be all light and mind. Then how unalloyed, how perfect will be our friendship! (IV: 328)

In this statement, Clarissa verifies Anna Howe's earlier comparison of their characters, which symbolized Clarissa's celestial aspirations in its picture of her "surrounded with . . . a flood of brightness" (II: 131) too luminous to reveal the contrasts of reality: shades as well as lights, faults as well as virtues, her defiled body as well as her unblemished mind. But Anna Howe remains on earth, as she foresaw, taking her natural place in the lights and shades of the landscape around her.

PART II

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL INEQUALITY ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN IN CLARISSA

Chapter III Two Friends: Belford and Lovelace

Chapter IV Two Suitors: Hickman and Lovelace

CHAPTER III

TWO FRIENDS: BELFORD AND LOVELACE

The normal authority of eighteenth-century men over the women in their custody is extended to ruthless sport in the hands of the audacious libertine. The close companionship of Lovelace and Belford is founded on their view of women as birds to be captured and on their mutual love of intrigue in snaring their feminine prey. They belong to a group of fellow-libertines who compete vigorously in their conquests of women, and the women they capture view themselves as conquered objects and the men as enemies to be outwitted. Richardson's immediate objective is to censure the typical aristocratic "man of pleasure" (I: xv) and the license granted him by the public. But through the phenomenon of the libertine, Richardson denounces as well the double standard of sexual freedom that is approved by the society and that has driven a wedge of hostility between the sexes. Richardson makes starkly clear the need for the reformation of the libertine in Lovelace's abuse of his excessive freedom. And in Belford's sequence of soul-shaking experiences, he demonstrates that, contrary to popular opinion, the eradication of habitual debauchery

is a long and laborious struggle. Lovelace, Belford, and their exuberant friends press to the limit their masculine prerogatives, and in their daring and inhumane escapades, Richardson exposes the potential for violence and serious injury to women in the prevailing sexual inequality.

In his Author's Preface, Richardson explains that the "two gentlemen of free lives" make it "one of their wicked maxims to keep no faith" with any individuals of the female sex "who are thrown in their power," but that they do not "think themselves freed from the observance of those moral duties which bind man to man" (I: xiii). Their libertine practices are confined to their relationships with women, and therefore, do not go beyond what is acceptable masculine conduct in the context of eighteenth-century mores. The traditional belief in the sovereignty of men and in the reciprocal obligation of women to obey all masculine authority needs little extension to enable the society to countenance the excesses of the libertine. The benevolent patriarch, guided by a sense of responsibility to his feminine charge, may need unlimited authority to fulfill his custodial obligations, but the same unrestrained freedom in the hands of a Lovelace predetermines the defeat of a Clarissa--as the central action of the novel demonstrates.

Lovelace's spirited band of companions in vice are descendants of the Restoration Rake, who still persists in the eighteenth-century libertine, retaining some of the

embellishments of the Restoration Court and Stage. Richardson's libertines also reflect the ideas and imagery of the Restoration poetry that celebrates the life of pleasure and uses the animal kingdom to mock enlightened man's elevation of reason over sense. The more generally accepted doctrine regards man as a being superior to the animals because of his rational control of his passions. This belief condemns the life of pleasure and associates the rake, whose sensuality is unhampered by civilized restraints, in a derogatory way with the untamed brutes. Richardson's libertines echo the poets' animal imagery, as they exult in their free mastery of women, while other characters in the novel use similar animal analogies to censure the libertines' sensuality and brutality.

This analysis of the friendship of Lovelace and Belford begins with evidence that the contemporary conduct books support the unequal standards for men and women. The contention is that the widely-read manuals help to implant and sustain attitudes towards women that derive from the double standard of sexual freedom, and that Lovelace and Belford demonstrate these attitudes in operation. The discussion of the double standard is followed by an examination of some correspondences between the ideas and metaphors of several Restoration poets and those related to Richardson's libertines. The inquiry focuses next on Lovelace and Belford as mimetic characters, pointing out their constitutional differences, describing the

psychological interaction between them, and exposing the libertine competition as a source of damaging hostility between them. Their opposite responses to Clarissa's virtue and individuality raise conflicts between them, and reveal different capacities in them for growth of personality. The impact of her extraordinary character on their stereotyped view of women propels the two men in opposite directions and leads them to divergent fates.

One need go no further than the influential conduct book, The Ladies' Calling, to find explicit evidence of the different standards applied to masculine and feminine behavior. The author asserts that God has placed women "in more advantageous circumstances" than men, where they have not as many temptations (Ladies' Calling, Preface, p. c). God seems to have,

> in many particulars, closlier fenced them in, and not left them to those wilder excursions, for which the customary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. (Ladies' Calling, Preface, p. c2)

On the other hand, a man, to uphold "Honour," must avenge affronts, and "to converse in the World," must expect to be "importun'd to debauchery and excess" (Ladies' Calling, Preface, p. c-c2).

The Ladies' Calling places modesty high among "the genuine and proper Ornaments of Women" (Ladies' Calling, p. 4) and cautions the woman that when she assumes "a modish Assurance," masculine "Habit," and the "Vices of Men, too," she dismisses her "Guards," and "it will not be hard to

guess the fate of that womans Chastity, which has no other bottom then that of mens" (Ladies' Calling, pp. 14-15). In an age of "industrious Vice" (Ladies' Calling, p. 16), the woman must arm herself against the arts of seducers, and the author advises that

> The best way therefore to countermine those Strategems of men, is for women to be suspiciously vigilant even of the first approaches . . . she that will secure her Chastity, must never let it come to too close a seige, but repel the very first and most remote insinuations of a Temter. (Ladies' Calling, p. 17)

Light behavior and immodesty suggest a willingness to surrender, and The Ladies' Calling warns against such an invitation to seduction with a vivid analogy:

> Let no woman . . . presume upon the innocence of her first intentions; she may as well upon confidence of a sound constitution, enter a pest-house and converse with the plague, whose contagion do's not more subtilly insinuate it self, then this sort of Temtation. (Ladies' Calling, p. 19)

Placing all responsibility for chaste conduct on the woman, the author explains that the woman must be concerned "to remove her self from the possibility of danger" by adopting "a severe Modesty" (Ladies' Calling, p. 19), that she must abstain not only "from all real evil," but "from the appearance of it too" (Ladies' Calling, pp. 30-31). Astell, in Reflections, supports the position of The Ladies' Calling, assuring the woman that "she can never be too careful to secure her Character, not only from the Suspicion of a Crime, but even from the Shadow of an Indiscretion" (Astell, Reflections, p. 80). Contending that the woman

who "goes beyond a bare Civility, though she meant no more than a Respect, will find in interpreted a Favour, and made ill Use of" (Astell, Reflections, p. 77). Astell approves the aphorism: "Resist the Beginnings: be early on your Guard" (Astell, Reflections, p. 12).

Both Lovelace and Belford interpret the strict avoidance of any slackening of propriety as the hallmark of the virtuous woman. Lovelace admits that he uses a lack of reserve as a signal to tell him whether or not he will be successful with a woman. Relying on this touchstone, he chooses to assume a leniency in Anna Howe's morals from her free and open manners and bold speeches. He thereby justifies, with mock pomposity, the improper advances he dreams of making to Clarissa's friend:

> Chastity, Jack, like piety, is a uniform thing. If in look, if in speech, a girl give way to undue levity, depend upon it, the devil has got one of his cloven feet in her heart already. (III: 412)

And Belford is astonished when Clarissa does not adjust herself, as he had anticipated she would, to the company at Lovelace's collation. He tells Lovelace that he had expected her "at least to forbear to show herself disgusted at freedoms of discourse in which those present of her own sex, and some of ours . . . allow themselves" (II: 484). Belford's veneration for Clarissa is initiated when she does not laugh--though the other women do--at Tourville's verses "full of double entendre" (II: 484). And his devotion to her is established when she is asked to give her

definition of wit and replies with a poem of Cowley's, proclaiming that wit does not depend on immodest innuendo, "At which a virgin hides her face" (II: 485). The awe-struck Belford is mortified to be part of the brash company that she now views "with conscious superiority" (II: 485). From then on he is exquisitely aware of her "correcting eye" and "discouraging blush," and of her contempt and pity for the company's "worthlessness" (II: 486). Instigated by this stereotyped criterion of feminine virtue, but reinforced by his own sympathetic perceptions, Belford's recognition of Clarissa's worth is profound and permanent. He is immediately convinced "of this fine woman's superiority in those talents which enoble nature, and dignify her sex" (II: 486).

The woman's education in the fine points of decorum is aimed towards avoiding any hint of lightness even in conversation, but the man is expected to exploit any advantage he can obtain. The rake, especially, has no need to protect his reputation and may, like Lovelace, flaunt his scandalous conduct, extolling his ingenuousness as proof that he is not a hypocrite. But even before he has met Clarissa, Belford, the "humane libertine" (IV: 103), has recognized that women are not so different from men, for he protests to Lovelace:

> And after all, I see not when men are so frail without importunity, that so much should be expected from women, daughters of the same fathers and mothers, and made of

> the same brittle compounds (education all the difference), nor where the triumph is in subduing them. (II: 159)

Belford continues to question this basic social inequity as he tries to persuade Lovelace that his testing of Clarissa is "not a fair trial" (II: 158). But in contrast Lovelace, the "inhumane libertine" (IV: 103), uses the double standard and the hostility it breeds between the sexes to taunt Belford for his earnest defense of Clarissa, advising his friend:

> . . . never offer to invalidate the force which a virtuous education ought to have in the sex, by endeavouring to find excuses for their frailty from the frailty of ours. For are we not devils to each other? They tempt us; we tempt them. Because we men cannot resist temptation, is that a reason that women ought not, when the whole of their education is caution and warning against our attempts? Do not their grandmothers give them one easy rule?--Men are to ask; women are to deny. (II: 185)

Lovelace argues in favor of his trial of Clarissa on the grounds that her virtue has not been "proved" (II: 36). But when he asks, "For what woman can be said to be virtuous till she has been tried?" (II: 41), he founds his case on an aphorism that Astell refers to with scorn as "that silly Maxim, That Vertue is not Vertue till it has been tried" (Astell, Reflections, p. 13). Lovelace's ulterior motives are exposed by Astell's warning that women should beware of this adage because it is commonly used by admirers as an insidious incentive to lower a woman's defenses.

Society's unequal apportionment of responsibilities and privileges between the sexes encourages the libertines, as Richardson presents them, to look upon men and women as antagonists, each striving to subdue the other. The good woman aims to avoid or reform the rake: the greater his wickedness, the nobler her reclamation of him. And the bold man plots to seduce the woman: the greater her virtue, the more glorious his conquest of her. Lovelace and his enterprising comrades acquire prestige from the number and difficulty of their conquests. Clarissa represents a higher level of virtue and social rank than any attempted before by the confederacy and so presents a new challenge to Lovelace, promising him even greater honor than he now enjoys. Lovelace savors the gratification he anticipates from his success when he boasts that

> among all the objects of your respective attempts, there was not one of the rank and merit of my charming Miss Harlowe. But let me ask, Has it not been a constant maxim with us, that the greater the merit on the woman's side, the nobler the victory on the man's? (II: 252)

With a special relish for intrigue, Lovelace gauges his superiority by the ingenuity of the plots he invents to subdue his victims. Analyzing his early feelings for Clarissa, he includes among the "many stimulatives to such a spirit as mine in this affair, besides love: such a field for strategem and contrivance, which thou knowest to be the delight of my heart" (II: 150). And in the midst of his excuses to Leman for his "youthful frolic" with Miss

Betterton, Lovelace confesses that intellectual rather than sensual pleasures provide him with his strongest motivation and compel him to prefer the pursuit to the prize:

> I love dearly to exercise my invention. I do assure you, Joseph, that I have ever had more pleasure in my contrivances than in the end of them. I am no sensual man; but a man of spirit; one woman is like another--you understand me, Joseph. In coursing, all the sport is made by the winding hare. A barn-door chick is better eating. (I: 147)

Emphasis on the chase--the means--diminishes the value of the trophy--the end--and ignores the individuality of the woman to be won. The view of women as objects to be conquered blurs the distinctions between them and allows the libertine to assume all women to be alike, a claim that justifies the rake's disregard for the seduced woman. Belford defines the rake's notion of women when he tells Lovelace that he cannot make Clarissa happy, "if she preserve her delicacy" because "What is the love of a rakish heart? There cannot be peculiarity in it" (II: 160).

Lovelace delights in de-personalizing women with his use of bird-imagery, in one instance comparing woman's gradual submission to that of "a bird new-caught" (II: 245). He starts with a self-revalatory observation that "We begin, when boys, with birds, and when grown up, go on to women; and both, perhaps, in turn, experience our sportive cruelty" (II: 245). He then describes "the charming gradations by which the ensnared volatile has been brought to bear with its new condition" (II: 245-246):

> . . . after a few days, its struggles to escape still diminishing as it finds it to no purpose to attempt it, its new habitation becomes familiar; and it hops from perch to perch, resumes its wonted cheerfulness, and every day sings a song to amuse itself, and reward its keeper.
>
> Now let me tell thee, that I have known a bird actually starve itself, and die with grief, at its being caught and caged. But never did I meet a woman who was so silly . . . But it is saying nothing in a woman's favour, if we do allow her to have more sense than a bird. And yet we must own, that it is more difficult to catch a bird than a lady.(II: 246)

The pathos and venality of the ordinary woman's accommodation to her subordinate role shines through Lovelace's description of the captive lady's gradual transformation from a "sullen one," who will not eat, into a "wanton kitten," who will "implore your consideration for her, and your constancy" (II: 246-247). And Lovelace exposes his wish to justify his new game by fitting Clarissa into this stereotyped concept of woman, when he asks, "Now, Belford, were I to go no further than I have with my beloved Miss Harlowe, how shall I know the difference between her and another bird?" (II: 247)

The typical libertine treats woman as a frivolous bird, created to be the object of his sport, and his favorite imagery of the predator and his prey is taken up by his detractors as accurately descriptive of his behavior. In Reflections, Astell uses the fox and the tiger to represent the clever rake that women must be taught to avoid or outwit:

> The Gallant, the fine Gentleman in Town, . . . in the artful Contrivance of his Design, and dexterity in

> executing it, happily combines the Cunning of the Fox, and the Audacity of the Tyger. Cruel indeed! for he tears the Fame, worries the Vertue, and compleats the Destruction of his unhappy Prey. (Astell, Reflections, pp. 14-15)

And in Proposal, Astell relies on the appropriate bird-imagery to characterize the dangers the virtuous woman will escape in a safe Religious Retreat, where she "need not curse her Stars for being expos'd a prey to bold importunate and rapacious Vultures" (Astell, Proposal, p. 35).

The animal imagery used with exuberance by Richardson's libertines, and with repugnance by other characters in the novel, has obvious antecedents in the metaphors of Restoration poetry. And in their association of man's violence with the brute kingdom, the analogies challenge the contemporary concept of man as a rational creature, elevated above the other animals by virtue of his reason. The conflict between man's whimsical philosophies and his sure animal instincts is explored by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-1680), in A Satyr against Reason and Mankind (1675). Provocatively, Rochester's summarizing phrase, "all men should be knaves" (line 169), has an echo in Lovelace's "human nature is a rogue" (II: 489).

In Satyr, Rochester asks whose morals are more generous, just, and trustworthy: those of animal or man. And his argument in favor of animal is the one used by Anna Howe, in her posthumous portrait of Clarissa, to consign Lovelace to a rank below the animals. The persona of

Rochester's Satyr condemns man for his pride in believing himself superior to the birds and beasts, when man's savagery is less justifiable than that of the animals:

> Which is the basest creature, man or beast;
> Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey;
> But savage man alone does man betray.
> Pressed by necessity, they kill for food;
> Man undoes man to do himself no good.
> With teeth and claws by nature armed they hunt
> Nature's allowance, to supply their want;
> But man with smiles, embraces, friendships, praise,
> Inhumanly his fellow's life betrays,
> With voluntary pains works his distress,
> Not through necessity, but wantonness.(ll. 128-139)

Remembering Clarissa's precocious remark as a child that fierce animals do not consort with docile ones, and therefore do not belong in the same picture, Anna Howe reviles Lovelace with a paraphrase of Rochester's observation:

> And, alas! she knew, before she was nineteen years of age, by fatal experience she knew! that all these beasts and birds of prey were outdone in treacherous cruelty by MAN! Vile, barbarous, plotting, destructive man! who, infinitely less excusable than those, destroys through wantonness and sport what those only destroy through hunger and necessity! (IV: 501)

Anna Howe has deleted all political connotations from Rochester's broad expression of "moral realism" (V. De S Pinto, "John Wilmot," Pelican Guide, p. 150), narrowing down his condemnation of all mankind to apply specifically to the rake.

As Belford becomes more disillusioned with the life of pleasure and more dedicated to his reformation, he, too, follows Rochester's example of comparing man and animal to man's disadvantage. Belford bursts out in anger against

man's arrogance in fancying himself superior to those he exploits: the animals who supply him with food and clothing and the weaker members of his own species:

> But man is a pragmatical, foolish creature; . . . proud and vain as the conceited wretch is of fancied and self-dependent excellence, he is obliged not only for the ornaments, but for the necessaries of life (. . . for food as well as raiment), to all the other creatures . . . for what has he of his own, but a very mischievous, monkey-like bad nature? Yet thinks himself at liberty to kick, and cuff, and elbow out every worthier creature: and when he has none of the animal creation to hunt down and abuse, will make use of his power . . . to oppress the less powerful and weaker of his own species! . . . what miserable yet conceited beings men in general, but we libertines in particular, are. (IV: 8)

Belford, like Anna Howe, applies Rochester's disgust with man's wanton exercise of power specifically to the rake's sportive cruelty to women.

Rochester, the prototype of the aristocratic, witty rake, expresses basic attitudes towards experience that are shared by his descendant Lovelace. The persona of Satyr recommends a life of action and censures the proud misguided man who prefers "Reason" over "certain instinct" (ll. 10-11). Ridiculing man's presumption in believing himself "the image of the infinite" (l. 77), capable of piercing "The limits of the boundless universe" (l. 85), the persona declares that the proper use of thought is to gratify the senses. In a powerful comment that endorses Lovelace's outlook on life, Rochester recommends the intimate association of thought and action and jeers at inhibiting regulations:

> But thoughts are given for action's government;
> Where action ceases, thought's impertinent.(ll. 94-95)

. . .

> Thus, whilst against false reasoning I inveigh,
> I own right reason, which I would obey:
> That reason which distinguishes by sense
> And gives us rules of good and ill from thence,
> That bounds desires with a reforming will
> To keep 'em more in vigor, not to kill.
> Your reason hinders, mine helps to enjoy,
> Renewing appetites yours would destroy.
> My reason is my friend, yours is a cheat;
> Hunger calls out, my reason bids me eat;
> Perversely yours, your appetite does mock:
> This asks for food, that answers, "What's o'clock?"
> (ll. 98-109)

In applauding spontaneous action, guided by appetites, Rochester sanctions the love of variety that accounts for the rake's abhorrence of marriage. The rake avoids the permanence of matrimony because it denies him the refreshing stimulus of change. Habitually following his immediate inclination, his "certain instinct," Lovelace exhibits the rake's thirst for novelty, driven by the need to keep his desires stimulated to a high pitch.

Using woman's admiration for the bold man to excuse his own audacity, Lovelace tells Belford that women "love to be addressed with spirit" and that therefore

> the ardent, the complaisant gallant is so often preferred to the cold, the unadoring husband. And yet the sex do not consider that variety and novelty give the ardour and the obsequiousness; and that, were the rake as much used to them as the husband is, he would be . . . as indifferent to their favours, as their husbands are; and the husband, in his turn, would, to another woman, be the rake.(II: 327)

Lovelace recognizes that change, as well as restraint--the "reforming will" employed by Rochester's persona--is one of the effective means of keeping the rake's ardours "more in vigour." But, as Richardson illustrates, the rake's

dependence on novelty to enliven his interest requires that he callously view woman as a bird-like creature, who may be discarded with impunity for a new object.

The fears and triumphs alike of the libertines find apt expression in the avian metaphors that derive from Restoration poetry, bearing connotations of freedom as well as predaciousness. When Lovelace jests that he has been kept out of other mischief by pursuing so assiduously the single object Clarissa, he has the bird imagery at hand to inform Belford that "By a moderate computation, a dozen kites might have fallen while I have been only trying to ensnare this single lark; nor yet do I see when I shall be able to bring her to my lure" (II: 29). Anna Howe compares Lovelace to a cruel vulture rather than a noble hunter in a similar metaphor that disparages his pursuit of the lowly Rosebud: "Wrens and sparrows are not too ignoble a quarry for this villainous goshawk!" (I: 350). When Lovelace boasts of his "eagleship," his "aiming at the noblest quarries" and "disdaining to make a stoop at wrens" (II: 253), and when Belford resents, envies, and disapproves of his friend's "attempts upon the innocent and uncorrupted" (II: 321), the two rakes are responding--the one with joy, the other with apprehension--to the unrestricted freedom of Cowley's "Imperial Eagle" in Upon Liberty. The animal and bird analogies, however they are used, attribute to the rake the unrestrained appetites of the brutes and dissociate

him from rational man, who virtuously controls his passions.

In their pursuit of the life of pleasure, the libertines, who live for the enjoyment of the moment, become keenly aware of the passage of time and obsessed with a fear that their pleasures will pall. This anxiety finds expression in a dread of old age, which they fear will bring on a loss of the capacity to enjoy sensuous experience. Many Restoration poems express this concern, while claiming that control of the animal instincts--virtue or reformation--is not possible until the rake is overtaken by ill health or old age. This problem, of great concern to the rakes, has religious implications for Richardson, because, in his interpretation of Christian doctrine, time must be allowed for repentance before death in order to insure Christian salvation. From this viewpoint, the rake's repentance because he can sin no more is only a specious imitation of genuine repentance. The authenticity of Belford's reform is confirmed because it is accomplished while he is still young and in good health.

The similarities between the analogies used by Richardson's libertines and the metaphors of Restoration poetry go deeper than superficial resemblances. The poet and the libertine delight in immediate experience as well as debauchery. But as they focus on the evasion of responsibility and permanent attachments, they leave themselves

unprepared for, and therefore afraid of, the future. Richardson's libertines and the Restoration poets also hold in common a love of the exhilarating freedom to choose and an abhorrence--for themselves, but not for women--of the enervating restrictions placed on human instincts in the name of virtue. In his immoderate A Satyr against Vertue, John Oldham attacks the conventional concept of virtue, which to him is a

> . . . Greensickness of the Mind!
> That mak'st us prove to our own selves unkind,
> Whereby we Coals and Dirt for Diet chuse,
> And Pleasure's better Food refuse! (ll. 5-8)

And Rochester protests the reason that "hinders" (l. 104) or "kills" (l. 103) appetites. Richardson's libertines celebrate human vitality with the poets when they rebel against excessive conventional restrictions and affirm the joy of the moment, but they undervalue civilization when they carry their defiance to the point of ignoring society's lawful prescriptions and disregarding the rights of other human beings. Lovelace and Belford encompass both the affirmative and negative connotations of libertine poetry, and along with their leaning towards heedless debauchery, they manifest strong inclinations towards enduring human values. Buffeted by contradictory impulses, these rebellious spirits transcend the stereotyped Restoration Rake to become complex individuals. Richardson's realistic presentation of the two men emphasizes the harmful and subtle effects of the libertine excesses, as they dissipate

Lovelace's extraordinary talents and subject Belford to the intricate psychological difficulties of reformation.

When examined as mimetic characters, Lovelace and Belford exhibit contrasting dispositions that draw them together, but that also heighten the tensions originating in their libertine view of women. Lovelace is by nature an aggressive personality. He refers to himself as "the prince and leader" of the "confraternity" (II: 18), displaying his love of mastery as he designs and directs exciting projects for the group. In contrast, Belford is by nature a submissive personality and is happy to follow the schemes Lovelace devises. Their constitutional differences help to bind the two friends together in a complimentary relationship that has kept them engaged in a notorious career of "glorious mischief" (II: 54).

In the early sequences of the novel, their relationships with women are based on conquest, like those of the stereotyped libertine of the times. And they show their opposite dispositions in their attitudes towards their feminine prey. The expansive Lovelace boasts of his "eagleship," while the less enterprising Belford is content with the lesser birds, consoling himself with the conviction that he has never ruined "the morals of any one creature who otherwise would have been uncorrupted" (II: 321). In response to Belford's charge that he glories in his corruption of the innocent, Lovelace defends himself

by claiming that difficulty--like Rochester's "reforming will"--adds zest to conquest. Confined to Clarissa, "this single charmer" (II: 29) after the abduction, and abstaining from the seduction of other innocents, Lovelace advises Belford "how greatly preferable it is, on twenty counts, to pursue a difficult rather than an easy chase" (II: 30). Relishing the implication of his own greater vigor, he urges the more sluggish Belford to join in this headier sport:

> I have a desire to inculcate this pleasure upon thee, and to teach thee to fly at nobler game than daws, crows, and wigeons; I have a mind to show thee . . . that these exalted ladies may be abased, and to obviate one of the objections that thou madest to me when we were last together, that the pleasure which attends these nobler aims, remunerates not the pains they bring with them; (II: 30)

With an adroit shift of emphasis, Lovelace distorts the intended meaning of Belford's genuinely sympathetic plea for Clarissa to suggest that the lazier and more timid Belford is not unhappy to reduce the exertion of conquest in the name of morality. As they carry on their libertine rivalry, each is ready to use against his friend any defect he recognizes in him. Belford knows that Lovelace is ruthless as well as vigorous, and Lovelace sees clearly that Belford is indolent as well as kind.

Clarissa's description of Belford after their first meeting corroborates his submissiveness. She sees him as "good-natured and obliging," and as "very complaisant" (II: 229), but she also notes that he does not have

Lovelace's handsome features: "those advantages of person" or dress "which Mr. Lovelace is too proud of" (II: 228). Lovelace refers to his friend as bear-like and clumsy, making fun of his "fat head" on his "porterly shoulders" (IV: 123) and ridiculing his poor taste in clothes. Belford's unattractive appearance explains in part his reluctance to assert himself and accounts for some of his distinctive qualities. His ungainly exterior--Lovelace even uses the adjective ugly (IV: 455) to describe him--has generated in him an urgent need for reassurance, but it has also developed in him an unusual capacity to sympathize with other unfortunates. His sympathy overflows in his spontaneous gifts to the needy and in his easy pity for those in trouble, the undeserving as well as the deserving. His hunger for approval is apparent in his eagerness to obey Lord M. and Clarissa, as well as Lovelace. He employs his best energies in service to his friends, rushing to the bedside of his dying uncle and to the aid of the consumptive Belton, and submitting to Clarissa's every wish, as her protector during her final illness.

The compliant Belford defines the leader-follower relationship between him and his friend and expresses satisfaction with his role as observer in the first sentence of his first letter in the novel: "Thou, Lovelace, hast long been the entertainer: I the entertained" (II: 157). In answer to Lord M.'s request that he use his influence

to persuade Lovelace to marry Clarissa, Belford writes on Clarissa's behalf, revealing, as he pleads her cause, those qualities in himself that foster the psychological interplay between him and his friend. He portrays himself immediately as a man of sensibility, easily moved by the ideal of virtue that Clarissa represents and proud of his capacity to appreciate "the unequalled perfections and fine qualities of this lady" (II: 157). And he implies inferior powers of discrimination in his friend, who has failed to let Clarissa's virtue and nobility serve as "her protection and security" (II: 157).

Belford's sense of fair play compels him to declare that his chief inducements in defending Clarissa are not "owing to virtue" (II: 157), but to the justice due "this incomparable creature" for her own sake (II: 158). In support of his genuine concern for justice, he demonstrates an ability to make clear distinctions, arguing with the incisiveness of a lawyer that Lovelace's trial of Clarissa's virtue is unfair. He lists the forces working against her that guarantee her defeat: Lovelace's unscrupulous tactics, the Harlowes' relentlessness, "the house she is to be in" (II: 159), her own inexperience. Belford's reasonable presentation of evidence is a form of accusation, since Lovelace has deliberately--and obviously--planned his trial in defiance of logic. But the analytical and seriously-concerned Belford identifies straight-forwardly the basic

contradiction in the trial as Lovelace plans it, pointing out to his friend that Clarissa cannot pass a test "founded upon the supposition of error in her, occasioned by her favour to thee" (II: 159). Belford rightly discerns that, if Clarissa shows the preference Lovelace demands, she must relinquish the virtue he demands. She cannot fulfill contradictory requirements simultaneously.

In his first letter, Belford also reveals the importance of fear as a motivating force in his behavior. Confessing to a sense of punishment deserved for his sordid past, he questions the wisdom of the rake's postponement of repentance. The intense fear of punishment, both natural and supernatural, that later contributes to his reform is forecast in his anxiety over the future, as he reminds Lovelace that

> Wicked as the sober world accounts you and me, we have not yet . . . got over all compunction . . . In short, we believe a future state of rewards and punishments. But as we have so much youth and health in hand, we hope to have time for repentance.(II: 161)

Belford's seriousness, the gravity that leads him to sober argumentation carries with it a propensity for gloom that grows into a morbid fascination with death, eventually causing Lovelace to declare in exasperation that his friend is "an absolute master of the lamentable" (IV: 171). Belford's conscientiousness inclines him to overwork even his admirable qualities, and his persistent pleas for justice, when overdone, become tedious, self-righteous and

self-vindicating, preaching, the "heavy preachment" (II: 184) that Lovelace ridicules mercilessly. Nevertheless, Belford is able to console himself for his friend's obvious superiority of person and wit--the attributes most useful to the libertine--by putting a high value on those qualities he recognizes in himself as commendable: his sensibility to both virtue and distress, his scrupulous adherence to reason, the high morality of his concept of justice.

In the early stages of the novel, the assurance with which the aggressive Lovelace takes advantage of the amiable Belford suggests that Lovelace's self-esteem depends on the control he is able to maintain over other people. Richardson supplies information about Lovelace's childhood that throws some light on the early sources of the rake's need to dominate--and even torment--his friends, and establishes a strong affinity between Lovelace's personality and the outlook of the typical rake. In the relationship of Lovelace to his mother, Richardson reflects some contemporary theories of child training. The Ladies' Calling observes that parental affection "often needs a bridle" (Ladies' Calling, p. 205), especially that of the mother, because, just as there may be a fault in the "defect of Love," so there may be also in the "imprudent excess of it" (Ladies' Calling, p. 201). Several characters in the novel testify that Lovelace has been spoiled as a child by a too indulgent mother. Mrs. Fortescue reports that "having never been subject to contradiction, he was always as mischievous

as a monkey" (I; 49). And Lord M. attributes Lovelace's impertinence, his love of liberty, and his hatred of obligation, to the laxity of his early guardians, explaining, "Indeed, it was his poor mother that first spoiled him: and I have been too indulgent to him since" (II: 323). As Lovelace comes out of his delirium after Clarissa's death, he attempts to shift some of the blame for his wilful crime from his own guilt-ridden shoulders to those of his mother:

> Why, why did my mother bring me up to bear no control? Why was I so educated, as that to my very tutors it was a request that I should not know what contradiction or disappointment was? Ought she not to have known what cruelty there was in her kindness? (IV: 443)

Seeking excuses for his self-indulgent behavior, Lovelace stumbles on a valid explanation for his compulsive aggressions. His too soft, doting mother offered him no opposition or direction, giving him the impression that no importance attached to whether he did right or wrong. He could only believe that he was of little value since no one cared enough to punish him. As a man, Lovelace is stimulated by resistance in women and by difficulty of intrigue, because the toughness of opposition intensifies his sense of a concrete self. To sustain a sense of a solid core of self, he seeks difficulties to master. And to indulge his acquired taste for the familiar unbridled power, he seeks compliant individuals to dominate.

Lovelace has owned to Belford that his yearning for resistance and his thirst for the exhilaration of power

took the form of sadism early in his life. And Belford testifies that cruelty is a deep-seated and long-standing component of Lovelace's personality, one that forebodes ill for Clarissa:

> 'Tis a seriously sad thing, after all, that so fine a creature should have fallen into such vile and remorseless hands: for, from thy cradle, as I have heard thee own, thou ever delightedst to sport with and torment the animal, whether bird or beast, that thou lovedst and had a power over. (II: 483)

On meeting Clarissa, Belford entreats Lovelace to cultivate "motives of compassion for the lady" (II: 248), and Lovelace responds with a list of instances of human cruelty to animals, as if savoring the unrestricted power he has over Clarissa, his appetite for mastery whetted by the compassionate Belford's opposition.

Lovelace also buttresses his precarious sense of self-worth by inviting attention to himself with his outrageous escapades and by flaunting his prowess in exaggerated claims. Under a cloak of self-mockery, he congratulates himself extravagantly for his clever contrivances. Elated over his success in abducting Clarissa, he brags, "What a capacity for glorious mischief has thy friend!" (II: 54) In another exuberant boast, made ostensibly in jest, Lovelace tells Belford the psychological truth, trusting a joke to neutralize the hostility he exposes:

> What a matchless plotter thy friend! Stand by and let me swell!--I am already as big as an elephant, and ten times wiser!--mightier too by far! . . . Lord help thee for a poor, for a very poor creature! Wonder not that

> I despise thee heartily; since the man who is disposed immoderately to exalt himself cannot do it but by despising everybody else in proportion.(II: 114)

By confessing that his purpose in disparaging Belford is to elevate himself, Lovelace shows that he understands intuitively his need to bolster his ego. This need is also apparent in his anxiety over any potential derision of himself. His brazen ridicule of others is obviously a defensive move to forestall their ridicule of him. One of the strongest incentives impelling Lovelace to stamp out his growing compassion for Clarissa is his fear of the ridicule of Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs if he spares his captive the ultimate trial.

Since the two libertines have formed a pact, agreeing "to take in good part" whatever freedoms they use--if the passages are written in "the Roman style," using thee and thou (Ftnt., I: 144)--they grant each other liberties of personal criticism not unlike those Clarissa and Anna Howe consider essential to their ideal friendship. This understanding causes their letters, like those of Clarissa and Anna Howe, to become an outlet for expressions of hostility as well as professions of loyalty. The malicious Lovelace, like the sagacious Anna Howe, is quick to detect the weaknesses of others and is equally astute in unmasking any disguised self-interest. Belford's self-righteousness may be obscured by the logic and justice of his well-taken arguments, and any ulterior motives behind

his kind actions may be hidden from himself, but they do not escape Lovelace's crafty suspicions. On the other hand, Belford's talent for analysis enables him to pick out the exact offence in Lovelace's violations of logic and morality. And he does not hesitate to instruct his friend on the proper course he should follow to meet both rational and moral demands.

The symbiotic relationship between "the entertainer" and "the entertained" is generally satisfactory to both until it is rocked by their conflict over Clarissa. The two libertines reveal their divergent values as they vie with each other to accomplish their opposite goals for her. As a dominating personality, whose life of pleasure is grounded in the subjection of women and whose vindictive nature exults in cruel conquest, Lovelace hopes to destroy Clarissa's lofty ideal of feminine virtue and to persuade her to a life of cohabitation with himself, reducing her to one of Mrs. Sinclair's nymphs. In contrast, the fair-minded Belford, who does not share Lovelace's interest in domination for its own sake, wishes to preserve her as a "fine woman" (II: 158), protecting her right to choose for herself. Belford has no interest in taking unfair advantage of women, observing that they are inherently weaker than men and educated to remain so. On meeting Clarissa, he perceives that she has an intelligence like his own and that she is different from the sensualists who have previously

been the objects of their sport. And this revelation has a profound influence on his future development, generating in him the change of attitude that is necessary to begin his reform and to release him from dependency on Lovelace's leadership.

The two libertine friends are separated during the crucial days between Belford's meeting with Clarissa and Lovelace's outrage against her, because Belford is called outside of London to "close the eyes" (II: 254) of his dying uncle. Belford's letters show him torn by contradictory reactions to his friend. He now anticipates with revulsion and scorn Lovelace's planned treachery to Clarissa, but isolated at his uncle's, he is more than usually dependent on his lively friend for vicarious excitement. His incongruous feelings emerge when he weakens his severe preachings against any violence to Clarissa by begging for a minute account of his friend's pursuit of her. Belford assures Lovelace that if Clarissa "must fall, fall by the man whom she has chosen for her protector; I would not for a thousand worlds have thy crime to answer for" (II: 254). But he immediately discredits this noble assertion with a self-vindicating entreaty, laden with prurient curiosity:

> But nevertheless, I should be desirous to know (if thou wilt proceed) by what gradations, arts, and contrivances thou effectest thy ungrateful purpose (II: 254).

Belford's desire to hear the details of the plot as it progresses shows the strength of his entrenched libertine inclinations, and suggests also that, beneath his longing to protect Clarissa, he harbors a morbid masochistic interest in the cruel outrages that powerful people perpetrate against the weak. His instinctive compassion is an emotion unacceptable in an audacious libertine and must find expression in a disguised form; in this case, one that has the added benefit of discharging the aggressions he must suppress as a compliant personality.

Belford's capacity to feel deeply for the persecuted Clarissa comes in part from his own experience with the kind of accommodation required of women in their state of dependency. He has long been a victim of the playful scorn of his friend, and to preserve the approval he depends on, he has formed the habit of accepting cheerfully Lovelace's cutting insults. Not daring to attack Lovelace directly for his ungrateful ridicule, Belford externalizes his "self-pitying feeling of being unfairly treated" (Horney, p. 230) by condemning Lovelace's injustice to Clarissa.

Belford has also felt the sting of rejection by women, who have ignored him for his handsomer friend. In retrospect, Lovelace argues that

> What indeed made me appear to be more wicked than thee was, that I being a handsome fellow, and thou an ugly one, when we had started a game . . . the poor frightened puss generally threw herself into my paws, rather than into thine . . . (IV: 455)

Belford's own humiliations have developed in him a special capacity to sympathize with other sufferers, bearing out Lord M.'s proverb "That he who pities another, remembers himself" (II: 324). His neurotic need to feel pain and pity is gratified through his vicarious enjoyment of Clarissa's struggle against her tormentor, and his neurotic need to feel superior is nourished by his sense of virtue in being genuinely touched by Clarissa's plight. His righteous indignation in defense of Clarissa supports his belief in himself as a man governed by a higher sense of justice and a nobler compassion than his friend. However, these subjective satisfactions, that compensate for his inadequacies in meeting his friend's libertine competition, do not invalidate his sincerity (as a complex realistic character) when he describes his concern for Clarissa as completely objective: "for the sake of our common humanity," or when he points out Lovelace's callousness in triumphing over "a distress so deep" caused by Lovelace's own "elaborate arts and contrivances" (II: 320).

Belford's healthy sense of justice compels him to ask for fair-play. He cannot imagine that Clarissa is not in love with the charming and resolute Lovelace. In his first letter to Lovelace, he says, "That she loves thee, wicked as thou art, and cruel as a panther, there is no reason to doubt" (II: 160). He, therefore, believes that she may still be seduced and reasons:

> If she yield to fair seduction, . . . if thou canst raise a weakness in her by love, or by arts not inhuman; I shall the less pity her: and shall then conclude that there is not a woman in the world who can resist a bold and resolute lover (II: 254)

And Belford is earnestly concerned that Clarissa not be subjected to the sinister methods of Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs, "whose trade it is to break the resisting spirit" (II: 489), pleading that Lovelace not make her "the victim of unmanly artifices" (II: 254). But Lovelace refuses to be dictated to by anyone and is spurred on to promote the very thing that Belford rails against.

Ironically, Belford's reasonable arguments and emotional appeals do Clarissa more harm than good. Earlier, when Belford stresses the injustice in the discrepancy between Lovelace's advantages and Clarissa's helplessness by saying, "it would be a miracle if she stood such an attempter, such attempts, and such snares as I see will be laid for her" (II: 159), Lovelace twists his friend's statement to mean that Clarissa is not above yielding to persuasive methods; that she "<u>may be</u> overcome" (II: 245). Pretending that Belford's adherence to this view impels him to proceed with his trial, he asks, "Am I not therefore obliged to go further, in order to contradict thee?" (II: 252). Frustrated by the futility of arguing with the determined Lovelace and torn between conflicting loyalties, Belford stands as an observer only, making no effective move--while the trial is in progress--to interfere

with his friend's maneuvers, or to warn Clarissa of her danger.

As the crisis nears, Lovelace vacillates in his purpose, his compassionate emotions in a death-struggle with his vindictive impulses. Lovelace is driven to resist all controls, but his conscience and his passions are both trying to take sole possession of him--and his identity is at stake. Two days before the rape, when Lovelace engages in a fierce battle with his irrepressible conscience, he equates Belford with the "varletess" (II: 400), accusing her of stealing his pen and writing with it--"in a hand exactly like my own" (III: 146)--a number of Belford's former arguments. Lovelace cannot allow reason, Belford, his conscience--all recommending marriage and compassion for women--to win over the plot-making process that preserves his identity as a clever and passionate master of women, not subject to humane considerations nor to the dictates of society. Lovelace seizes his conscience by the throat and pours out his hostility to Belford, as if administering physical blows to both his friend and the varletess for their futile and exasperating admonitions, informing both of the compulsive nature of his crime:

> Had I not given thee thy death's wound, thou wouldst have robbed me of all my joys. Thou couldst not have mended me, 'tis plain. Thou couldst only have thrown me into despair. Didst thou not see that I had gone too far to recede? (III: 147)

The rape creates a pivotal crisis in the relationship of the two libertines. Belford's disapproval of his

friend's unfair and violent tactics passes over the threshold of toleration and he is shaken out of his inertia. Spurred into action, Belford moves toward a new level of maturity. In his first letter after he learns of the outrage, he dares to abuse Lovelace as a "savage-hearted monster" (III: 196) and to flaunt the superiority of his natural compassion over Lovelace's callousness, declaring, "I never could have been so remorseless a caitiff as thou hast been, to a woman of half this lady's excellence" (III: 198). Though his devotion to Lovelace is too firmly established to be uprooted, Belford no longer behaves as an obedient servant.

Belford continues to revile Lovelace relentlessly for his barbarity to Clarissa and to bombard his friend tirelessly with warnings of dreadful punishments to come, if he does not abandon the libertine life of immorality. But Belford--though straining at the bonds of dependency--continues to carry out Lovelace's wishes, keeping his friend informed of all aspects of Clarissa's life. Dwelling on her suffering after the arrest, as if he enjoys "the melancholy subject" (III: 436), Belford explains that his prime motive for including all the shocking particulars is "that I might stab thee to the heart with the repetition" (III: 439). Belford continues to maintain that he purposely exaggerates his warnings and abuse in order to produce in his friend a consciousness of his sins, as a prelude to

repentance. But the violence of his attacks suggest that they also function as a release for his long-term envy of Lovelace's superiorities and for his suppressed resentment of his friend's disparaging ridicule.

As Belford witnesses a series of shocking deaths, his terror of eternal punishment intensifies his desire to give up his dissolute habits. And this fear, in combination with his awe for Clarissa, leads him rapidly towards reformation. Each time that he is moved by a distress to double his efforts to reform, he wishes that Lovelace might be present to be affected as forcefully. Taking on the function of Lovelace's conscience, Belford sends grisly descriptions of the agony and regrets of his uncle and Belton, as both die in long, drawn-out miseries. Horrified by the terrible convulsions that precede Belton's death, Belford describes the physical manifestations of the fear that propels him towards reform:

> O Lord! Lovelace, death is a shocking thing! . . . I wish thou wert present on this occasion. It is not merely the concern a man has for his friend; but, as death is the common lot, we see, in his agonies, how it will be one day with ourselves. I am all over as if cold water were poured down my back . . . (IV: 168)

Belford is drawn toward reform, not only by fear, but with even greater momentum by his holy love and admiration for Clarissa. As Clarissa's daily attendant while she fades away into death, he learns from her noble example how one might die tranquilly, blessing others, and

looking forward to "everlasting happiness" (IV: 324). Impressed by the contrast between the remorseful struggles of the unprepared profligates and Clarissa's joyful preparation for her decease, he tries to inculcate in his friend the salutary lessons he is learning:

> If Miss HARLOWE'S glorious example, on one hand, and the terrors of this poor man's last scene on the other, affect me not, I must be abandoned to perdition; as I fear thou wilt be if thou benefitest not thyself from both.(IV: 150)

Belford's efforts to draw Lovelace after him toward reform reveal a new inclination in him to lead rather than follow. He gradually shifts his homage from the rake Lovelace to the virtuous woman, Clarissa, developing, under her benevolent tyranny, a new self-reliance that enables him to direct the affairs of others rather than taking orders from his friend. Clarissa makes a substantial contribution to his self-confidence when she asks him to be her executor, and he shows himself able to meet unflinchingly Lovelace's angry objections to that transaction. Lovelace unmasks his envy of Belford and unleashes his frustration over Clarissa's steady decline, in a violent expression of his possessive feelings for her:

> thou shalt not be her executor: let me perish if thou shalt. . . . nobody shall dare to be anything to her but I--thy happiness is already too great, to be admitted daily to her presence; to look upon her . . . to hear her talk, while I am forbid to come within view of her window.(IV: 89)

Ready to assert his new independence, Belford replies with a proud and definitive statement of his new-found maturity:

"But surely thou dost not pretend to say what I shall, or shall not do, as to the executorship. I am my own man, I hope" (IV: 94).

While he serves as Clarissa's protector, the malleable Belford is building defenses against Lovelace's power to dissuade him from the reformation he strongly desires. He shows his awareness of his susceptibility to Lovelace's overwhelming influence when he wishes poignantly at Clarissa's death that she could have been prevailed upon to see and reclaim Lovelace, thereby removing the temptation he fears:

> and that for my sake, as well as yours: for although I am determined never to be guilty of the crimes which . . . have blackened my former life; . . . yet should I be less apprehensive of a relapse if . . . you had become a reformed man: for no devil do I fear but one of your shape.(IV: 308)

Belford must fortify himself against the powerful personality of his friend as he strives to fulfill his resolve to "marry, and live a life of reason, rather than a life of a brute, for the time to come" (III: 484).

For the libertine, reform means giving up his free way of life for the "shackles" of marriage (II: 249). As Belford's plans for matrimony keep pace with his reformation, Lovelace holds tenaciously to stereotyped opinions that discredit matrimony and glorify the rake's freedom. Belford's particular nature--and perhaps his less successful career as a libertine--allows him to change his way of life completely, as he perseveres in the difficult task of

replacing old habits with a "new system" (IV: 544), but Lovelace's constitution--and perhaps his phenomenal success as a libertine--confines him to the libertine practices, with few signs of change or growth. In spite of Belford's vigorous efforts to persuade Lovelace to follow his example, Lovelace resists the reformation he sees "coming fast upon" his friend, telling Belford, "But go thou in thy own way, as I will in mine" (III: 496).

Lovelace's madness after Clarissa's death becomes a frenzy, his brain "boiling like a cauldron over a fiery furnace" (IV: 378). In his illness, he sees himself as "the sport of enemies! the laughter of fools! and the hanging-sleeved, go-carted property of hired slaves" (IV: 441), his role of master reversed, his identity shaken. He places some of the responsibility for his derangement on Belford, telling him, "Your damned stings and reflections have almost turned my brain" (IV: 378). But as he blames others, he pronounces as well "damnation upon myself" (IV: 378), testifying to the temporary victory of self-hatred and remorse over his prevailing mood of levity. Lovelace is active, dependent on novelty, and cannot dwell on the past. To survive with sanity, he must master life again. As he comes out of his delirium, he reintegrates himself on his former level, reconstructing his self-image as a conqueror of women, declaring:

> I must, I will, I have already, overcome these fruitless gloominesses. Every hour my constitution rises

> stronger and stronger to befriend me; and . . . it gives me hope that I shall quickly be what I was--life, spirit, gaiety, and once more the plague of a sex that has been my plague, and will be every man's plague at one time or other of his life.(IV: 443)

Lovelace is shaped irrevocably to the libertine mold, but, in contrast, Belford grows and develops in response to Clarissa's confidence in him. Following his recognition of her as an intelligent being like himself, Belford relies on her influence and example to accomplish the difficult task of reformation. He gradually assumes responsibility for himself and others, lessening his dependency and moderating his excessive emotionalism to become a reasonable man of feeling. As he matures, he brings his tendency to overdo into balance. His pedantry, under control, makes possible his meticulous execution of Clarissa's will; his indiscriminate pity becomes compassionate care of the sick and dying; his complaint nature, reinforced by self-reliance, gains the strength to resist the Harlowes' imperious demand to use the legacy as they please. Finally, his passive desire for vicarious experience finds a constructive outlet in his scrupulous editing of the collected papers of Clarissa and Lovelace, whose story will warn young ladies against the villainous libertine.

Belford's instinctive sympathy with women develops into a capacity to accept Clarissa as an individual, and in time, to think of Charlotte Montague as a wife. As his

reform advances and he prepares for marriage, he composes a "faint sketch" of what he hopes to do and be (IV: 449), describing the affirmative practices that will replace his former libertine habits:

> I shall have good order in my own family, because I shall give a good example myself. I shall be visited and respected . . . by the best and worthiest gentlemen . . . Oaths and curses shall be forever banished from my mouth: in their place shall succeed conversation becoming a rational being . . . And instead of acts of offence, subjecting me perpetually to acts of defence, will I endeavour to atone for my past evils, by doing all the good in my power, and by becoming a universal benefactor to the extent of that power. (IV: 448)

Finding his pleasure in his new resolutions so great that he need not fear deviation from them, Belford presumes himself to be worthy of the "virtuous and prudent wife" (IV: 549) he wishes for. Recalling Lovelace's "encouraging hints," he makes his addresses to Miss Charlotte Montague (IV: 549), and is accepted.

Though Richardson does not present a fully-developed characterization of Charlotte Montague, he indicates that he intends her to be a woman of virtue and spirit, not unlike Anna Howe, possessing a bright and bold wit. Though admiring the perfection of Clarissa, and virtuous herself, Charlotte does not elevate herself above the world on lofty heights. She enjoys bantering with her cousin Lovelace and speaks up to him pertly, rebuking him for his audacious conduct, not self-righteously like Clarissa, nor militantly like Anna Howe, but wittily and tolerantly. In Lovelace's trial before his family, Charlotte exhibits

a sound judgment as she comments on Clarissa's situation. Her careful distinctions, her compassion for a fellow creature, her tolerance for human frailty indicate a sense of justice and a natural kindness similar to Belford's. However, she makes clear her stand for conventional propriety, not being willing "to open her lips" (III: 406) to defend the irresponsible or indecorous woman. In her forthright handling of this delicate situation, and in her letters, visits, and vigorous action in Clarissa's behalf, she shows a courage and aggressive spirit that should complement well Belford's disposition to comply.

In the marriage of these two worldly and well-intentioned individuals, Richardson offers an affirmative alternative to Clarissa's idealistic expectations from life and herself, and to Lovelace's frenzied engagement in the libertine life of pleasure. Belford envisions a future life based, not on the offence and defence of libertine rivalry, but on the noble qualities of generosity and rationality. Belford acknowledges his own past grievous errors without despair, making what amends are in his power, and Charlotte recognizes and pities the frailties of human nature without deserting virtue. Belford and Charlotte preserve the positive qualities of Lovelace and Clarissa without perpetuating their obsessive and destructive self-images. The marriage of Belford and Charlotte affirms, as does that of Hickman and Anna Howe, Richardson's

faith in the possibility of mutual respect between the sexes.

The friendship of Lovelace and Belford remains intact in spite of the constitutional biases that make Belford's preachings so irritating to Lovelace and Lovelace's irreverences so chafing to Belford. The bond between them also withstands the tension of libertine competition. But as Richardson dramatizes the interaction between the two men as mimetic characters, he exposes the envy and hostility generated in them by the libertine attitudes. Though Lovelace remains fixed in libertine patterns of thought and behavior, returning compulsively to his "former game" (IV: 487), Belford abandons them permanently, discarding the rake's bird-imagery to accept Clarissa, Anna Howe, and Charlotte as individuals of virtue and sound judgment. Freed from his friend's mischievous temptations, Belford prepares for marriage, having consciously decided to relinquish the sexual freedom of the libertine for the restraints and harmony of marriage. In the divergent fates of the two friends, Richardson condemns the abuse of power inherent in the concept of the libertine, as he punishes Lovelace severely with a violent death that denies him time for repentance; and he affirms his own humanitarian values as he rewards Belford with a happy and civilized, if restrictive, marriage.

CHAPTER IV

TWO SUITORS: HICKMAN AND LOVELACE

The admired and indulged aristocratic rake provokes Richardson to declare in his Preface that one of his specific aims in the novel is to warn young women "against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity, upon that dangerous received notion that a reformed rake makes the best husband" (I: xv). The prototype of the highborn gifted rake, Rochester, has proclaimed loudly in Satyr that the vicious side of man's nature predominates. To undercut the proud libertine, Richardson proves Lovelace--Rochester's dazzlingly talented counterpart--to be a villain. And to counteract the prevalent negative concept of human nature, Richardson opposes the treacherous figure of the libertine with a trustworthy alternative: the man of probity.

A comparison of Hickman, who represents Richardson's man of probity, with Lovelace, who represents the man of pleasure, must acknowledge at once the distinction between them that Richardson emphasizes in his Postscript. Richardson states that his goal has been to convince sensible and virtuous ladies that, in choosing "companions for life," they should prefer "the honest heart of a

Hickman, which would be all their own," to "the volatile mischievous one of a Lovelace," which would probably be shared with "scores" of other women (IV: 561). The genuine worth of the suitor, his "goodness of heart" and "inviolable" love, should govern the woman's choice.

To make his point that even the most gifted libertine is not preferable to the truly sound and honest gentleman, Richardson amplifies the difference between the two men, endowing Lovelace with an irresistibly attractive exterior that conceals a savage nature and giving Hickman a dull and awkward surface that obscures a good mind and feeling heart within (IV: 561). Hickman is also subject to the hazards of the man who, in Rochester's language, plays upon the square in the face of the cheat. The stiffness of the man of probity weakens his appeal, while the skills of the cheat enhance his. Richardson attempts to siphon off distaste for the honest man's lack of polish by stressing the ruthlessness of the urbane libertine.

This analysis of Richardson's antithetical personalities begins by distinguishing, as Richardson does, between the man of probity and his counterfeit Solmes. Next, correspondences are noted between Astell's description of the ideal suitor and Richardson's concept of the genuine man of probity. Like Astell, Clarissa and Anna Howe recognize two categories of men, who evoke opposite responses from women: the bold man, in general, attracts feminine

admirers, while the modest man escapes the notice of his feminine acquaintances. The opposite dispositions of Lovelace and Hickman, of course, fit them into the opposite categories. Though Richardson preserves intact throughout the novel the basic distinctions between the man of pleasure and the man of probity, he goes beyond the simplistic division into types to develop Lovelace and Hickman into complex characters. In their confrontation at Dormer's, the two men emerge as fully-realized individuals, exhibiting the subtle psychological reactions of two highly responsive antagonists. This comparison ends by associating the two types of men with the eighteenth-century definitions of virtue and vice, and by proposing that the reformed rake Belford functions as Richardson's symbol of a fusion of these opposites in actual life. The fictional Belford serves as a bridge between the man of pleasure and the man of probity, and with his acquired virtues, becomes an auxiliary hero of the novel, conceding first place to the innately good man Hickman.

Richardson's first step in establishing the worth of Hickman is to attack the common belief that a malicious niggard like Solmes, because he commits no public immoralities, can qualify as a man of probity. As Mrs. Harlowe pressures Clarissa in the name of the family to accept the wealthy Solmes, she tells her daughter, "He is not indeed everything I wish him to be: but he is a man of probity, and

has no vices--" (I: 72). Proposing Solmes as the antithesis of Lovelace, the man of pleasure, Mrs. Harlowe says with artful skepticism, "a young creature of your virtuous and pious turn . . . cannot surely love a profligate" (I: 72). And Mrs. Harlowe assigns to Solmes those attributes that Richardson associates with the genuine men of probity: he "Is an honest man, Clary Harlowe. He has a good mind. He is a virtuous man" (I: 75). Clarissa, shocked, brands Solmes as a fraud, refuting her mother's claims for him with the questions, "Can he be an honest man who offers terms that will rob all his relations of their just expectations? Can his mind be good--" (I: 75). As Clarissa describes him, Solmes, the spurious imitator, lacks the very qualities that distinguish his genuine counterpart. He has no intelligence, generosity, or compassion, though no fault can be found with the regularity of his life.

Other members of the family, as well as Mrs. Harlowe, twist Clarissa's distaste for Solmes to imply a preference for Lovelace. Uncle Antony accuses Clarissa of perverse misrepresentations like those he is using himself to defend Solmes:

> Who, think you, does most injustice, a prodigal man or a saving man? The one saves his own money; the other spends other peoples' . . . What names will perverseness call things by! A prudent man who intends to be just to everybody, is a covetous man! While a vile, profligate rake is christened with the appellation of a gallant man and a polite man, I'll warrant you! (I: 160)

Since the Harlowes' values are centered in wealth and property, they are ready to interpret Solmes' niggardliness as admirable frugality and the financial concessions he makes to obtain Clarissa and her estate as proof of his generosity. By the same illogical processes, they interpret the absence of vices in Solmes to indicate his virtue, and Lovelace's profligacy in regard to women to confirm his extravagance with money and property. Clarissa points out their fallacious reasoning with her question, "But the one it seems, has many faults--is the other faultless?" (I: 156). And later, she makes Richardson's specific point that the absence of conspicuous vices does not guarantee virtue and create the genuine man of probity, in her wise comment, "But I may venture to say, that many of those who have escaped censure have not merited applause" (I: 395).

Clarissa argues that Solmes's lack of consideration for her preference demonstrates that he is incapable of the genuine love that qualifies the honest man for marriage. She writes to Uncle Antony:

> Be persuaded, sir, that I am not governed by obstinacy in this case, but by aversion, an aversion I cannot overcome: . . . and I have been averse to myself, for offering but to argue with myself, in behalf of a man who . . . , knowing this aversion, could not persevere as he does if he had the spirit of a man.(I: 159)

This instance of Solmes's insensitivity to the feelings of another person condemns him as the fraudulent man of probity, while Hickman's behavior in a similar situation establishes

him as the genuine man of compassion, generosity, and manly strength of character.

After his especially trying time as the victim of Anna Howe's scoffs on the journey to Cousin Larkin's, Hickman writes to Mrs. Howe, offering to discontinue his unwelcome suit. Comparing himself to Solmes, Hickman declares that he will not harass the woman he loves:

> Well might the merit of my passion be doubted, if, like Mr. Solmes to the truly admirable Miss Clarissa Harlowe, I could continue my addresses to Miss Howe's distaste. Yet what will not the discontinuance cost me! (I: 335)

Believing that Mrs. Howe's partiality cannot "conquer what seems to be an invincible aversion" (I: 336) in Anna Howe to himself, Hickman is not willing to succeed with the daughter only because of the mother's partiality. He asks, "should I wish to make the best-beloved of my soul unhappy; since mutual must be our happiness, or misery for life the consequence to both?"(I: 336). Through Hickman's refusal to behave like Solmes, Richardson defines the difference between the possessiveness of the impostor and the genuine love of the honest man of feeling.

Richardson furnishes Hickman with the basic requirements mentioned by Astell as those which "must incline a Woman to accept" a suitor, if she wishes herself and her husband to be as happy in marriage "as that State can make them" (Astell, Reflections, p. 45). Astell advises that "the Soul be principally consider'd, and Regard had in the first place to a good Understanding, a vertuous Mind; and

in all other respects let there be as much Equality as may be" (Astell, Reflections, pp. 45-46). Richardson uses Mrs. Howe to vouch for the proper degree of social and economic equality between Hickman and Anna Howe: the mother recommends Hickman to her daughter as "one of the soberest, yet politest men in England . . . Of a good family . . . a fine, clear, and improving estate . . ." (I: 129).

Discussing, for the benefit of Anna Howe and their friends, "how far figure ought to engage us" (I: 189) in choosing a suitor, Clarissa endorses the internal attributes that both Richardson and Astell approve. And the specific qualities she lists are those that distinguish Hickman and set him apart from both his counterfeit and the man of pleasure. Clarissa recommends:

> a man of sense, of virtue, of generosity; one who enjoyed his fortune with credit; who had a tenderness in his nature for the calamities of others, which would have given a moral assurance, that he would have been still less wanting in grateful returns to an obliging spirit . . . and this whatever had been the figure of the man; since the heart is what we women should judge by in the choice we make, as the best security for the party's good behavior in every relation in life. (I: 198)

Hickman easily equals Solmes in conventional rectitude, and he obvioulsy surpasses both Solmes and Lovelace in true worthiness; but he cannot equal Lovelace in superficial graces. Anna Howe points out to Clarissa that Hickman--like Solmes--has no common vices: "He is no fox-hunter: . . . He loves his horse; but dislikes racing in a gaming way, as well as all sorts of gaming" (I: 243). And

she verifies his sterling qualities: "Then he is sober; modest; they say, virtuous; in short, has qualities that mothers would be fond of in a husband for their daughters" (I: 243). But Richardson makes it clear that Hickman is no match for Lovelace in face or figure. Anna Howe complains that she has

> a quarrel against his face, though in his person, for a well-thriven man, tolerably genteel . . . But Hickman, with strong lines, and big cheek and chin bones, has not the manliness in his aspect, which Lovelace has with the most regular and agreeable features. (I: 242)

In bearing, Hickman is the antithesis of Lovelace, making a "bustle" with his manners (I: 44). Anna Howe sees in him a "gravity" and "primness" like her mother's (I: 44), describing him as "a sort of fiddling, busy, yet, . . . unbusy man . . . Irresolute and changeable in everything" (I: 242). In dress also, Hickman compares unfavorably with Lovelace. The prejudiced but realistic Anna Howe complains that he is a "set and formal mortal," overly careful but unsure in his dress, sometimes "too gaudy, at other times too plain, to be uniformly elegant" (I: 242). On the other hand, Lovelace impresses Clarissa as "certainly" having taste (I: 206), and she grants him a special grace in bearing and attire, saying,

> But although he has a humourous way of carrying it off, yet one may see that he values himself not a little, both on his person and his parts, and even upon his dress; and yet he has so happy an ease in the latter, that it seems to be the least part of his study. (I: 206)

An outstanding difference between Richardson's characterizations of the man of probity and the man of pleasure is in the matter of self-assurance. At times Hickman's commendable modesty deteriorates into meekness, while Lovelace's useful self-confidence often swells into arrogance. These superficial traits are deceptive indications of the inner quality of the man, as Astell explains when she associates humility with the inner strength of self-trust and arrogance with a lack of faith in one's own virtue or capacities. In Astell's view:

> Insolence is never the Effect of Power but in weak and cowardly Spirits, who wanting true Merit and Judgment to support themselves in that Advantageous Ground on which they stand, are ever appealing to their Authority, and making a Shew of it to maintain their Vanity and Pride. (Astell, Reflections, p. 48)

On the other hand, an inward consciousness of virtue needs no such artificial boosters, and Astell commends the person who is able

> to bear Contempt and an unjust Treatment from one's Superiors evenly and patiently. For inward Worth and real Excellency are the true Ground of Superiority, and one Person is not in reality better than another, but as he is Wise and Good. (Astell, Reflections, p. 54)

In agreement with Astell's views, Clarissa distinguishes between a pride based on "inward Worth" and one based on exterior advantages. During an early discussion of Lovelace's vanity in his person, birth, and fortune, she remarks to Anna Howe:

> for persons to endeavour to gain respect by a haughty behaviour, is to give a proof that they mistrust their own merit . . . Such added advantages too, as this man

> has in his person and mien: learned also, as they say he is; such a man to be haughty, to be imperious! . . . Proud of what? Not of doing well: the only justifiable pride. Proud of exterior advantages! Must not one be led by such a stop-short pride . . . in him or her who has it, to mistrust the interior?(I: 142)

Astell recognizes that arrogance has its roots in an unwarranted contempt for one's fellow-beings, explaining that

> NONE of God's Creatures, absolutely consider'd, are in their own Nature contemptible; the meanest Fly, the poorest Insect has its Use and Vertue . . . nothing making us more worthy of that Contempt we shew, than when, poor, weak, dependent Creatures as we are! we look down with Scorn and Disdain on others.(Astell, Reflections, p. 53)

And Clarissa, too, points out the close connection between pride in one's self and contempt for one's fellow-beings, an attitude that, in turn, deserves contempt:

> The man who is fond of being thought more or better than he is, . . . but provokes a scrutiny into his pretensions; and that generally produces contempt. For pride . . . is an infallible sign of weakness; of something wrong in the head or heart. He that exalts himself, insults his neighbour; who is provoked to question in him even that merit, which, were he modest, would perhaps be allowed to be his due.(II: 256)

This psychological truism provides a foundation for the antithetical personalities of the two suitors. The fully-rendered, complex individual that is Lovelace illustrates the pride that goes wrong in many people, and the shadowy figure of Hickman represents the humility that accepts an equal humanness with his fellow-beings. In his two characterizations, Richardson shows a steady self-trust beneath the humility of the modest Hickman and a deep incurable insecurity beneath the arrogance of Lovelace.

As he proceeds in his purpose of persuading the woman to choose a husband for his worthy interior rather than for his attractive exterior, Richardson uses Anna Howe's instinctive liking for the rake to show that the woman is more strongly influenced by the deceptive self-confidence of a suitor than by the unassuming steadiness that Richardson, Astell, and Clarissa consider to be essential in a companion for life. Anna Howe ponders the importance she places on the self-assurance of her suitor and tries to probe to the causes of her own and of other women's preference for the bold man:

> Strange! that these sober fellows cannot have a decent sprightliness, a modest assurance with them! Something debonair; which need not be separated from . . . awe and reverence, when they address a woman . . . ; for who knows not that love delights in taming the lion-hearted? That those of the sex, who are most conscious of their own defect in point of courage, naturally require, and therefore as naturally prefer, the man who has most of it, as the most able to give them the requisite protection? . . . in short, that their man should be a hero to every one living but themselves; and to them know no bound to his humility. A woman has some glory in subduing a heart no man living can appal; and hence too often the bravo, assuming the hero, and making himself pass for one, succeeds as only a hero should.(I: 243-244)

Aware of her own joy in wielding power, Anna Howe is able to identify this craving as an ingredient in the woman's adoration of the rake, the bold man. And conscious of a "defect in point of courage" beneath her own surface of bravado, she can sympathize with the woman's preference for a mighty protector. Her dream of simultaneous protection and personal power is actually a hope for the combination

of satisfactions traditionally granted to the woman in a patriarchy and customarily provided most effectively by the strong brave man.

Anna Howe's attraction to the bold man, to Lovelace, and earlier to the rake Sir George Colmar, and her exasperation with the meek and obsequious Hickman are intricately bound up with the cultural view of the appropriate relationship between husband and wife. Since patriarchal theory assumes the woman's need for a protector and the man's right to the woman as his possession, the patriarchal marriage tends to become an association of mutual exploitation, not mutual conciliation. As long as the woman is viewed as a helpless being who needs protection, she wisely and naturally chooses the strongest protector available. The bold and arrogant rake gives the impression of strength and represents the lion-hearted challenger to be tamed and reformed by the woman's beauty and virtue. If the wife can eventually dominate domestically her brave protector, she experiences the exhilaration of taming the lion-hearted, alleviating her sense of helplessness and acquiring an illusion of power. Anna Howe's attitudes towards Lovelace and Hickman are shaped to a great extent by the clichés of the day.

The traditional belief that women should be controlled by men leads naturally to the association of aggressive characteristics with men and of passive qualities

with women. In the central action of the novel--the rape--the traditional sexual roles are enacted with utter simplicity. Society's decree that the helpless female be guarded by a strong masculine protector makes possible an act of unrestrained masculine aggression against a female in whom complete passivity has been assured with drugs. Richardson consistently demonstrates that a quality beneficial in moderation may be injurious when carried to excess, but this central dramatic event also implies that the temptation to violence is inherent in the association of these specific attitudes with gender.

Richardson reinforces this devastating invalidation of the theory of sexual temperaments with cross-overs of the traditional male and female tendencies in various characters in the novel. His reversals of the generally accepted sexual qualities illustrate that the temperament which dominates the personality of an individual is not necessarily sex-linked. Those characters who survive at the end of the novel tend to contradict the conventional sexual roles: Anna Howe is more aggressive than passive; Belford and Hickman are more passive than aggressive; and Charlotte Montague, in the few episodes where she is featured, shows more assertiveness than meekness. Richardson condemns excessive aggression and excessive passivity regardless of sex. Anna Howe's petty despotism is as dishonorable as is the Harlowe men's serious tyranny; and Mrs. Harlowe's extreme passivity is as injurious to

Clarissa in its failure to protect her from cruelty as is Belford's passive failure to warn her of Lovelace's cruel plot against her. Though Richardson is illustrating the potential injury in the excessive application of any human tendency, he simultaneously breaks down the stereotypical distinctions in temperament between the sexes.

In his characterization of Hickman, Richardson demonstrates that the quality of modesty, considered the most charming and essential attribute of the subordinate woman, is equally appropriate to and desirable in the male. Hickman, as an individual, exhibits those qualities that Clarissa identifies as "the peculiar and indispensable characteristics" of "a real fine lady" (IV: 477). He is distinguished by his "affability" and his "gentleness next to meekness" (IV: 477), and Anna Howe labels him a "dull-swift" (II: 178), that is, "gall-less as a dove" (IV: 477). Like Clarissa's "real fine lady," Hickman never knows "what warmth of spirit is, but in the cause of religion or virtue"; or in cases where one's "own honour, the honour of a friend, or that of an innocent person is concerned" (IV: 477). Since he represents those qualities that she values highly, the gentle Clarissa instinctively appreciates the modest man of probity, just as the assertive Anna Howe responds instinctively to the bold man of pleasure.

Clarissa, throughout the novel, is Richardson's spokesman for his hero. She sorts out his strengths and weaknesses, telling Anna Howe that "If Mr. Hickman has not

that assurance which some men have, he has that humanity and gentleness which many want" (I: 279); and observing that distance must be kept with such men as Lovelace, she recognizes that the same reserve is not necessary "with those, surely, who are prudent, grateful, and generous" (I: 357). She gives her general endorsement of the man of probity over the man of pleasure by affirming his superior qualifications as a husband:

> These gay wretches may, in mixed conversation, divert for an hour or so; but the man of probity, the man of virtue, is the man that is to be the partner for life. What woman, who could help it, would submit it to the courtesy of a wretch who avows a disregard to all moral sanctions, whether he will perform his part of the matrimonial obligation, and treat her with tolerable politeness? (II: 54)

The unassuming Hickman does not often speak for himself in the novel. The sparse information provided about him is for the most part secondhand, coming from the biased observations of other characters. Only two letters appear in his own hand-writing; but his early poignant letter to Mrs. Howe elicits immediate sympathy for him and verifies his astuteness as well as his sincerity; for he is sharp-witted enough to state proudly that "Miss Howe's treatment of me does no credit either to her education or fine sense" (I: 336). Hickman moves in the shadow of Anna Howe, taking action only when she requests it, but a few scenes, such as his meeting with Lovelace at Dormer's, convey in concentrated form the complexity of his fully-conceived mimetic personality. Since Hickman is seen

primarily through the eyes of other people, their credibility as witnesses must be considered as a factor in their assessments. The aggressive Anna Howe and Lovelace are, of course, his detractors, while the compassionate Clarissa and Belford are his defenders.

The comments of other characters fill out Richardson's meager delineation of Hickman, but more is needed to balance the fully-rendered characterization of Lovelace; and Richardson employs subtle methods to add substance to his man of probity. The few concrete virtuous actions that Hickman performs can hardly offset Lovelace's flamboyant acts of deception and violence; but Hickman is defined by what he is not as well as by what he is: a negative method appropriate to his self-effacing perseverance on the side of virtue. Richardson rarely uses dramatic action to substantiate Hickman's merit, but trusts to the honest man's unwavering support of virtue to make him appear to advantage beside Lovelace's active villainy. When Hickman receives a sizable legacy from his god-mother "as an acknowledgment of his good behavior to her," Mrs. Norton comments that "These good men are uniformly good: indeed could not else be good" (IV: 287). And in her account to Belford of Hickman's early courtship, Anna Howe also notes the uniformity of Hickman's good conduct: ". . . the poor man (his character unexceptionally uniform) still persisting, made himself a merit with me by his patience" (IV: 478). Richardson uses Hickman's quiet perseverance and the

uniformity of his goodness to signify his capacity for constancy in a durable marriage: the identifying attribute of the man of probity.

After Mrs. Howe convinces him that her daughter would reject him completely if she did not intend to accept him eventually, Hickman's loyalty is set, and he is not again thrown off balance by Anna Howe's volatile behavior. His devotion to Anna Howe is intimately tied in with his dedication to virtue, but it is also an expression of the psychological interdependency that contributes to their authenticity as mimetic characters. From their association, Hickman gains the compliant person's satisfaction in obeying a powerful directress, and Anna Howe gains the unfailing support she requires for her uneasy--but strong--self-assertive inclinations. However, Hickman's dependency on Anna Howe also puts strains on his goodness of heart and on his basic self-trust. The conflicting obligations he feels are apparent in the episode where he learns of Lovelace's villainy in setting the fire at Mrs. Sinclair's. An examination of that incident shows that Hickman's unchanging loyalty has the potential to congeal into an injurious passivity. By submerging his own will in that of another person, he incapacitates himself to compete with Lovelace, who acts without inhibition.

Hickman demonstrates his readiness to show warmth of spirit when the honor of an innocent person is at stake by proposing immediate action on learning of the sham fire

that permits Lovelace to enter Clarissa's room. Hickman's reactions to Lovelace's violent effrontery are described by Anna Howe, and though her account is condescending in tone, it conveys the intensity of his emotions as "he trembled and reddened" while reading the letter (III: 165). His first impulse is to rescue Clarissa and give her "the protection of his house," but his need to obey Anna Howe's wishes is a stronger compulsion. Instead of taking the initiative and setting out on his own, he "throws himself" at Anna Howe's feet, begging her "to permit him to attend" Clarissa (III: 165). As Anna Howe tells the story, she infuses his spontaneous and humane offer with heady romanticism, reporting that

> The good-natured man had tears in his eyes . . . proposing to take his chariot and four . . . and in person, in the face of all the world, give himself the glory of protecting such an oppressed innocent. (III: 165)

On intercepting this letter, Lovelace welcomes the opportunity to scoff at Hickman's display of feeling and at his paralyzing deference to his beloved, which inhibits him from taking the appropriate action. And Lovelace's justifiable criticism makes plain the good sense in the course of action proposed by Hickman and rejected by Anna Howe. Anna Howe makes a serious error of judgment when she refuses to permit Hickman to rush to Hampstead to rescue Clarissa, for such a heroic action at that particular time could have prevented Clarissa's return to Mrs. Sinclair's. Through the momentous consequences of Hickman's failure to

act, Richardson condemns the modest man's lack of confidence in his own judgment. And he censures severely the man Hickman's expression of an excessive degree of the obliging devotion that distinguishes him as a suitable prospective husband.

The paradox of Hickman's simultaneous display of strength and weakness--in this case, of courage and servility--requires resolution. The contradiction disappears when Hickman's basic self-trust is seen as faith in his own morality and good will, while his hesitancies are seen as signals that his inner composure is being threatened by his hunger, as a homely, awkward man, for Anna Howe's approval. As a compliant personality in a sexist society that puts prime value on the bold handsome man, the diffident Hickman desperately needs Anna Howe's confident direction. But by giving in to Anna Howe's decision, which is motivated by her own emotional needs as well as by objective rational considerations, Hickman destroys his effectiveness in handling the problem. In this crisis, the modest Hickman shrinks in stature beside the bold Lovelace, who endorses the conduct that is the obviously appropriate response to a danger such as Clarissa's.

Hickman appears at his worst and Lovelace at his best in a situation that calls for action. However, Richardson's acknowledgment of the devil's due and of the modest man's handicap bolsters the authenticity of his

characterizations of both men. Richardson shows that neither the powers of the intrepid Lovelace nor the uncertainties of the honest Hickman can invalidate the superiority of the whole personality of the good man to that of the knave. However, this episode, in which the bold man gains and the good man loses credit, suggests that Richardson himself wavers at times under the pressure of conflicting impulses in his own psyche. The content of the novel exposes a conflict in Richardson between compelling compliant tendencies and powerful vindictive drives. The novelist exorcizes his malicious spirit in his full rendition of Lovelace's deviltry, and he subdues his violent impulses once and for all by acclaiming and rewarding the good-hearted Hickman in the resolution of the novel.

Lovelace, in the manner of Anna Howe, usually patronizes Hickman. Anna Howe expects less of her suitor than he is capable of accomplishing, often inducing him to fulfill, in superficial ways, her low and unfair estimate of him. Though Lovelace pretends also to value Hickman below his deserts, the libertine occasionally reveals a secret recognition of the honest man's superiority and a smoldering envy of his opposite's clear conscience. When Lovelace battles the "intruding varletess," his own conscience (III: 147), before the rape, he catches a glimmer of what the life of the man of probity might be and gives serious expression to his sense of deprivation:

> What a happiness must that man know, who moves regularly to some laudable end, and has nothing to reproach himself with in his progress to it! When, by honest means, he attains this end, how great and unmixed his enjoyments! (III: 146)

Such a sober assessment of his way of life in comparison with that of the honest man is rare with Lovelace. His more usual practice is to derogate with ridicule those who travel a different path from his own: that is, to follow the inclination he observes in the rest of humanity "to enculpate himself by blackening his neighbour" (III: 168).

Lovelace's animosity to the good man is heightened by personal motives when he purloins Anna Howe's letters to Clarissa and reads of the assistance Hickman has given the girls in their secret correspondence. Envious that Hickman has been "a busy fellow between them," Lovelace warns that "Hickman had best take care of himself," adding menacingly, "I am afraid that I must punish him, as well as this virago" (II: 364). In a frenzy of malice over Anna Howe's letter informing Clarissa that she is in "a devilish house" (III: 2), Lovelace aims to take out on her suitor some of his spite toward the interfering Anna Howe. But undertones of envy belie the scorn of Lovelace's sarcastic assessment of his new masculine victim, as he writes mockingly to Belford:

> Hickman is a good man, they tell me. I love a good man. I hope one of these days to be a good man myself. Besides, I have heard within this week something of this honest fellow that shows he has a soul; when I thought, if he had one, that it lay a little of the deepest to emerge to notice, except on very extraordinary occasions; and that then it presently sunk again into its <u>cellula adiposa</u>.(III: 14)

To fortify his confidence in his omnipotence as rake, Lovelace imagines, with some justification, that Anna Howe is in love with him. And on this basis, he develops a jealousy of Hickman as a rival that adds to his antagonistic feelings towards him as a good and honest man. His personal spite comes out in his testy remark, "for he has been a busy fellow, and I have long wished to have a slap at him!" (III: 412). To abate his envy and to punish Hickman, Lovelace indulges in adulterous fantasies of seducing Anna Howe whether or not he marries Clarissa, warning the future husband, "So, Hickman, take care of yourself, I advise thee, whether I marry or not" (III: 412). He counteracts his feelings of moral inferiority to the good man with self-elevating contempt for Hickman's disinterest in the conquest of other women, implying in Hickman a weakness of spirit. Upon receiving Hickman's request for the interview at Dormer's, he raves against him with undertones of self-mockery:

> Hickman (I have a mortal aversion to that fellow) has, by a line which I have just now received, requested an interview with me on Friday at Mr. Dormer's . . . I shall not be civil to him, I doubt. He has been an inter-meddler! Then I envy him on Miss Howe's account: for if I have a right notion of this Hickman, it is impossible that that virago can ever love him.(III: 475-476)

The chief encounter in the novel between the man of pleasure and the man of probity occurs when they meet in person at Mr. Dormer's. The two men reveal their opposite natures and their different perspectives on marriage and women, as they walk in the garden and duel with words over

the women they both admire. The dialogue is reported to Belford in Lovelace's words, but the dramatic irony of his account throws a strong light on Hickman's mimetic personality as well as his own. Characteristically, Hickman sets up the appointment at Anna Howe's request. She wishes to find out from Lovelace's "own mouth" whether or not he is wholly inclined, "exclusive of the wishes of his relations," to offer marriage to Clarissa (III: 425), her doubts aroused by his postscript promising

> that if I may be once more admitted to pay my duty to the most deserving and most injured of her sex, I will be content to do it with a halter about my neck; and attended by a parson on my right hand, and the hangman on my left, be doomed, at her will, either to the church or the gallows. (III: 425)

Hickman's opening remarks are excessively ceremonious, apologetic, and hesitant, as he searches for language that will be fair and respectful to all concerned. The quick-witted and intolerant Lovelace responds by urging the faltering speaker to "speak on" and admits to Belford that he is deliberately trying to throw the formal Hickman off his course, in order to keep "the game in his own hand quite through the conference" (III: 486). And Lovelace takes over control immediately by offering to go directly with Hickman "to explain himself in person" to Miss Howe (III: 486). Having conquered Clarissa, and now transferring his day-dreams to her lively, more compatible, friend, Lovelace amuses himself by trying to make the prim Hickman jealous with hints of his own attraction to Anna Howe.

Lovelace is, of course, a rival for Anna Howe in Hickman's eyes, as in his own, and her presence is felt throughout the interview, adding to the tension and underscoring Hickman's courage in agreeing to take on the mission.

As Lovelace prods and pushes and waylays his slow and conscientious opponent, Hickman pursues his course, treating Lovelace with courtesy, answering the rake's foolish questions seriously and to the point, trying laboriously to state accurately the purpose of his coming. Hickman may be tediously deliberate, but he demonstrates that he is not stupid or uneducated when he instantly gets the point of the literary allusions Lovelace inserts to trap him. Lovelace tries repeatedly to stir up a fight, defensively interpreting Hickman's neutral remarks as slurs on his honor, but Hickman remains calm and conciliatory, implying several times that Lovelace's honor is in question, but stating forthrightly, "Sir, I come not to offend or affront you" (III: 487). In the early segment of the exchange, Hickman appears to advantage, for he refuses to abandon the serious mood that is appropriate to the topic under discussion. In contrast, Lovelace appears flippant and callous, at times, even cruel, illustrating the rake's inability to take seriously the distresses of women, whose sole purpose, in his view, is to provide men with their "principal diversions and delights" (II: 249).

The man of pleasure and the man of probity are defined in terms of their antithetical views of women and

marriage. The two men state explicitly their opposite opinions on marriage, when Hickman asks Lovelace directly whether he has "objections to marriage" as the condition of a reconciliation (III: 489). Lovelace answers, "I never liked matrimony in my life," and Hickman counters with, "I am sorry for it: I think it a very happy state" (III: 489). Lovelace's levity and Hickman's seriousness on this occasion reveal their different concepts of woman. Their contrasting views coincide with the two eighteenth-century extant beliefs that A. R. Humphreys ascribes to the current parallel influences of Plato and Aristotle. Those people with feminist sympathies gained support from Plato's belief in the rational equality of men and women, while those wishing to maintain the status quo adhered to Aristotle's belief in the natural subordination of women, that "the man commands, the woman obeys" (A. R. Humphreys, MLR, xli, p. 257).

Lovelace's determination to make light of the matter and his anxious inquisitiveness about how much Hickman knows suggest that the libertine has a great deal at stake in clearing himself of any criminal action. The privileges that make possible Lovelace's free way of life, his self-esteem as a conqueror of women, and therefore his identity, rest on the continuance of the conventional Aristotlelian beliefs and customs. Lovelace serves his compelling need to preserve things as they are by deliberately making himself blind to the meaning of the crime to Clarissa. Lovelace

tries to dismiss the whole affair with the woman's courageous or venal, but always hackneyed, statement of surrender to unalterable conditions: "When a thing is done and cannot be helped, 'tis right to make the best of it" (III: 489). Cognizant of the advantages to him if Clarissa would behave as the ordinary woman, he adds honestly, "I wish the lady would think so too" (III: 489).

In contrast to Lovelace's desire to reduce Clarissa to the obliging captured bird, Hickman's Platonic view of women as human individuals, comparable to men, prevents him from accepting this easy solution to Clarissa's violation. Hickman focuses the discussion on the "hard usage" Clarissa has received, courageously defying the libertine code that it is not necessary to keep faith with any of the female sex:

> I think, sir, ladies should not be deceived. I think a promise to a lady should be as binding as to any other person at the least. (III: 489)

Hickman's courageous declaration is the antithesis of Lovelace's explicit admission at a later time that "it would be strange if I kept my word--in love-cases, I mean; for as to the rest I am an honest man, as all who know me can testify" (IV: 207). But at Dormer's, Hickman states as proudly as Clarissa herself, "I would always keep my word, sir, whether to man or woman" (III: 489). Hickman's fine words ring out with pride, but deep chords of self-trust resound beneath them to drown out the superficial tone of self-righteousness. Hickman's slight sense of superiority

is psychologically realistic and does not invalidate the nobility of his genuine regard for verbal truth or his advocacy of fair-play in abiding by contracts made with women as well as men.

As Lovelace continues to probe into what Clarissa has communicated to Anna Howe and Anna Howe to Hickman, he adopts a supercilious tone, implying his superior knowledge of women and of the dark arts used in seduction, and conversely, Hickman's ignorance of them. And Lovelace parodies the common liberties taken with logic as if intending another affront to Hickman's intelligence. While punishing Hickman with insinuation's of the good man's lack of worldly sophistication and mental agility, Lovelace punishes himself for falling short of the good man's innocence by throwing out self-incriminating hints that drugs have been used. Proof of drugs, and therefore of coercion, is central to the charge of rape, and Lovelace's devil-may-care hints are symptoms of his strong self-destructive tendencies.

In the final portion of the interview, Hickman is drawn in and astounded as Lovelace embellishes his elaborate hoax, personifying death as the lover for whom the offended Clarissa refuses him. Lovelace leads Hickman on shamelessly, asking "Who can account for the workings and ways of a passionate and offended woman?" (III: 493). As he lists numerous instances of trivial female retributions for thwarted infatuations--all calculated to reduce Clarissa's

profound and justified resentments of grievous injuries to petty spite over a disappointed whim--he pretends to challenge Hickman's view of woman as a full "person." But Lovelace's fantasy of Death as a lover whom Clarissa encourages penetrates deep into Clarissa's psyche, telling "the whole truth" about her, that he fathoms, though she has not told it even to her friend Anna Howe. "The whole truth" is submerged in Clarissa's subconscious mind, where she has suppressed her anger towards her family, her erotic attraction to Lovelace, and her furious resentment of the rake's subjection of her. In believing that these emotions, vital to the organism's self-preservation, are imperfections that must be repressed, Clarissa fails to meet life on its own terms; and she courts death. Through Lovelace's metaphor, Richardson acknowledges revenge as a violent force, corrosively destructive when turned back upon the self. By envisioning Death as Clarissa's accepted lover, Lovelace offers a rival to the spiritual bridegroom for whom Clarissa prepares herself in her Christian exultation. With Lovelace's imagery, the contradictory implications in Clarissa's death take form as competing suitors, and the alternative interpretations are fused when both suitors claim her hand at her demise.

At Lovelace's shocking denoument, Hickman is astonished and disconcerted, ashamed to be duped by such a fantastic hoax. But he collects himself and surprises

Lovelace with his spirit, showing that he sets limits to his amiability when he says with dignity:

> I came, sir, . . . as a mediator of differences. It behoves me to keep my temper. But, sir, . . . as much as I love peace, and to promote it, I will not be ill-used.(III: 495)

Lovelace's apology cools the atmosphere, and both men show the better sides of their natures: Hickman, his fundamental self-respect; and Lovelace, a capacity for feeling, as he explains, "But this is my way. I mean no harm. I cannot let sorrow touch my heart" (III: 495).

Although the scene at Dormer's emphasizes Lovelace's luminous exterior and Hickman's honest interior, Lovelace's heart seems less despicable when he confesses his jests to be a shield from his inner agonies, and Hickman's bearing seems less awkward when he responds without pretensions to Lovelace's taunts. These manifestations of other dimensions to their characters challenge the stereotypes they represent and transform both men into distinct personalities. In spite of Lovelace's dazzling performance as Hickman's tormentor, the palms for courage, dignity, and humane good sense go to his victim in the interview. Beneath his diffident manner, Hickman's deportment throughout the trying confrontation reveals a capacity to show spirit when required and a stubborn strength in defending his principles of fair-play and honesty. In the scene at Dormer's, the man of probity gains stature by adhering to his principles in the face of the much cleverer Lovelace. Hickman's composure

before his formidable antagonist qualifies this modest man to serve as Richardson's hero of the novel.

As an affirmative alternative to the gifted aristocratic rake, Richardson envisions a hero as close to the eighteenth-century concept of the innately virtuous man of good will as his knowledge of human nature will allow. Hickman's kind and generous feelings are symbolized by his generosity in money matters. Anna Howe mentions his anonymous and inconspicuous gifts when she tells Clarissa that he is sending the ill and destitute Hannah

> two guineas . . . as from an unknown hand; nor am I or you to know it. But he does a great many things of this sort, and is as silent as the night in his charities; for nobody knows of them till the gratitude of the benefited will not let them be concealed.(II: 116)

Hickman's uniform kindness emerges in other minor incidents. When Belford's servant Harry brings the news of Clarissa's death to the Howes, Belford reports that Hickman remembers "with his usual humanity" to direct that Harry be taken care of all night (IV: 371). Colonel Morden testifies to Hickman's genuine compassion and natural modesty at Clarissa's funeral:

> Another gentleman was there incognito, in a pew near the entrance of the vault, who had not been taken notice of, but for his great emotion when he looked over his pew at the time the coffin was carried down to its last place. This was Miss Howe's worthy Hickman.(IV: 410)

The obvious differences between Richardson's man of pleasure and his man of probity conform closely to those used by Bernard Mandeville to distinguish between the two

classes of men that, in his account, make up the human species. Although Mandeville's theories express a persuasive moral realism, they are based on oversimplified definitions of virtue and vice, as if designed in part to subvert the refined and conscientious distinctions made by contemporary moralists and Churchmen. In theological opinion, "the Author of nature" has implanted in man's heart a moral faculty instinctively approving virtue and disapproving vice. Acknowledging that "Human nature is not simple and uniform," and that the body's "inward structure consists of various instincts, appetites, and propensions" shared with the brutes," the moralists assert "that virtue consists in the due regulation and subjection of all other appetites and affections to the superior faculty of conscience" (Joseph Butler, Analogy of Religion, Introductory Essay, pp. lxxix-lxxx). And they oppose as misguided those "who, on the one hand, make the whole of virtue to consist in benevolence" and those "who, on the other, assert that every particular affection and action is resolvable into self love" (Butler, Introductory Essay, p. lxxxii).

Mandeville's widely read and vigorously attacked Fable of the Bees (1714) includes his essay "An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue." In the essay, Mandeville scoffs at man for taking inordinate pride in his rationality and for making clear-cut distinctions between himself and his humbler brethren, the animals. Mandeville theorizes

that those wishing to civilize man found that they had to make him believe

> that it was more beneficial . . . to conquer than indulge his Appetites, and much better to mind the Publick than what seemed his private Interest. (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 42)

The civilizers began to use flattery to persuade man to practice the necessary self-denial, declaring that it was beneath his dignity to be solicitous about gratifying those appetites which he had "in common with the Brutes" (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 43).

Richardson's characterizations of Lovelace and Hickman embody the two classes of men that Mandeville establishes on the basis of his theory. One class is made up of low-minded people "always hunting after immediate Enjoyment," who make "no use of their Rational Faculties but to heighten their Sensual Pleasure" (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 43). The other class is made up of "lofty high-spirited Creatures," who esteem "the Improvements of the Mind to be their fairest Possessions," and aim at "no less than the Publick Welfare and the Conquest of their own Passion" (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 44). However, both classes agree

> to call every thing, which, without Regard to the Publick, man should commit to gratify any of his Appetites, VICE; . . . And to give the Name of VIRTUE to every Performance, by which Man, contrary to the impulse of Nature, should endeavour the Benefit of others, or the Conquest of his own Passions out of a Rational Ambition of being good. (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," pp. 48-49)

Astell testifies to the general usage of these definitions in her time when she incorporates them into her moral philosophy, as does Richardson, in his, when he dramatizes them in his characterizations of his man of pleasure and his man of probity. But Richardson also gains further means of discrediting Lovelace by associating him with the unreasoning brutes and with what conservative thinkers considered the perverted reasoning of Mandeville.

In Mandeville's view, the man who is "only solicitous" of pleasing himself--the man of pleasure--is eager to cooperate with social regulations in order to acquire a wider field for indulging his voluptuous appetites without interference; therefore, in self-interest, he promotes the public welfare, serving his private interests indirectly when he serves the public interest. Lovelace, displaying his usual skill in twisting aphorisms to sanction his own inclinations, refers to Mandeville as "my worthy friend" and claims he is "entirely within" Mandeville's concept "<u>That private vices are public benefits</u>" when he provides Clarissa with an opportunity to be an example for the rest of her sex (III: 145). Lovelace acclaims his private ravishment of Clarissa because it will provide a public warning to all young ladies not to trust a libertine. Ironically, Clarissa's only worldly consolation for her calamity is in this "public benefit" with which Lovelace excuses and applauds his perpetration of that calamity.

Lovelace practices vice as Mandeville defines it, refusing to be controlled by civilized laws. The incorrigible rake is governed instead by his passions, or more exactly, by his wilfulness: his desire to give free rein to his brute-like impulses or his intellectual fantasies without restraint. Hickman, in turn, observes virtue, since his rationality, or rather, his morality, obviously his ascendancy over his passions. Richardson's attempt to provide, in his man of probity, a positive and fully adequate contradiction of the pessimistic view of man, proclaimed by the powerful voices of such men as Mandeville and Rochester, meets with the usual difficulty of sustaining an image of goodness. His lightly sketched Hickman remains uniformly good, because he rarely appears in well-rounded form to reveal human frailties. However, the authenticity of Hickman's goodness is established in the short scene at Dormer's, where it stands out in contrast to Lovelace's roguery. With more confidence, Richardson bridges the wide gulf between the man of probity and the man of pleasure with the fully-rendered Belford, who, as the reformed rake, shares the viewpoint of both in sequence. In his early life, Belford has been almost as active in vice as Lovelace himself, but as he perfects his reformation, he develops the moral qualities belonging innately to Hickman. Richardson lets Belford himself define the different potential for happiness of the naturally good man and the reformed man.

Belford claims that he is as "completely happy as a man can be, who has enormities to reflect upon," and adds "But how much more happy is he who has no capital and wilful errors to repent of!" (IV: 550)

The sexual discrimination of the Harlowes' society exempts Hickman, the truly virtuous man, from the exploitation that beleaguers his feminine counterpart, Clarissa, the truly virtuous woman. As a man, he pays no exorbitant penalty for upholding the conventional standards, weighted in man's favor. However, the contemporary sexist values damage Hickman's personality severely by persuading women--and especially Anna Howe--to undervalue him because he is diffident, not bold; awkward, not handsome. The two men, who represent opposite kinds of motivation and who hold opposite views of women and marriage, are evaluated falsely by their society. Richardson reverses that estimation, as he dramatizes the thoughts and actions of both. Richardson demonstrates that the extraordinary charm, inventiveness, and vivacity of the handsome Lovelace, the man of pleasure, cannot compensate for his corrupt heart and inordinate cruelty. Through Hickman's dependable, uniform conduct, Richardson recommends as a more fitting "companion for life" the modest man of unappealing exterior, but whose honest heart and unfailing kindness qualify him to be the genuine man of probity.

PART III

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL INEQUALITY ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN CLARISSA

Chapter V Clarissa and Belford

Chapter VI Anna Howe and Hickman

CHAPTER V

CLARISSA AND BELFORD

The virtuous woman, Clarissa, and the "humane libertine" (IV: 103), Belford, hold in common personality traits and aspirations, even though cultural attitudes place a barrier between them, precluding a friendship of equality. Both are obliging and anxious to please, but exacting in imposing on their friends the high standards they hold for themselves. A special aptitude for moral reflection leads them both to preach tirelessly to their friends. But the same proclivity for grave deliberation, linked with a natural generosity, also makes possible Belford's transformation from a scandalous rake to a civilized husband and Clarissa's transfiguration from a model of feminine decorum to a "beatified spirit" (IV: 214).

The cultural barrier between them is grounded in the contemporary notions of Virtue as controlled passion and Vice as unrestrained animal appetites: concepts reflected in Mandeville's definitions. Chastity, then, becomes synonymous with feminine Virtue and is glorified in the symbol of the inaccessible angel, while Vice, as rampant

passion, is exemplified in the profligate rake. The angel and the rake confront each other when Clarissa and Belford meet. And Clarissa's influence on Belford's reformation dramatizes the contemporary belief that the virtuous woman has it in her power to reform the rake. Though Clarissa's angelic qualities supply the divine grace that begins Belford's reformation, they sustain the barrier between the two, as man and woman, that predestines their relationship to one of humble worshipper and guiding angel.

Various clichés incorporated in the relationship of Clarissa and Belford reflect the sexual inequities that assure the radical division between men and women. In the days of their close association after Clarissa escapes, Belford fits into the approved masculine mold of the protector of the weaker woman, but Clarissa inverts the conventional pattern by failing to behave as his amiable feminine subordinate. With her quiet domination of Belford, Clarissa usurps the masculine "right" to direct, and becomes a benevolent directress, dictating her own wishes to the submissive Belford, who carries them out meticulously. Aiming toward a clarification of the nature of the unconventional relationship of Clarissa and Belford, this analysis will begin with a brief review of some contemporary ideas that support the barrier between the angel and the rake. A description follows of the ways in which Clarissa and Belford, as mimetic characters, use their symbiotic association to help each other to become stronger. After tracing

the influence of Clarissa's personality on the several stages of Belford's steady reformation, the study concludes with the thesis that Richardson is presenting, in this relationship manqué, a model of a generous friendship between a man and a woman, overriding the current clichés that both shape and disfigure it.

The prevailing misunderstanding between the sexes that finds extreme expression in the symbols of the angel and the rake is, of course, fostered by the legal concept of woman as man's property. Lovelace and Belford classify women as wives who can be trusted with their husband's honor, or as either birds to be captured or angels to be worshipped. Limited to fewer choices by their disdain for marriage, the rakes are concerned only to consort with the birds or to dream of the angels. And the fleshless angels are as alien to masculine humanity as are the sub-human birds.

Lovelace and Belford have not yet found the chaste woman, the angel. Lovelace declares that libertines

> seldom meet with the stand of virtue in the women whom they attempt. And by the frailty of those they have triumphed over, they judge of all the rest. Importunity and opportunity no woman is proof against . . . This, thou knowest, is a prime article of the rake's creed.(II: 35)

And Belford substantiates Lovelace's findings when he pleads with his friend not to go on with the trial:

> Were I in thy case, and designed to marry . . . I should dread to make further trial, knowing what we know of the sex, for fear of succeeding . . . (II: 158)

As far as the rakes know, the angel is a figment of the imagination, for they have only encountered her in poetry or by hearsay. They are persuaded only by "common bruit" that Clarissa is "the paragon of virtue" (II: 36). And Lovelace's trial of Clarissa will assign her definitely to one of the rake's two categories of women.

The libertine's division of women into two antithetical types is an exaggeration of the same tendency in the society as a whole. The rigid categories are grounded in the eighteenth-century distinctions used by the Restoration poets and by Mandeville to draw a sharp dividing line between man and animal, and between Virtue and Vice. Astell bases her instructions to women on this contemporary concept of human nature. She urges her feminine readers to make their beauty "lasting and permanent . . . by transferring it from a corruptible Body to an immortal Mind" (Astell, Proposal, p. 1). And she blames the tyranny of custom for diminishing most women to vain and unthinking narcissists, using her considerable rhetorical powers to persuade women to abandon their absorbing interest in dress, fashion, and beauty:

> Let us learn to pride ourselves in something more excellent than the invention of a Fashion, and not to entertain such a degrading thought of our own worth, as to imagine our Souls were given us only for the service of our Bodies, and that the best improvement we can make of these, is to attract the Eyes of Men. (Astell, Proposal, p. 304)

Astell asks her readers to strive to distinguish themselves only by what is truly valuable: "that you may not only be as

lovely, but as wise as Angels" (Astell, Proposal, p. 1). And she places much of the blame for the general frivolity of women on the women themselves, when she promises that her Retreat will be

> a Seminary to stock the Kingdom with pious and prudent Ladies, whose good Example . . . will so influence the rest of their Sex, that Women may no longer pass for those little useless and impertinent Animals, which the ill conduct of too many has caus'd 'em to be mistaken for. (Astell, Proposal, p. 17)

Astell's serious definition of the nature of man is based on the accepted duality, but she also perceives the need for a specified degree of cooperation between the two components. Astell states that

> the true and proper Pleasure of Human Nature consists in the exercise of that Dominion which the Soul has over the Body, in governing every Passion and Motion according to Right Reason, by which we must truly pursue the real good of both, it being a mistake . . . to consider either part of us singly, so as to neglect what is due to the other. For if we disregard the Body wholly, we pretend to live like Angels whilst we are but Mortals; and if we prefer or equal it to the Mind we degenerate into Brutes. (Astell, Proposal, p. 137)

Astell believes, with Lovelace and Belford, that women run a greater danger of becoming "those little useless and impertinent Animals" than of pretending "to live like angels." But she censures both choices as equally detrimental to health of Mind and Body, to morality and happiness, as she explains that

> The former indeed is not frequent, it is only to be found amongst a few Scrupulous Persons, who sometimes impose such rigors on the Body, as God never requires at their hands, because they are inconsistent with a Human Frame. The latter is the common and dangerous fault, for the most of us . . . pamper our Bodies till

> they grow resty and ungovernable, and instead of doing Service to the Mind, get Dominion over it. (Astell, Proposal, pp. 137-138)

The barrier is unsurmountable between Clarissa, who behaves as one of those "few Scrupulous Persons" who impose inordinate rigors on the body, and the rakes, who grant their bodies "Dominion" over their minds. However, Astell's understanding of the need for integration of the two sides of man's nature is substantiated by Richardson in Belford's reformation. Richardson brings harmony between the angel and the rake in Belford, the reformed profligate, guided by the chaste woman to virtue and the regulation of his passions.

When Mandeville observes, in "The Origin of Moral Virtue," that men can be easily manipulated by flattery to pursue virtue, he describes the psychological process that has contributed to Clarissa's rigorous perfectionism. Scornful of a falsely optimistic view of man's nature, Mandeville compares the influential Steele's "artful Encomiums" on the excellency of human nature to the effective "Tricks made use of by The Women" to teach children "to be mannerly" (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 53). Mandeville declares that

> These extravagant Praises would by any one, above the Capacity of an Infant, be call'd fulsome Flatteries, and, if you will, abominable Lies, yet Experience teaches us, that by the help of such gross Encomiums, young Misses will be brought to . . . behave themselves womanly much sooner, and with less trouble, than they would without them. (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," pp. 53-54)

Mandeville testifies to the force of the kind of social pressures that work on Clarissa's psyche, when he asserts:

> Thus Sagacious Moralists draw Men like Angels, in hopes that the Pride at least of Some will put 'em upon copying after the beautiful Originals which they are represented to be. (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 52)

Mandeville goes even further and bluntly attributes heroism to "an ungovernable greediness to engross the esteem and admiration of others," claiming that

> the great Recompense . . . for which the most exalted Minds have with so much Alacrity sacrificed their Quiet, Health, sensual Pleasures, and every Inch of themselves, has never been anything else but the Breath of Man, the Aerial Coin of Praise. (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," pp. 54-55)

Mandeville's cynical emphasis points out the power of praise to reinforce the idealized image by which most people, as Richardson understands, shape their characters and govern their conduct. Clarissa's perfectionism is implanted in her by the adulation she receives from her adult mentors and from the people of the surrounding countryside, as she establishes herself--in Belford's retrospective view--as

> a lady whose merit and innocence entitled her to the protection of every man who had the least pretence to the title of a gentleman; and who deserved to be even <u>the public care</u>. (IV: 458)

Richardson dramatizes the power of praise to generate heroism in Clarissa, as a mimetic character, but he illustrates healthier effects of this kind of motivation in his realistic presentation of Belford. In response to Clarissa's flattering acknowledgments of his worth, Belford matures as a person and gradually accomplishes his

reformation. Richardson's characterization of Belford is highly individualized and includes complicated motivations, but it still bears traces of the contemporary stereotypes. As a rake who worships the pure woman, he not only illustrates the tendency, noted by Mandeville, in all human beings to "admire in others" what they "find wanting in themselves" (Mandeville, "Moral Virtue," p. 337), but also the contemporary cliché that those steeped in vice have a natural inclination to admire virtue excessively. The author of The Ladies' Calling tries to persuade women to accept rigid restraints with the notion that evil is irresistibly attracted to good, arguing:

> Vertue and Honour . . . seem in this loose age to be exploded, yet where these things are visible they extort a secret veneration, even from those who think it their concern publicly to deride them. (Ladies' Calling, p. 28)

Moved inordinately by either nobility or distress, Belford, the novel's "man of sensibility," is deeply affected by the first reports he receives of Clarissa's unusual virtue and beauty, idolizing at a distance "this incomparable creature" (II: 158). And Lovelace's first letter, boasting of his involvement with Clarissa, not only attributes the urgency of his love to her "virtue" (I: 144), but also abounds with allusions to her as a supernatural being. She is "this angel of a woman," "a goddess," "The divinity" (I: 145). Lovelace fires the imagination of his impressionable friend by presenting

Clarissa as a being in composition different from the rakes and far beyond their reach.

Lovelace claims to have discarded the juvenile "desire to become a goddess-maker" that he had learned in his early manhood from the poets, and that generated his infatuation with the "quality-jilt" who first deceived him (I: 145). But he is now whipping himself up--and Belford along with him--into a similar fervor, quoting poetry of love and violence. After describing Clarissa's healthy appearance, he calls her with relish "this charming frost-piece" (I: 148), elevating her in Belford's mind, as well as his own, to the angelic category of women. He ponders whether she could have been born a human, but finally cites Mrs. Norton's "maternal offices" as proof "that she came not from above all at once an angel!" (I: 148).

In his glowing description of Clarissa's beauty at the time of her abduction, Lovelace flaunts his awe of her inaccessibility, praising her "native elegance" and comparing her complexion to "The lily and the driven snow" (I: 511). His "faint sketch" of his "charmer" at the moment she unbolts the garden door is elaborated with minute details of "her admirable person," and of her emotions (I: 511), all calculated to excite humble reverence in the susceptible Belford. Vowing he "trod air," and hardly thought himself "a mortal" (I: 512), Lovelace sends Belford racing ahead of him towards the worshipful state of mind that he, Lovelace, the

goddess-maker, both claims and mocks in himself with his vivid hyperboles.

Belford is as vulnerable to pathos as to nobility. And Lovelace plays on his friend's readily accessible pity by dwelling on Clarissa's agitations as she struggles to escape abduction. In the midst of his theatrical report, Lovelace tells Belford, "It would pain thy friendly heart to be told of the infinite trouble I had with her" (I: 512). Lovelace stirs up Belford's sympathies by larding his account with vindictive menaces, searching out pretenses for revenge, threatening the captive Clarissa, "If once thy emperor decrees thy fall, thou shalt greatly fall" (I: 513). Swaggering in extravagant self-praise over his success, he deliberately provokes Belford to come to Clarissa's defense. As Lovelace's passive observer and reflector, Belford enjoys the drama that is unfolding before him, indulging his compelling need to admire and pity, as his emotions keep pace with those of the players. By the time Belford writes, at Lord M.'s request, to urge Lovelace to marry Clarissa, his adoration for Clarissa's angelic qualities has been firmly established by Lovelace's goddess-making process, and his pity excited by Lovelace's sadistic delight in her distresses. From this point on, Belford is Clarissa's humble worshipper and valiant defender.

In his first letter, Belford admits, without approval, that the rakes apply a double standard of honor

in their relations to men and women, reminding Lovelace that

> Neither are gratitude and honour motives to be mentioned in a woman's favour to men such as we are, who consider all those of the sex as fair prize over whom we can obtain a power. For our honour, and honour in the general acceptation of the word, are two things. (II: 158)

However, he supports his case for marriage to Clarissa with an argument based on customs that insure woman's secondary status. Belford contends that Lovelace should marry Clarissa because her dutiful obedience to her parents indicates that she will make a dutiful wife. Crediting Clarissa with less rebellion against her parents than she shows, he accepts, without criticism, custom's decree that the daughter obey the parental will, even though the father's demands may be unjust, arguing:

> Has she not demonstrated that even the highest provocations were not sufficient to warp her from her duty to her parents, though a native, and . . . an originally involuntary duty, because native? And is not this a charming earnest that she will sacredly observe a still higher duty into which she proposes to enter, when she does enter, by plighted vows and entirely as a volunteer? (I: 160)

Belford assumes that the daughter who submits respectfully to the unjust father will feel a similar obligation to preserve her morality--and thereby her husband's "honour" (II: 36)--even if married to an unfaithful husband. Belford, as Richardson's spokesman, does not question the justice of masculine authority within British social institutions. He does not challenge woman's position as the possession, first of father, then of husband, but he is

compelled by his compassionate sense of justice to defend women from masculine abuses of that authority.

Belford's meeting with Clarissa initiates profound changes in his attitudes towards himself and towards women, revealing his capacity to learn from experience, to modify both his thinking and his behavior. His meeting with her corroborates the feelings that Lovelace's story has already generated in him. He sees what he expects to see, but her presence surpasses what he has been told. Conceding that she is "a perfect beauty," he is more impressed with "her conversation," which convinces him "that there is not of her age a finer woman in the world, as to her understanding" (II: 243). And the pity that comes easily to him, and that has already been aroused in her behalf, comes to the surface when he sees in "a sweet smile darting through the cloud that overspread her fair face . . . more apprehensions and grief at her heart than she cared to express!" (II: 243).

At this first meeting, Belford perceives Clarissa as a beautiful innocent to be pitied, but he also recognizes her as a thinking individual. This is his first experience with an intelligent woman, and perplexed, he concludes that she is not typical of her sex. The other libertines in the party are equally awed and "swear it would be a million of pities to ruin a woman in whose fall none but devils can rejoice" (II: 244). Judging by the women they know at the Sinclair establishment, and unable to reconcile "understanding" with society's view of woman, Belford and his

fellow-rakes elevate Clarissa above the human level and place her with the angels. Belford sees her as "all mind" (II: 243), assuming that because she has a mind, she has no body.

Belford declares that he is "ready to regret such an angel of a woman should even marry" (II: 243), and asks with his usual argumentative curiosity:

> Why should such an angel of a woman be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? . . . For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to mere bodies? (II: 243-244)

And he assures Lovelace that

> In every real excellence she surpasses all her sex. But in the article thou seekest to subdue her for, a mere sensualist, a Partington, a Horton, a Martin, would make a sensualist a thousand times happier than she either will or can.(II: 244)

Belford's statement places the angel, Clarissa, and the birds, the prostitutes, in two distinct categories. His outlook is determined by the contemporary cultural notions that brand the sexual instincts as a shameful part of life, not to be acknowledged by a "truly admirable" lady (II: 244), and clearly separating the animal side of human nature from its "real excellence."

In his letter of June 6, a week before the rape, Belford again emphasizes the differences between the sensualists and the pure and modest Clarissa. He begs Lovelace not to give Clarissa up to "the abandoned people in the house," assuring him that "the sagacious fair one," if she "had not so resolutely held those women at a

distance," would have "in a week's time" seen through them and "would have fled their house as a place infected" (II: 487). He instructs Lovelace:

> Make a toy, if thou wilt, of principle with respect to such of the sex as regard it as a toy; but rob not an angel of those purities, which, in her own opinion, constitute the difference between angelic and brutal qualities.(II: 487)

Belford defends the distinction he makes between Clarissa and the nymphs with an explicit statement of his culture's view of man's animal instincts as a degrading part of his nature that should be suppressed. With his characteristic over-statement, Belford insists that

> With regard to the passion itself, the less of soul in either man or woman, the more sensual are they . . . The very appetite is body: and when we ourselves are most fools, and crazed, then are we most eager in these pursuits. See what fools this passion makes the wisest men! What snivellers, what dotards, when they suffer themselves to be run away with by it! (II: 487)

Extreme manifestations of virtue and vice hold a hypnotic fascination for Belford. He is both overwhelmed with awe at Clarissa's extraordinary virtue and nobility and with horror at the corruption of the prostitutes. When much later, in retrospect, he censures "his false notions of honour to his friend" (IV: 458) that kept him from preventing Lovelace's trial of Clarissa, he defends his complicity in the crime, and alleviates his guilt, on the grounds that he had no concrete proof that Clarissa was different from the nymphs. In fact, he admits that, before meeting Clarissa, he had assumed that

> Her choice of this gay fellow, upon some hazardous terms (thought I), is a confirmation that her wit wants that maturity which only years and experience can give it.(II: 483)

In his use of this particular hindsight to defend himself, he demonstrates that, even after his acceptance of Clarissa as a unique personality, he is unable to assume the same potentiality in the nymphs or to absolve them from much of the responsibility for their own corruption. In self-vindication, he distinguishes

> between an irreparable injury intended to a CLARISSA, and to one designed to such of the sex as contribute by their weakness and indiscretion to their own fall, and thereby entitle themselves to a large share of the guilt which accompanies the crime.(IV: 458)

Belford cannot escape his entrenched belief that women fall into the two categories of those who indulge their passions in a libertine way of life, and those who suppress them in order to become wives or angels.

When Clarissa and Belford meet at the collation, Clarissa comments to Anna Howe on Belford's "easy manner of expressing his sentiments" and on his "delight in a logical way of argumentation" (II: 229). She notices that he is "no equal" to Lovelace in wit and vivacity, but that he "visibly" has the advantage of Belton, when the two flaunt their debating skills in banter. Clarissa surmises that Belford's eagerness to take "the worst side of the argument" indicates that he thinks he can get the best of Belton, and she compares Belford to "a character in Milton," who "could make the worst appear/The better reason, to perplex and

dash/Maturest counsels; . . . yet he pleased the ear (II: 229). With this comparison, Clarissa makes the point for Richardson that Belford's talents for debate are not yet being put to mature uses, suggesting that his extreme position in regard to the separation of mind and body requires modification.

Convinced of Clarissa'a nobility but uncertain of the impression he has made on her by exposing his pretensions, Belford declares, when the evening is over, that he would give "a thousand pounds . . . for the good opinion of this single lady--to be thought tolerably of, and not quite unworthy of her conversation" (II: 238). The astute Lovelace rightly discerns that fear of her disapproval is the emotion behind Belford's anxious curiosity, and after hearing Clarissa's negative reaction to his friends, Lovelace delights in informing Belford that "Thy thousand pounds, Jack, is all thy own: for most heartily does she dislike ye all--thee as much as any of the rest" (II: 238). Characteristically, Belford accepts Clarissa's scornful assessment of him without resentment, sending to Lovelace a repetition of his "earnest prayers" in her behalf, "notwithstanding her dislike of me" (II: 245).

Though Belford does not see Clarissa again before the rape, he continues to implore Lovelace to do "justice to her extraordinary merit" (II: 319). He adheres stubbornly to his original belief that Clarissa and Lovelace love each

other. In his first letter after meeting Clarissa, he tells Lovelace:

> But we cannot think it reasonable that you should punish an innocent creature, who loves you so well, and who is in your protection, and has suffered so much for you, for the faults of her relations.(II: 244)

And in his impassioned letter before the fire, when he realizes that Lovelace is "upon the crisis" (II: 482), he argues that "the case of this fine woman" is different from "that of any other whom thou hast seduced! . . . thou certainly loving her, as far as thou art capable of love, above all her sex" (II: 483).

Belford's predominant passions are for justice and sympathy, and Clarissa brings both into play. After the rape, he demonstrates his longing to protect her, when he surmises that he could use his recent inheritance to entice Lovelace--if Lovelace were "a money-lover" (III: 198)--to permit him "the honour of being this fatherless lady's father, as it is called, at the altar" (III: 198). In this wish, Belford displays the elemental human response to the pathos of the orphan. From the beginning the fair-minded Belford has been inordinately moved by the injustice in Clarissa's unrewarded obedience, admiring her strict "performance of all her even unrewarded duties to the most unreasonable of fathers" (II: 319). Touched by the stereotyped situation of the meritous daughter expelled from her father's house, Belford blames Lovelace severely for "forming schemes to ruin her" at the very time "she is

labouring under a father's curse laid upon her by thy means" (II: 319). Clarissa is helpless and abandoned, and is therefore an object of pity. She is dutiful and persecuted, and therefore is a victim of injustice.

The death of Belford's uncle coincides with Clarissa's shocking violation, and Belford is sobered by both painful experiences. After witnessing his uncle's remorse for his past sins (less villainous than his own), Belford vows to reform. Learning of the vicious role played by Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs as assistants in Clarissa's outrage, Belford is further revolted by libertine depravity. He is deeply disturbed by his thoughts of Mrs. Sinclair, the nymphs, and the brothel as corrupting influences lying in wait for the innocence that Clarissa represents. When informed of Clarissa's arrest, he rushes first to "the wicked woman's," suspecting a ruse designed to "mortify" Clarissa into Lovelace's measures," and he expostulates:

> Little knows the public what villainies are committed in these abominable houses, upon innocent creatures drawn into their snares (III: 426).

Belford's personal relationship with Clarissa begins in conjunction with his serious reformation at the time of her arrest.

As Belford describes, for Lovelace's betterment, the indignities Clarissa is suffering at Rowland's from the insolence of Sally Martin and Polly Horton, he brings out the contrast between the rudeness of the nymphs and the dignified forbearance of Clarissa. In their callous remarks, Sally and

Polly reveal the depravity of their lives, claiming to be happy at Mrs. Sinclair's, while from Belford's standpoint, Clarissa reveals a contrasting native nobility, facing her mortifying hardship with honesty and humility. Belford frequently interrupts his account to impress on Lovelace the difference between the two categories of women: the virtuous and the depraved. His primary motive is to emphasize for Lovelace the enormity of Clarissa's indignity and suffering, but he is also bent on conveying the message that such humiliations should not be inflicted on a woman of her quality. At the point in his story where the sheriff's officers carry Clarissa off in a chair, Belford inserts the comment: "Only, Lovelace, remember, all this was to a Clarissa!!" (IIIL 428). When Sally owns that now she has "the triumph of her heart over this haughty beauty, who kept them all at such distance in their own house!" (III: 430), Belford exclaims: "What thinkest thou, Lovelace, of this! This wretch's triumph was over a Clarissa!" (III: 430). When Clarissa cannot eat, but eagerly drinks a glass of water brought to her, Belford reports: "The divine Clarissa, Lovelace--reduced to rejoice for a cup of cold water!"

Clarissa is also struggling to maintain the distinction between herself and the nymphs. Her hysterical refusal to admit any man to her presence manifests her determination not to be used by the Sinclair establishment. She is as frightened of Mrs. Sinclair as of Lovelace, because she is fully aware that the same fate awaits her

in the hands of either. In desperate self-defense, Clarissa has the courage to threaten Sally:

> if this aunt of yours, this Mrs. Sinclair; or this man, this Mr. Lovelace, comes near me; or if I am carried to the horrid house (for that, I suppose, is the design of this new outrage) . . . Look, I charge you, to the consequence! (III: 429)

The ignominy of being classed as a prostitute or kept woman, and not as "the most excellent of women" (III: 425) has dealt a fatal blow to Clarissa's identity. On finding her, Belford perceives at once the pernicious effects of her demeaning experience on her psyche, foreseeing that "the poor lady" will not be long either Lovelace's sport, "or the sport of fortune" (III: 425). Her vitality threatened by her shattered self-image, Clarissa forbids all men her presence, to obviate any possibility of degrading inferences.

Richardson defines Belford's role as Clarissa's deliverer, when he contrasts the sincere motives of the genuinely compassionate man, Belford, with the ulterior motives of the feigned compassionate man, who offers to release Clarissa from her prison. Sally and Polly bring Clarissa a proposition from a "compassionate" (III: 436) gentleman

> who saw you taken, and was so much moved for you, Miss Harlowe, that he would gladly advance the money for you, and leave you to pay it when you can. (III: 434)

Belford's prime motive is to rescue Clarissa from any association with the nymphs, while the "compassionate" gentleman's goal is to establish her as one of them. However,

in this incident, Richardson also suggests that Belford needs to learn that the customer must share with the nymphs responsibility for their degradation. The emotional Belford absorbs sponge-like Clarissa's horror at being classified with the nymphs, and when the "compassionate" stranger is introduced, he blames the women exclusively, focusing on the difference between the incorruptible Clarissa and those who seek to corrupt her:

> See, Lovelace, what cursed devils these are! This is the way, we know, that many an innocent heart is thrown upon keeping, and then upon the town. But for these wretches thus to go to work with such an angel as this! (III: 434)

Belford deplores Sally's insolence but not the pathos of the seduced woman who has no redress, when she advises Clarissa to relieve her grief in tears, "For once I too wept mightily" (III: 439). Belford infers that Sally's decline into prostitution is entirely her own fault for not resisting Lovelace's charming wiles. And he resents her readiness to classify the principled Clarissa with the disreputable women, who have no inclination to withstand corruption, when she defends Lovelace as a "man of honour" even though "he will take advantage where he can, of <u>us</u> silly credulous women" (III: 441). Attributing to Clarissa the same high value she places on herself, Belford experiences along with her "the anguish she must feel on being comprehended in the US" (III: 441). However, Belford is not completely devoid of sympathy for the nymphs, for he admits to Lovelace, "The

wretched women, it must be owned, act but in their profession; a profession thou hast been the principal of reducing these two to act in" (III: 442). And Belford's most urgent concern is to deliver Clarissa from the depravity of the profession.

Belford's "long attendance" on his dying uncle (III: 435) has made him conscious of the punishment he deserves for his past debauchery. But he speculates that Clarissa's courage and nobility come from her knowledge that "the evils she contends with" are "not deserved, and that, since "this world" is but a "state of probation," she is assured of an ample reward in "another and better" one (III: 435). By rescuing Clarissa, he can compensate in part for his past violations of other women. As the plundering rake, he has often been the oppressor of helpless lost creatures, and he suffers with an oppressor's guilt. As the long-term victim of Lovelace's ridicule, he sees himself also as an injured innocent, and he suffers with her for his own undeserved mortification. In her brave submission to undeserved abuse, Clarissa functions for Belford as a scapegoat for the punishment he deserves and does not get, and as a fellow-sufferer for punishment received and not deserved. During the scenes at Rowland's, Clarissa is a Christ-like figure, "despised and rejected," and bearing her afflictions patiently. In a religious sense, she becomes a figure of redemption for Belford, bearing for him undeservedly the punishments he deserves.

Clarissa's hysteria increases in violence, causing her to object even to the apothecary's visit, "because he was a MAN" (III: 443). By the time Belford applies for an audience with her, he is under "shocking disadvantages" and laments the additional handicap of being Lovelace's "friend and intimate" (III: 443). However, Belford overcomes her hysteria and wins her confidence by falling on his knees and beseeching her to permit him to release her "from this damned house" and out of the power of "the accursed woman" (III: 447). Characteristically, he anticipates her sensibilities as he introduces himself, referring tactfully to her foremost distinction, now literally in question, telling her: "I ever was a worshipper of your virtues, and an advocate for you" (III: 447). Having attempted to restore her pride in her virtue, he returns her to the liberties of her childhood, assuring her, "You are absolutely free, and your own mistress" (III: 447). He answers her rebuff, "To the friend of my destroyer will I not owe an obligation," with the reasonable explanation that she has been "detained for a debt" she does "not owe" (III: 447). He then reverses the obligation by declaring that she will oblige him "inexpressibly" if she commands him to do her "either service or pleasure" (III: 448). Thus, he turns the reins of leadership over to her at once, and she accepts them with alacrity. From a mood of utter dejection, she becomes even animated as she gives him careful directions on the

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even when in the "bitterness" of her spirit, she "most vehemently" exclaims against "the undeserved usage" she has "met with from him," she is able to say:

> Give him, good God! repentance and amendment; . . . And, in Thine own good time, receive to Thy mercy the poor wretch who had none on me! (III: pp. 453-454)

Thus, Clarissa establishes for Belford the substance of the new self-image he is helping her to construct. She can regain some sense of self-worth, if she can visualize herself as the magnanimous injured innocent. This instance of her generosity in praying for the redemption of her destroyer moves Belford to tears. He must take out his handkerchief and exclaim "What an angel is this!" (III: 454).

Reacting with sensitivity and shrewdness to every nuance of mood in Clarissa, Belford gains her confidence. She gives him without hesitation the keys to her trunks at Mrs. Sinclair's, she leans on his offered arm as he escorts her to the waiting chair, and she apologizes for her rudeness and original suspicions of him. He graciously responds by reinforcing the new self-image she has suggested to him, telling her that he knows enough of her story to convince him

> that there is not such purity and honour in any woman upon earth; nor any one that has been so barbarously treated. (III: 455)

Hearing someone from the outside corroborate the virtue she knows she still upholds, and looking forward to being her own mistress again, Clarissa exhibits a new

determination. Forced to discard her lifelong image of herself as a model of feminine decorum and chastity, she must now rely on her subjective knowledge of her own innocence. No longer torn between the world's interpretation of virtue and her own, she can dispense with concern over reputation and appearances and know the comfort of personal integrity. With refreshing honesty, she greets Mrs. Smith frankly with the news that she has been in prison, "Arrested for debts I owe not!" (III: 455).

Clarissa's freedom from all pretensions astounds Belford, for he is still swayed by worldly values, admitting that he hesitates to call in his friend Doctor H. at Rowland's, because he is "ashamed to be seen" in such "a den," by "a man of his reputation" (III: 449). Impressed by Clarissa's unvarnished exposure of her situation, he ponders:

> But dost thou observe . . . what an uncommon openness of heart reigns in this lady? She had been in prison, she said before a stranger in the shop, and before the maid-servant: . . . The disgrace she cannot hide from herself herself, . . . she is not solicitous to conceal from the world. (III: 456)

Trying to understand her motives, Belford remembers her prayer for her destroyer, and decides that "though she can retain so much proper resentment," revenge has "very little sway in her mind" (III: 456). Belford's absorbing concern with justice informs him that vengeance is due her, however, and contemplating the imbalance of rewards and punishments in her particular case, he concludes that there must be "such

a thing as future remuneration" (III: 456). Fear of a remorse like his uncle's gives emotional reinforcement to these rational conclusions, and Belford makes a firm decision to turn his back on his libertine practices and to look for a wife of merit.

The approbation of a virtuous person can convince him of his own capacity for goodness, and from Clarissa, he can hope to absorb through association the virtue he now craves. Much of his future self-respect and impetus to reform hinges on the self-confidence she can give him, and he fears her disapproval as strongly as he longs for the healing power of her benevolent acceptance of him. Admittedly "afraid of disobliging, or incurring a censure" from her (III: 465), he behaves towards her with humble reverence. Clarissa rewards him for his compliance and humility by reinforcing his new sense of a virtue superior to Lovelace's, comparing him favorably with his cruel friend in her comment: "I hope . . . I talk to a man who has a better heart" (III: 465). In return, Belford gives Clarissa the two kinds of support she needs: worship of her nobility and sympathy for her undeserved injuries. To her complaint that she has received barbarous treatment that she has not deserved, Belford responds instinctively with confirmation of her unquestioned superiority: "I told her I knew enough to be convinced that she had the merit of a saint, and the purity of an angel" (III: 460). His natural

inclination to exaggerate raises her above the ordinary to an angelic spiritual realm, where she feels at home. Her pride in setting an example for others may be crushed, so that she protests, "No flighty compliments! No undue attributes, sir!" But her innermost sense of high purpose and self-worth welcomes the corroboration of Belford's fervent assertion of her superhuman goodness.

Clarissa is also indebted to Belford for returning her to a generous earthly environment, to "an honest house, with considerate and kind-hearted people" (III: 460). Clarissa "enumerates her comforts" to Anna Howe, describing the safety which she could not be enjoying without the protection Belford is voluntarily providing:

> I am no prisoner now in a vile house. I am not now in the power of that man's devices. . . . One of his intimates is become my warm friend, and engages to keep him from me . . . I am among honest people, I have all my clothes and effects restored to me . . . and methinks, at times, I find myself superior to my calamities. (III: 479)

As a warm friendship develops between them, Belford serves as Clarissa's masculine protector, performing all of the practical tasks that are essential to her well-being. Clarissa is obliged to Belford for his deliverance of her, his psychological support, and now for his protection. But suffering keenly under the guilt of her failure to honor her filial obligation, Clarissa seeks independence from all obligation. By exposing a complimentary need in himself to oblige others, Belford indicates to Clarissa that she may

accept his kindnesses without liability, thus evening the immediate score. However, it is imperative for Clarissa to pay her larger moral debt to him for his support and protection, and this she does by pressing continuously for his reformation.

After Belford returns from Belton's deathbed with his normal seriousness intensified, he is profoundly affected by Clarissa's forgiving attitude towards her parents. She tells Belford that he must not blame them for their harsh treatment of her, for they are justified in "resenting the rashness of a child from whose education they had reason to expect better fruits" (III: 500). Belford is overwhelmed when she extends her generosity to Lovelace, as well, praying that her "dear earthly father" will set her the example that her "heavenly one"

> has already set us all; and, by forgiving his fallen daughter, teach her to forgive the man, who then, I hope, will not have destroyed my eternal prospects, as he has my temporal! (III: 501)

This magnanimous supplication marks the turning point that leads to Belford's permanent reformation. Moved, as always, by Clarissa's need for a father, and unable to "stand such sublime generosity of soul in so young a creature, he succumbs absolutely to her power, involuntarily bending a knee and saying:

> Methinks . . . I have before me an angel indeed. I can hardly forbear prostration, and to beg your influence to draw me after you to the world you are aspiring to! (III: 501)

Revealing his compulsive need to comply and obey, and giving her wishes unquestioned precedence over those of his friend, he asks that she make him "in some small instances, serviceable to you," adding, "Any office to be employed in to serve you, absolutely independent of my friend's wishes" (III: 501). In abject submission to her, he declares, "My life and my fortune . . . are devoted to your service" (III: 501).

At this point, the practical Belford offers the first concrete service that comes to mind, dropping a bank note behind her chair. Clarissa refuses absolutely to accept such a favor. Money means obligation: the duty she will not owe again to anyone. Belford's eagerness to please--now especially to please this angelic presence--causes him to be even more awkward than usual (as Lovelace points out later). However, "the purity" of his "intentions," supplies the tactful Belford with a diplomatic excuse for his clumsy gesture. He explains to Clarissa that the offer is made from his concern "that the want of the conveniences she was used to abound in, might affect and disturb her in the divine course she was in" (III: 502).

Belford's extravagant adulation is the substitute Clarissa needs for the loss of her character "in the eye of the world" (III: 374), and to confirm her growing confidence in her inner virtue: the belief that sustained her so well in the penknife scene. She hastens to assure him

that she "cannot now be easily put out of" her "present course" (III: 503). Extolling her victory over those who harassed her with the arrest, she declares:

> But I presume to hope that I have a mind that cannot be debased, in essential instances, by temporal calamities. Little do those poor wretches know of the force of innate principles (forgive my own implied vanity . . .), who imagine that a prison, or penury, can bring a right-turned mind to be guilty of a wilful baseness, in order to avoid such short-lived evils.(III: 503)

Belford interprets the bravery of these words and the dignity of her carriage as showing "her to be more of soul than of body at that instant" (III: 503). And he tells Lovelace "No wonder a virtue so solidly founded could baffle all thy arts" (III: 503). Overwhelmed by her eloquence and magnanimity, Belford is irrevocably dedicated from this moment to both Clarissa and reformation.

Ascribing to himself a special understanding of Clarissa, Belford says of the doctors who are depending on her youth and on time to bring her back to health, "They know not half of her nobleness of mind, nor how deeply she has been wounded" (IV: 10). Indulging his propensity for looking back into the past and ahead into the future, and his bias for the melancholy view, Belford sees little hope for alleviation of

> the woes of such a mind: for, having been bent upon doing good, and upon reclaiming a libertine whom she loved, she is disappointed in all her darling views, and will never be able, I fear, to look up with satisfaction enough in herself to make life desirable to her.(IV: 10-11)

Belford's insight into the nature of Clarissa's disappointments lays a romantic stress on her dream of reclaiming the talented Lovelace, but Clarissa herself, in a number of letters, confirms his intuitive assumption. By dedicating himself to her and reform, Belford offers Clarissa a recompense for her frustrated dream.

In her letter informing Lady Betty Lawrence of Lovelace's impostures and forgeries, Clarissa includes among her motives for initially receiving Lovelace's addresses the "presumptuous one" of hoping that she might be

> an humble means in the hand of Providence to reclaim a man who had, as I thought, good sense enough at bottom to be reclaimed; or at least gratitude enough to acknowledge the intended obligation, whether the generous hope were to succeed or not. (III: 335)

In this confession, Clarissa states explicitly her view that such a feminine influence for good places upon the man an obligation for which he should be grateful. But the obligation is not all on one side, for in the early days at Harlowe Place, when tempted to accept Lovelace's protection, Clarissa admits that a "secret pleasure" intruded itself when she thought of reclaiming "such a man to the paths of virtue" (I: 200). Much later when she reviews for Anna Howe her reasons for refusing Lovelace, she still gives major importance to her ambition that she, the good woman, might reform a man who loved her. She confesses to the importance to her of that dream in her sad question, "but now, what hope is there left for this my <u>prime</u> hope?"

(III: 520). In her control of Belford's reformation, Clarissa is given the opportunity, denied her in Lovelace's treachery, to fulfill her dream of saving a worthy man from perdition: to play the part of the good woman who reforms the rake.

Clarissa and Belford are mutually obligated in his reformation. By accepting her guidance for his spiritual salvation, Belford restores some of Clarissa's belief in herself as the conventional good woman. But by putting her trust in him, Clarissa not only bolsters Belford's determination to reform, but also further his personal development toward a mature self-reliance. Clarissa contributes substantially to Belford's belief in himself when she makes her two important requests of him: that he assist in ordering the correspondence that will tell her "tragical story" (IV: 46) to the world, and that he serve as the executor of her will.

The wording of her formal request that he be her executor touches precisely the immediate needs of Belford, who longs to serve her in a unique way and who is struggling to be his own man. She tells him:

> If then I request if of the only person possessed of materials that will enable him to do my character justice; And who has courage, independence, and ability to oblige me; To be the protector of my memory . . . ; And to be my executor; . . . And if I leave it to him to do the whole in his own way, manner, and time; . . . I presume to hope that this my second request may be granted. (IV: 78-79)

Clarissa assigns Belford full responsibility for the charge, putting her complete trust in him, and heightening his sense of usefulness. Belford accepts most cheerfully "the sacred office," pledging "the literal performance" of every article of her will.

Clarissa makes clear what recompence Belford may expect for his devoted service in editing her story. In so doing, she gives importance to those assets that Belford has secretly valued in himself, but that Lovelace has openly mocked: his compassion and his resolution to reform. Clarissa neutralizes her obligation to him in her prophetic closing:

> And who knows, but that Mr. Belford, who already from a principle of humanity, is touched at my misfortunes, when he comes to revolve the whole story, placed before him in one strong light . . . who knows but that, from a still higher principle, he may so regulate his future actions as to find his own reward in the everlasting welfare which is wished him by his
>
> Obliged servant
> CLARISSA HARLOWE?(IV: 79)

And Belford assures her that she has already been instrumental in furthering his reformation, for it is impossible "to be a witness" of her "piety, equanimity, and other virtues," and not aspire to emulate her (IV: 79-80).

When Belford returns to town, depressed and horrified by Belton's death, he is drawn mysteriously to Clarissa for guidance, and he finds in her the reassurance he anticipates. His new saintly guide gives him permission to release the emotions that his former leader inhibited

with scorn and lampoons. Instead, Clarissa commends him for the compassion that Lovelace has always ridiculed as "thy shriek-owl note" (IV: 123), and sympathizes with the gloom he feels over the grave matters he has witnessed. She expresses approval of his charitable deeds:

> You have been performing for your poor friend a kind last office. 'Tis not long ago since you did the same for a near relation. Is it not a little hard upon you that these troubles should fall so thick to your lot? But they are charitable offices: and it is a praise to your humanity that poor dying people know not where to choose so well.(IV: 211)

Jubilantly confident over Clarissa's authoritative sanction of his softer emotions, Belford recognizes in himself a new freedom from concern over Lovelace's criticism or praise. He takes delight in informing Lovelace that Clarissa's allegorical letter was indeed a strategem to get her persecutor out of town, and that Lovelace has been outwitted. And he is not ashamed to disclose, in extravagant terms, Clarissa's inspirational power over him:

> for I could not help telling her, that every time I saw her I more and more considered her as a beatified spirit; and as one sent from Heaven to draw me after her out of the miry gulf in which I had been so long immersed.(IV: 214)

Foreseeing Lovelace's ridicule for his fanciful thoughts of Clarissa's part in his reform, Belford maintains his new fearless stand before his friend's scoffs, telling Lovelace, "Laugh at me if you wilt" (IV: 214). Lovelace responds, as expected, with cutting ridicule, but Belford is too thoroughly convinced of Clarissa's faith in his capacity

to reform to be deterred from his purpose by his friend's mirth.

Totally immersed in the affecting scenes before him, as Clarissa approaches death, Belford is more concerned with profiting by the example of her heroism than with resisting, as before, the ridicule of his friend. Belford attributes Clarissa's strength of mind, as she declines, to "the consolations" of the "religious rectitude" which has guided all her actions, preventing "wilful errors" (IV: 258). He finds confirmation for his own inner worth by recognizing that the principle she has followed is the same one that has governed his conduct even at the height of his debauchery, that is, "rather to choose to be a sufferer than an aggressor!" (IV: 258). Belford does not defend himself as formerly in his letters to Lovelace, but instead, describes Clarissa's heroism, saying, "Surely, what I shall send thee . . . will affect thee" (IV: 259), hoping to make of his friend a proselyte.

As Clarissa prepares for death, her primary concern is to find justification for exonerating her friends, so that she can rely on reason to suppress her resentments, taking on herself the blame they deserve, and so becoming their redeemer. Clarissa subverts the reasoning process with rationalizations, and the rational side of Belford's nature is helpless to rescue her from her casuistry. However, the emotional side of his nature imposes on his

perceptions the same blind spots that cloud Clarissa's vision, and he accepts her misguided magnanimity as evidence of her true excellence, declaring:

> This, Lovelace, is the woman whose life thou hast curtailed in the blossom of it! How many opportunities must thou have had of admiring her inestimable worth, yet couldst have thy senses so much absorbed in the WOMAN in her charming person, as to be blind to the ANGEL that shines out in such full glory in her mind! Indeed, I have ever thought myself, when blest with her conversation, in the company of a real angel: and I am sure it would be impossible for me, were she to be as beautiful, and as crimsomed over with health as I have seen her, to have the least thought of sex, when I heard her talk. (IV: 248)

As an angel, Clarissa is as inaccessible to Lovelace as to Belford, but her surprising conversation (her mind) has made her equally inaccessible to Belford as a WOMAN. In summing up her merits in the eighteenth-century cliché: "she may be said to have been not only an ornament to her sex but to human nature" (IV: 348), Belford acknowledges Clarissa to be human as well as WOMAN; and therefore, a creature more like himself than the "wrens," who were his feminine companions before he knew her. The hope is that he will be able to accept the clever conversation (mind) of his future wife, Charlotte Montague, as a natural attribute of her nature of a WOMAN.

In her posthumous letter to Belford, Clarissa bequeathes to him her place in the world as an espouser of virtue. She tells him:

> having the presumption to think that a useful member is lost to society by means of the unhappy step which has brought my life so soon to its period, let me hope that

> I may be a humble instrument, in the hands of Providence, to reform a man of your abilities; and then I shall think that loss will be more abundantly repaired to the world . . . (IV: 355)

Thus she discharges her debt to him, classing him with herself, while assuring him of his value in his own right as a man of abilities worth saving.

In their brief association, Clarissa and Belford create for each other an atmosphere of generosity that allows Clarissa to express her natural magnanimity and Belford to accomplish his reformation. Both are generous people, preferring to be sufferers rather than aggressors. Though both wish to govern others by obliging, Clarissa is the more dominant personality and maintains control of the relationship, while Belford submits willingly. Under her guidance, Belford develops from an awkward and pedantic over-doer into a self-reliant man, with regulated sensibilities. The tasks she assigns him teach him to channel his passions for argument and justice into responsible activities, useful to others. In turn, Belford, as Clarissa's masculine protector, secures the peaceful environment that frees her to perform the elegant pageantry of her heroic death.

CHAPTER VI

ANNA HOWE AND HICKMAN

In Hickman's courtship of Anna Howe, Richardson explores the contrast, sanctioned by eighteenth-century custom, between masculine behavior in courtship and after marriage. If Anna Howe accepts Hickman's homage in courtship, she must expect his domination after marriage, and her overbearing treatment of her docile suitor indicates her refusal to abide by the traditional bargain. This unorthodox relationship gives concrete form to two prominent concerns of the contemporary conduct manuals. Anna Howe's unseemly behavior presents the problem of the aggressive woman who exploits the masculine deference granted her in courtship and usurps the masculine right to govern her after marriage. And Hickman's docility raises the issue of the inferior husband who may be foisted on the superior "learned lady." Though Anna Howe is often cruel in her rudeness, Richardson shows her to be protecting herself from the belief, engendered in her by her culture, that all husbands, even a mild Hickman, will take full advantage of his masculine prerogatives in marriage.

Anna Howe reflects the teachings of her elders and her own observations of the marriages around her when she complains to Clarissa that they can expect "to be courted as princesses for a few weeks, in order to be treated as slaves" for the rest of their lives (I: 131). Astell, the feminist, deplores the feigned idolatry men offer to women in courtship, and censures the women as severely for taking the flattery and promises seriously:

> She must be a Fool with a Witness, Who can believe a Man, Proud and Vain as he is, will lay his boasted Authority, the Dignity and Prerogative of his Sex, one Moment at her Feet, but in Prospect of taking it up again to more Advantage; he may call himself her Slave a few days, but it is only in order to make her his all the rest of his Life. (Astell, Reflections, p. 30)

Warned by her worldly advisors that "the Passion of the Lover" is soon "Exchang'd for the Indifference of a Husband" (Astell, Proposal, p. 42), Anna Howe disguises her fear of marital domination under humor, but frankly anticipates her acceptance of Hickman as an exchange of power:

> If ever I should be persuaded to have him, I shall watch how the obsequious lover goes off; and how the imperative husband comes upon him; in short, how he ascends, and how I descend, in the matrimonial wheel, never to take my turn again, but by fits and starts, like the feeble struggles of a sinking State for its dying liberty. (I: 340)

This study of the relationship of Anna Howe and Hickman begins with a demonstration of how closely these contemporary issues are woven into the courtship of two basically generous people.

Though attesting to the conspicuous need for social reforms, the uneasy courtship of Anna Howe and Hickman also provides Richardson with a vehicle for examining the interaction between two mimetic characters. As if symbolizing their inherent differences in his treatment of them, Richardson presents a fully-illuminated picture of the turbulent Anna Howe, but offers only a dimly-lit portrait of the mild-mannered Hickman. Some of the underlying causes of Anna Howe's eccentricities emerge from descriptions of her early home life and experiences, but Hickman's self-effacing personality has developed before the novel opens, and no information is supplied about his early life. The steady Hickman changes little in the course of the novel, but in time, Anna Howe succeeds in eradicating her scorn for him and replacing it with a recognition of his worth. This analysis traces the steps in the gradual modification of Anna Howe's attitude toward her devoted suitor, and searches for signs that the unpromising courtship can culminate in the happy marriage Richardson wishes to affirm.

The resolution of the relationship of Anna Howe and Hickman in a successful marriage, though given only a brief notice in the Postscript, is of prime importance to the meaning of the novel. Their marriage constitutes the major positive support for Richardson's humane values to counterbalance his powerful denunciation of libertine behavior. The ability of Anna Howe and Hickman to form a civilized

relationship based on good will depends on the moderation of extreme tendencies in both. In representing this accomplishment, their marriage goes far beyond an affirmation of chastity and monogamy. The implication is that Anna Howe's impetuosity will be quelled by Hickman's steady composure and that his diffidence will be dispelled by her spirited management. When Anna Howe's reason gains control of her fervent passions, and when the apprehensions of both parties are allayed by a mutual trust, they will achieve a balance of obligations and concessions in a marriage where the generosity of both can be expressed without fear of scorn or imposition.

The springboard for Richardson's investigation of a lasting relationship between a dominating woman and an obsequious suitor is the contemporary custom that grants the woman "her day" in courtship and the man "his day" in marriage. In his censure of the hypocrisy of the absurd rituals, Richardson has the support of Astell, who warns her feminine readers of the mercenary motives of men, charging that "under the Pretense of Honouring and paying a mighty Deference to the Ladies," the suitors are, in fact, calling their betrotheds

> Fools . . . to their Faces; For what are all the fine Speeches and Submissions that are made, but an abusing them in a well-bred Way? (Astell, Reflections, p. 30)

Anna Howe arms herself against appearing the fool and becoming the dupe of potentially devious men by using offense

as the most effective defense. She must flaunt her power over Hickman to prove to him that she does not take his professed adoration literally. The local disapproval of Anna Howe's ridicule of Hickman reflects the patriarchal attitudes of many contemporary manuals. But Anna Howe's exploitation of the seemingly trivial, but actually insidious, codes of conduct reflects Astell's bitter protests against the duplicity of courtship that helps to perpetuate woman's subordinate status.

Anna Howe's shameless domination of the submissive Hickman pushes to extremes the prerogatives granted the woman in courtship and implies that she will govern him as her husband. A wife who is obviously superior to a husband in wit or in will inverts the patriarchal assumption that all men are superior to all women. And any instance of a man ruled by a woman is a traditional source of humor and scorn. Anna Howe represents the typical vivacious witty woman who has the potentiality to dictate to a diffident suitor or husband. And her association with Hickman suggests the stereotypical marriage of the pedantic woman and the timid husband, a stock situation of comedy, ridiculing what is seen as unseemly in terms of eighteenth-century mores. But Richardson rescues the couple from the commonplace--and challenges the validity of the stereotype--through his development of the two stock figures into unique individuals. Hickman is diffident and passive, but he is also an

intelligent man of strong character. Though Anna Howe is impatient and haughty, she is an appealing and sensible woman, who can learn to regulate her passionate nature.

Entrenched economic injustices are supported by the conventional conduct books' emphasis on the importance of the woman's ostensible respect for her husband. Because of the woman's lack of legal status in the eighteenth century, the husband had power over the wife's property even when her settlement protected her (Smith, p. 88). Astell testifies to the frequency of this practice when she complains that, because the husband is the wife's absolute master, even when he is the wife's equal,

> she and all the Grants he makes her are in his Power, and there have been but too many Instances of Husbands, that by wheedling, or threatening their Wives, by seeming Kindness, or cruel Usage, have persuaded or forc'd them out of what has been settled on them. (Astell, Reflections, pp. 42-43)

Halifax adds his authority to the general belief that the wife "must, of course, pay deference" to "a weak and incompetent husband" in public, even though she "can easily see to it that he is really under her control" (Reynolds, p. 321). And Astell, in Proposal, like Halifax, recommends camouflage of the husband's deficiency by the wise woman "whose prudence will conceal it from publick Observation, and at once cover and conceal his defects" (Astell, Proposal, p. 38). But in Reflections, Astell looks at the problem from the woman's viewpoint and comments:

> Did the bare name of Husband confer Sense on a man, and the mere being in Authority infallibly qualify him for

> Government, much might be done. But since a wise Man and a Husband are not Terms convertible . . . the Head many times stands in need of the Inferior's Brains to manage it . . . and if she submits to his Power, it is not so much Reason as necessity that compels her. (Astell, Reflections, p. 61)

In his letters to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson joins Astell in challenging the popular notion that inferiority in a wife is desirable, and if not present, should be counterfeited. Refusing to agree that "because a man is superficial, a woman must be so too, for fear she should meet with a husband to whom she may have a superior understanding," Richardson asks provocatively:

> Would it not be very pretty for the parents on both sides to make it the first subject of their inquiries, whether the girl as a recommendation, were a greater fool, or more ignorant, than the young fellow; and if not, that they should reject her, for the booby's sake?--and would not your objection stand as strongly against a preference in mother-wit in the girl, as against what is called learning . . . (Barbauld, Correspondence, Vol. VI, p. 58)

Richardson does not see the possibility of an inferior husband as justification for suppressing learning or "mother-wit" in the wife, for he continues as if he had the marriage of Anna Howe and Hickman in mind:

> If she has good sense, she will not make the man she choses, who wants her knowledge, uneasy, nor despise him for that want. Her good sense will teach her what is her duty; nor will she want reminding of the tenor of her marriage vow to him.(Barbauld, Correspondence, Vol. VI, p. 59)

Richardson, like Astell, accepts the woman's marriage vow to obey her husband as fixed by religion and law, and therefore right. Both ask that it not be used to deprive

the woman of her learning or to force her to dispense with the exercise of her own judgment.

Although the circumstance of Anna Howe's tyranny over her humble suitor Hickman derives from the current discussions of the proper deportment for women in courtship and marriage, the social issues do not obscure the psychological realism in Richardson's characterizations of Anna Howe and Hickman. Anna Howe vindicates her imperious sway over Hickman with the popular notion that the woman should rule in courtship, but she confesses that her hasty temper "by its warmth" serves the function, indispensable to her, of "keeping all imposition at a distance" (II: 131). She has learned to value independence and to fend off encroachment by her childhood spent under her mother's foolish and wilful domination, and she anticipates a similar servitude if she marries a man chosen by such a mother and one whose awkward uncertainty in her presence promises a like foolishness of judgment. However, Anna Howe welcomes another lively spirit on which to try her natural wit, and Hickman, the modest man, who has no interest in competition, disappoints her in his failure to return her banter. Hickman does not provide Anna Howe with the animating resistance that makes an association exciting to her. On the other hand, her remembrance of the contentious, but witless, James Harlowe as "the most intolerable creature that I ever conversed with" prompts her to ask, "What,

thinks you, makes me bear Hickman near me, but that the man is humble and knows and keeps his distance?" (I: 41).

Among the many motives that impel Anna Howe to spurn her mother's favorite Hickman is her need to retaliate for her mother's interference in her affair with the rake Sir George Colmar, whom she would have chosen as a husband. When she explains to Belford her delay in complying with Clarissa's last request that she "let it not be long" before she marry" (IV: 421), Anna Howe confesses that her opposition to her mother, to men in general, and to Hickman, in particular, can be traced to that early experience with the rake. She writes to Belford:

> Long did I stand out against all the offers made me and against all the persuasions of my mother: and to tell you the truth, the longer, and with the more obstinacy, as the person my choice would have first fallen upon was neither approved by my mother, nor by my dear friend. This riveted me to my pride, and to my opposition: for although I was convinced, after a while, that my choice would neither have been prudent nor happy; and that the specious wretch was not what he made me believe he was; yet could I not easily think of any other man: and indeed from the detection of him, took a settled aversion to the whole sex. (IV: 478)

Clarissa understands that the disillusionment of this early deception now prevents Anna Howe from trusting or developing a new interest in any man, and she explains to her friend: "But, my dear, you have outlived your first passion; and had the second man been an angel, he would not have been more than indifferent to you" (II: 181). Colmar's treachery has also helped to generate in Anna Howe the hostility to all men that finds an outlet in her cruelty to the unresisting

Hickman. Deprived of the man of her choice--even though she recognizes that choice to have been an ill-advised one--she is also involuntarily resentful of her mother's part in bringing about her renunciation of him. Unwilling to attack her mother directly, she gives vent to her suppressed rage toward her mother as well as toward Colmer in her merciless ridicule of the gentle Hickman.

In Anna Howe's memory, the marriage of her parents had been a continuous battle for control. Mrs. Howe, a woman of warm temper, who "never espouses or resents with indifference," had married a man of like spirit, for, in Anna Howe's words, her mother often reminds her "of the violence of my poor father's temper" (II: 127). Anna Howe still feels distress over their "durable contentions with each other" (II: 118), suspecting from her mother's complaints, that the "yoke" of marriage sat "heavy upon her neck" (II: 117). Mrs. Howe admits to her daughter that Mr. Howe "was more the choice of her parents than her own," and Anna Howe remembers that her parents "did not live so very happily together, as one would hope people might do, who married preferring each other, at the time, to the rest of the world" (I: 416). The model set by her parents warns her of the hazards in accepting the parental choice but also suggests that the amiable spirit of Hickman might be a wiser choice for her than a warm spirit like her own. She comes close to this idea when she surmises that, since her father

was "a fond father," he perhaps "would have been as tender a husband had not my mother and he been too much of one temper to agree" (II: 117).

Anna Howe has grown up without her father, and her many jokes linking Hickman with her mother suggest that she can imagine him as a supportive paternal figure, who will bring her the security she has never known. The bond between Mrs. Howe and Hickman, in their mutual concern for Anna Howe, indeed resembles that of a father and mother over a child, for both must bear a great deal from her sauciness and "compassionate each other" over it (I: 44). In a jesting mood, Anna Howe expresses this fantasy to Clarissa:

> I have hinted before that I could almost wish my mother and Mr. Hickman would make a match of it: . . . What signifies a difference of fifteen or twenty years: especially when the lady had spirits that will make her young a long time, and the lover is a mighty sober man? I think verily, I could like him better for a papa, than for a nearer relation: and they are strange admirers of one another. (I: 240)

Anna Howe can see Hickman as Clarissa's husband, she says, or as her own brother, but not as her husband. But her reluctance to dismiss him suggests a subconscious inclination to find in him the steady reliable father she lacks.

In an argument with her mother over the relative merits of Lovelace and Hickman, Anna Howe shows clearly where her preference would lie, describing Lovelace as "one of the finest figures of a man, . . . whatever his morals may be!" (I: 297). Suspecting in her daughter an amorous

interest in Lovelace, and "afraid for her favorite Hickman" because of the long visit made recently by Lovelace to Anna Howe in her absence, Mrs. Howe finds grounds for disparaging Lovelace and praising Hickman (I: 331). Mrs. Howe declares that "there hardly ever was a very handsome and a very sprightly man who made a good husband: for that they were generally such Narcissus's," and follows her comment with higher praise of Hickman than, in Anna Howe's view, he can deserve: "entering him into comparisons in which it is impossible but he must be the sufferer" (I: 297). Anna Howe scoffs at the "preposterous partiality" of her mother in claiming

> for her part, that Mr. Hickman, 'bating that his face was not so smooth, nor his complexion quite so good, and saving that he was not so presuming and so bold . . . equalled Mr. Lovelace at any hour of the day. (I: 297)

Unintentionally, Mrs. Howe testifies to Lovelace's superiority of person, but she also shows Hickman to be not quite so intolerable as Anna Howe thinks him to be.

Anna Howe's attraction to Lovelace is shared by many of her sex and is based on other psychological proclivities than a liking for a handsome figure or amusing banter. Anna Howe agrees with Clarissa that "Our way of training-up . . . makes us need the protection of the brave" (I: 341), and she reasons that, therefore, the more timid the woman, the more attracted she is to the bold man, whose self-confidence passes for bravery. When Anna Howe

chafes at the lack of self-assurance in Hickman, she implies that, beneath her exterior of bravado and humor (like Lovelace's), she suffers herself from a lack of confidence. Made wary by the lessons of the conduct books and by Lovelace's heartless taunting of Clarissa, Anna Howe understands that the bold man can be a threat as well as a protection, and she adds sarcastically,

> . . . how extremely brave and gallant is it, that this brave man will free us from all insults but those which will go nearest to our hearts; that is to say, his own! (I: 341)

Anna Howe includes herself with the fearful women who desire the brave man's protection and acknowledges her own wish to control the power the brave man represents. She also exposes her own apprehension that he will use the bluster she admires against herself: that he will himself supply the insults he protects her from. She confesses to Clarissa:

> I believe, my dear, we all love your blustering fellows best; could we but direct the bluster, and bid it roar when, and at whom, we pleased.(I: 332)

Shortly after this, Anna Howe associates her fears, not with men and libertines in general, but with Hickman in particular, writing to Clarissa:

> This very Hickman, I make no doubt, would be as saucy as your Lovelace, if he dared. He has not half the arrogant bravery of the other, and can better hide his horns; that's all. But whenever he has the power, depend upon it, he will <u>butt</u> at one as valiantly as the other.(I: 340)

She shows the ridiculous lengths to which her anxieties can lead her when she is tensely distrustful of the

excessively meek and adoring Hickman. She even finds grounds for suspicion in his naive attempt to seem worldly before the rakes at the Cocoa Tree in Pall Mall. When Hickman asks whether Lovelace "pushed his good fortune" with the ladies "as far as it would go" and then smiles "to make them believe he did not think amiss of it," Anna Howe jumps to the conclusion that her suitor seems "not to be a stranger to their dialect," and confesses her doubts about him in her remark,

> I have often tried to find out this mighty sober man of my mother's: but hitherto have only to say that he is either very moral or very cunning. (I: 250)

The unduly wary Anna Howe expects the worst of Hickman. Astell, one of woman's most sympathetic advisors, increases the uneasiness of women like Anna Howe through her attempts to lessen the woman's vulnerability to deception. Astell insists, in Reflections, that the modesty of the humble suitor is very likely a mask for mercenary intentions. She warns of the dangers in the subtle addresses of "an humble Servant," convinced that he plots self-interested designs beneath his unassuming manner:

> And at the same Time that he nourishes the Hope of being Lord and Master, appears with all the Modesty and Submission of an humble and unpretending Admirer! (Astell, Reflections, p. 67)

Astell's unmasking of the "humble servant" provides Richardson with a starting point for his dramatization of the relationship of Anna Howe and Hickman; and as he illustrates the power of such warnings to imbue Anna Howe with distrust of her sincere suitor, he undermines--as he does

with the wit--Astell's classification of individuals into admired contemporary types who require exposure. Astell's instructions point out that the bold man is perhaps less dangerous than the specious humble man, because the bold man's motives are not concealed--he is ingenuous like Lovelace; therefore, Astell concentrates on enlightening the woman as to the modest man's means and motives in deception:

> And generally the more humble and undesigning a Man appears . . . the greater Caution should be used against him. A bold Address and Good Assurance may sometimes . . . take. To a Woman of Sense an artifical Modesty and Humility is a thousand times more dangerous, for he only draws back to receive more Encouragement, and she regards not what Advances she makes towards him . . . What hurt in a Visit? . . . The Man has so much Discernment, as to relish her Wit and Humour, and can she do less than be Partial to him who is so Just to her? (Astell, Reflections, pp. 74-75)

Anna Howe's unnecessary reserve and apprehension toward the innocent Hickman demonstrate that, in response to the admonitions of her advisors, she has replaced her natural generosity with distrust and suspicion. Astell's further instructions to the woman who wishes to secure her character are reflected in Anna Howe's inability to have confidence in her obsequious suitor:

> Preserve your Distance then . . . your Caution cannot be too great . . . And where-ever you see great Assiduities, when a Man insinuates into the Diversions and Humours of the Lady, liking and admiring whatever she does, though at the same Time he exceeds in the profoundest Respect; . . . when a more than ordinary Deference is paid; . . . and such an Obsequiousness in every Action . . . Then, whatever the Inequality be, . . . the Man has for certain his Engines at work, the Mine is ready to be sprung on the first Opportunity;

> and 'tis well if it be not too late to prevent the poor Lady's Ruin.(Astell, Reflections, pp. 81-82)

Clarissa testifies to the regrettable concealment of her friend's basic generosity, when, after reprimanding Anna Howe for interpreting Hickman's mild approval of their correspondence as presumption, she asks,

> How comes it, I wonder, that a young lady so noted for a predominating generosity should not be uniformly generous?--That your generosity should fail in an instance where policy, prudence, gratitude, would not permit it to fail? (II: 126)

Filled with distrust of the timid Hickman, and frankly preferring the bold man, Anna Howe claims that her first choice is to live singly, in the full enjoyment of her self-sufficiency, fulfilling her dream of escaping to London, "without being beholden to any man-fellows for their protection" (I: 417). But she confesses to Clarissa that in any case she prefers to rule rather than to be ruled. If she cannot hope to dominate the bold man after marriage--to tame the lion-hearted--she can at least dominate the meek man in courtship before marriage.

The unpromising courtship of Anna Howe and Hickman begins with indifference on her part and with obsequious adoration on his, but it gradually develops into an interdependence based on a mutual trust suitable for marriage. Anna Howe is brought to respect Hickman enough to make marriage possible by three distinct inducements: first, by Hickman's genuine and persistent devotion, which motivates him to mold his conduct in ways that obligate Anna Howe to

him; secondly, by Clarissa's endorsement of the modest man, and of Hickman in particular, as a worthy husband; and thirdly, by Lovelace's villainy that demonstrates to her, by contrast, the value in a man like Hickman who would not wish to impose on a woman.

After Mrs. Howe reassures him, Hickman searches for ways, not only to avoid the offence he perpetrates so easily, but also to engage Anna Howe's gratitude. And Clarissa's predicament provides him with a welcome opportunity to ingratiate himself with his "beloved." Hickman recognizes the use he can make of Anna Howe's devotion to Clarissa, and he gives full support to their friendship, admiring Clarissa extravagantly and offering practical help as messenger between them. Believing rightly that the appreciative Mrs. Howe's partiality can stand the risk, he quietly and sincerely takes sides with the daughter against the mother. However, his manner to Mrs. Howe indicates that he enjoys serving a domineering woman and that his openly obsequious deference to her is not hypocrisy. The effectiveness of his behavior is evident when Anna Howe informs Clarissa, after her abduction, that "Mr. Hickman, who greatly honours you, has, unknown to me, interposed so warmly in your favour with my mother that it makes for him no small merit with me" (II: 3). But along with her reluctant pleasure in his efficient intervention, Anna Howe shows a persistent suspicion of his motives, telling Clarissa,

> It goes against me too, to make him so useful to me. He looks already so proud upon it . . . He had best consider that the favour he has been long aiming at may put him into a very ticklish situation. He that can oblige may disoblige--happy for some people not to have it in their power to offend! (II: 6)

In this light-hearted but contemptuous threat, Anna Howe exposes briefly the undercurrents of vindictive exasperation that his passivity arouses in her. In this mood, she welcomes the excuse provided by the conduct manuals to suspect ulterior motives deserving of punishment.

Though Hickman's generous offers to assist her troubled friend alert Anna Howe to the worthiness of the humble man, they do not allow her to relax her distrust of men, and of Hickman as a representative of the sex. Nevertheless, a postscript to one of her letters of consolation to Clarissa inadvertently reveals unspoken satisfactions to both Anna Howe and Hickman in their uneasy relationship. Anna Howe describes a conversation with Hickman in which she accuses him of devious motives in his concern for Clarissa. In the exchange, each shows the other an awareness that Hickman's desire to win Anna Howe's approval is indeed an ingredient in his eager efforts to assist her friend. But each also shows a recognition that this motive does not lessen the sincerity of his kind-hearted interest nor the genuineness of his admiration for Clarissa. The dialogue between them serves as a rare instance of the bright spirit that is enclosed inside of Hickman's sober exterior and indicates that he gets as much joy as pain from Anna Howe's

barbed wit. Hickman's response to her charge suggests that the sharpness of her wit is by no means wasted on him and that a touch of mock-humility underlies his formal and awkward courtesies to her. Anna Howe's report of his sharp answer shows that she is not completely unaware that he may possess a capacity to reciprocate in kind, once his diffidence has been overcome. A secret approval of his daring creeps into her account of the incident:

> Mr. Hickman begs his most respectful compliments to you, with offer of his services. I told him I would oblige him, because minds in trouble take kindly anybody's civilities; but that he was not to imagine that he particularly obliged me by this; since I should think the man or woman either blind or stupid who admired not a person of your exalted merit for your own sake, and wished not to serve you without view to other reward than the honour of serving you.
>
> To be sure, that was his principal motive, with great daintiness he said it; but with a kiss of his hand, and a bow to my feet, he hoped that that fine lady's being my friend did not lessen the merit of the reverence he really had for her.(II: 71)

But the set pattern of interaction between them continues. Anna Howe assumes a self-assured condescension toward this man, whose awkwardness she increases by continually reminding him of it. And Hickman stubbornly praises and assists Clarissa, in part to please Anna Howe but also in sincere appreciation of the nobility he recognizes in Clarissa.

Anna Howe's respect for Hickman grows, as does her dependence on him, but her suspicions of him do not subside. In spite of her bravado, vivacity, and sauciness, Anna Howe

shows that she is as susceptible to fear as to other intense emotions. This is clearly evident, when, after learning that Lovelace has intercepted her letters of warning to Clarissa, she writes with great apprehension for her own and Clarissa's safety. Accustomed to indulging in petty vengeances on her mother and Hickman, she suspects Lovelace of vindictive motives stronger than her own and writes frantically to Clarissa:

> Mr. Hickman should attend you; but I apprehend that all his motions, and mine own too, are watched by the execrable wretch: as indeed, his are by an agent of mine; for I own that I am so apprehensive of his plots and revenge, now that I know that he has intercepted my vehement letters against him, that he is the subject of my dreams, as well as of my waking fears.(III: 384-385)

Anna Howe's strong emotions have not been restrained by her mother. In giving unchecked expression to her own warmth of disposition, Mrs. Howe has served, not as a model of controlled passion, but rather as a model of excessive freedom of expression. Motivated by intense emotions, fear as well as love, Anna Howe does not dare to admit that she trusts Hickman.

Nevertheless, Hickman's behavior begins to please her, even though she is careful to conceal her pleasure from him. She is impressed with his charitable generosity in making his gift of money to Clarissa's maid Hannah, but comments that "his time is not yet come to be praised to his face for these things" (II: 116). And she admits to Clarissa that his inclination to serve her friend "makes him

a merit with me, which otherwise he would not have had, notwithstanding the good qualities which I have just now acknowledged in his favour" (II: 119). Hickman not only helps the girls to continue their correspondence, but he also carries out specific assignments at their bidding. At Clarissa's request, he acts as her intermediary with her family, interposing in her behalf with Uncle John Harlowe, and at Clarissa's request, he gives his advice on the written proposals that Lovelace submits to her.

In response to Clarissa's request, Anna Howe asks Hickman for his opinion on the proposals, and in describing with humor the incident that follows, she exposes some sources of the friction between herself and her suitor. Hickman has read law and offers to take the papers home to "weigh them well" (II: 348), but Anna Howe loses patience with his bustling consideration over them. Exhibiting her preference for the impetuous over the deliberate judgment, she tells him that "if there were no objections that struck him at once, there were none"; and Hickman strikes at her basic failing in his sharp answer, "So hasty, dearest madam!--" (II: 348). The exchange points up the fundamental difference in their temperaments: her hasty, high-strung impatience and his tendency to overdo in his inordinate desire to please. Other significant information communicated by the quick dialogue is that Hickman's modesty is not tameness, for he has set a point beyond which he will not be

affronted. In his characterization of Hickman, Richardson consistently distinguishes between the humility that hesitates to impose on others and the tameness that, from cowardice, submits to tyranny, providing a convincing illustration that motivation determines the quality of behavior.

In his letter to Mrs. Howe, Hickman states explicitly his unwillingness to be abject, even in his excessive deference to Anna Howe, and he asks:

> What hopes can there be that a lady will ever esteem, as a husband, the man whom, as a lover, she despises? Will not every act of obligingness from such a one be construed an unmanly tameness of spirit, and entitle him to more of her disdain? (I: 336)

In their spat over Lovelace's proposals, Anna Howe spurns his earnest offer to give careful consideration to a serious matter which he is qualified to examine. And Hickman does not accept her petulant response without notice. In this instance, Hickman merely resists imposition, but in another instance--his interview with Lovelace at Dormer's--he displays a courageous resentment of insult. Hickman does not blanch at facing Lovelace and goes bravely to that meeting, in compliance with Anna Howe's wishes, even though its purpose is to examine the sincerity of a violent and uncontrolled man from whom he can expect insolent behavior.

At Colonel Ambrose's ball, Hickman makes himself indispensable to Anna Howe and her mother by providing them with the masculine support they need to confront Lovelace. However, with his usual docility, he leaves the crucial

encounter entirely in the hands of the assertive Anna Howe. During the evening, he alternates between dutiful attendance on the Howes and serious conversations with Lovelace. And what Anna Howe interprets as spiritless conduct in him is as infuriating to her at the time as is Lovelace's "high assurance" (IV: 19). However, in describing the occasion later to Clarissa--with an anger that sharpens her sagacity--Anna Howe remembers the vain man and the modest man in close proximity and experiences a flash of insight. She suddenly perceives that merit and modesty are interrelated and that vanity and disregard for others are two sides of the same coin. Astonished to comprehend that Hickman's humility is the outward sign of his inward nobility, and of his respect for others, she expresses her enlightenment in her question, "Would not a little reflection teach us that a man of merit must be a man of modesty, because a diffident one?" (IV: 23). And she follows this new idea with its corollary that the libertine's effrontery "can proceed only from the light opinion he has of us, and the high one of himself" (IV: 23).

The obliging Hickman serves Anna Howe without complaint, taking action only at her request, rarely volunteering strategies of his own invention. He goes without protest to the Isle of Wight, since Mrs. Howe demands it, and he pays a final visit to Clarissa in London to ease Anna Howe's mind about her friend before they set out on

that journey. And his perseverance and support finally begin to recommend him to his recalcitrant beloved. Anna Howe describes his manner on the Isle of Wight with less asperity than formerly. Her accounts of their differences while there suggest more good-natured and affectionate raillery in her reprimands and more boldness and humor in his retorts, as if both are becoming more secure in their mutual regard for each other. Hickman's noble and sincere gesture of wearing mourning for Clarissa is a more daring action than any he has attempted before. This time his behavior receives from Anna Howe more approval than suspicion. Colonel Morden predicts a marked improvement in their relationship from this gracious tribute to their mutual friend, commenting to Belford,

> But let me tell you, Mr. Belford, that if this compliment of Mr. Hickman's does not produce a short day, I shall think Miss Howe has less generosity in her temper than I am willing to allow.(IV: 472)

Anna Howe writes to Belford to explain why she is reluctant to make it "a short day" to the marriage Clarissa has requested in her will, and her frank analysis of her feelings discloses her understanding that her relationship with Hickman is not a wholly satisfactory one. She still dreads the domination she has been led to expect in marriage, and she confesses that she feels no more affection for Hickman than she would feel for a brother. But she has long ago decided to make the best of things--in the courageous sense of the cliché--and now, having no doubts of Hickman's

worth, "virtuous, sober, sincere, friendly, as he is" (IV: 478), she resolves to try "to make him amends for the patience he has had" with her (IV: 480).

Her lack of enthusiasm for the alliance is counterbalanced by the many positive aspects of the marriage. The supportive, non-competitive attitudes of the modest man are necessary to the marriage of mutuality that Richardson envisions as the appropriate relationship between the sexes. Hickman may not fight Anna Howe's battles for her--she can do that for herself--but he will provide the generous atmosphere where her own generosity, freed from intimidation, can find expression. And he will replace Clarissa, according to her expressed wishes, as the friend Anna Howe has grown to depend on for closeness with another generous and virtuous human being. Anna Howe's insecurity as the fatherless daughter of a narrow-minded, imperious mother can only be reassured by the unconditional support of the kind that Hickman will provide. The disputes of their marriage will not give way to arbitrary authority, but will be settled by reasonable arbitration.

Hickman's patient devotion outlasts Anna Howe's resistance to him and to marriage, and his generous conduct gradually mollifies her exasperation with him. But a stronger incentive to her acceptance of him as a husband comes from Clarissa's unqualified approval of him. Clarissa's continual praise of Hickman's fine qualities and her persistent

advocacy of him as a congenial husband are supplemented by relentless reprimands to Anna Howe for her overbearing treatment of so worthy a man. In time, these pressures from Clarissa undermine Anna Howe's defensive belligerence, and this second inducement does even more than Hickman's own efforts to bring Anna Howe to appreciate the virtues she has underrated in her suitor.

Clarissa, like Anna Howe, has been indoctrinated in the belief that amiable submission to masculine authority is the essence of woman's marital obligation. From her similar background, Clarissa is able to perceive that Anna Howe's militant hostility to men is heightened by a secret fear of unfair domination and by a suspicion that she will not be able to fend off encroachment if she agrees to the vowed obedience of matrimony. Clarissa understands the layers of her friend's personality: that Anna Howe's natural generosity is buried under fears and self-doubts that she must conceal with her spirited ridicule and her pert disparagements of others. When Clarissa describes the husband she herself would want, she stresses the quality that should relieve Anna Howe's concealed apprehensions: the capacity to respond generously to concessions made by the other person. Clarissa recognizes that Hickman's amiability--like that of the compliant woman--appears to the aggressive personality as weakness inviting opposition. But she, who sincerely wishes to be amiable, assumes that generosity, as

she feels it in herself, is a natural characteristic of the humble person. And Clarissa rebukes Anna Howe for her unfair attacks on the obliging Hickman, who does not deserve--as the encroaching rake does--suspicious affronts.

Clarissa is convinced that modesty in a man indicates the presence of other good qualities and may conceal intelligence as well as generosity. She corroborates her friend's reluctant admission that "The man has certainly a good mind" (II: 116), and adds her own explanation of what obscures the light of that "worthy mind" (II: 126):

> Mr. Hickman, my dear, is a modest man. I never see a modest man, but I am sure . . . that he has a treasure in his mind which requires nothing but the key of encouragement to unlock it, to make him shine . . . (II: 126)

Clarissa understands that Hickman's diffidence--a sign of the modest man--is magnified into awkwardness by his desire to please Anna Howe and by his fear of offending her, and finally, by the embarrassment her scorn causes him. Clarissa offers Anna Howe evidence of this:

> Often and often have I been concerned, when I was your happy guest, to see him, after a conversation in which he had well supported his part in your absence, sink at once into silence the moment you came into company. (II: 126)

Clarissa points out that Anna Howe's intimidation of Hickman has prevented him from displaying any wit or intelligence he might have and has indeed given his genuine humility the appearance of abjectness.

Clarissa's two foremost justifications for recommending the modest Hickman as a worthy husband are, first,

that as a generous and rational man, he will not enforce his arbitrary wishes on a wife and, second, that he will respect her judgment as worthy of consideration. She defends her beliefs by asking:

> . . . shall not a modest woman distinguish and wish to consort with a modest man?--a man before whom and to whom she may open her lips secure of his good opinion of all she says, and of his just and polite regard for her judgment? And who must therefore inspire her with an agreeable confidence.(II: 126)

Clarissa believes that, unthreatened in the company of the uncompetitive modest man--in contrast to the "confident man," who, in Clarissa's words, "to be confident, must think as meanly of his company as highly of himself" (II: 126)--Anna Howe need not fear marriage.

When Mrs. Howe is dangerously ill on their return from the Isle of Wight, Anna Howe writes at the height of her distraction, with her emotions close to the surface. As Richardson presents her mimetically in her distraught state, he endows her with realistic emotions that define more precisely her relationship to her dull and unattractive suitor. She declares that, if both her friend and her mother die, she will not marry, and she bursts out into a comparison of Hickman and Lovelace and reveals her frustration over the contradictions in both masculine personalities. The animal imagery that precedes the comparison is filled with a loathing for submissiveness that seems to be generated by vindictive tendencies in her own nature rather than by Hickman's inoffensive humility. The contempt is

there, as is the desire to dominate, and Hickman is the target. But her complaint suggests also that oppressive social forces have increased her aggressiveness; and the contrast between her positive response to Lovelace and the void she meets when she tries to describe Hickman suggests serious deficiencies in her suitor. She follows her declaration that she will not marry with the question:

> And why should I? Creeping, cringing in courtship! O my dear, these men are a vile race of reptiles in our day, and mere bears in their own. See in Lovelace all that is desirable in figure, in birth, and in fortune: but in his heart a devil! See in Hickman--indeed, my dear, I cannot tell what anybody can see in Hickman, to be always preaching in his favour. And is it to be expected that I, who could hardly bear control from a mother, should take it from a husband?--from one, too, who has neither more wit, nor more understanding, than myself? (IV: 265-266)

As Clarissa relinquishes her interest in life, she bequeathes her aspirations for a happy marriage to Anna Howe and imagines that their friendship will live on in her friend's marriage. In her posthumous letter, she beseeches Anna Howe not to

> suspend the day which shall supply to herself the friend she will have lost in her, and give to herself a still nearer and dearer relation.(IV: 367)

With her belated and reluctant agreement to comply with the request of Clarissa's will, Anna Howe renounces all hope of "Felicity" with an exciting rake, foregoing savage treatment from his "brutish" passion and neglect from his love of variety (Astell, Reflections, p. 18). She looks forward instead to a marriage based on friendship, as Clarissa

advises. And fulfilling Astell's prescription for such a realistic marriage, she anticipates a pleasant life with Hickman, "bearing with the Inconveniencies" and "content with a competent Share of Good" (Astell, Reflections, p. 18). Clarissa's guidance has led her to the prospect of a stable future.

Irrefutable proof of Lovelace's villainy is the third determining factor that induces Anna Howe to accept Hickman as a companion for life. Anna Howe learns to value Hickman's worthy qualities through her observation of Lovelace's lack of them. By chance and her own inquiries, she uncovers an abundance of incriminating evidence against Lovelace. Overwhelmed by the persuasiveness of her findings, she writes to Clarissa:

> The vileness of this specious monster has done more than any other consideration could do, to bring Mr. Hickman into credit with me.(III: 165)

Filled with resentment and frustration that the attractive Lovelace, whom she wants to be trustworthy, is not, she raves violently against him, giving vent to an accumulation of vindictive impulses.

After learning of the rape and the whole story of Lovelace's forgeries and impostures, Anna Howe is compelled to compare the bold man with the modest man, to the latter's advantage. She looks again at the daughter governed leniently in comparison with the daughter used cruelly, and she begins to be exceedingly grateful for her own good

fortune. As she weighs Hickman's unfailing loyalty against Lovelace's inordinate treachery, she asks:

> But see we not, in the horrid perjuries and treachery of this man, what rakes and libertines will do when they get a young creature in their power? . . . With what comfort must those parents reflect upon these things, who have happily disposed of their daughters in marriage to a virtuous man! And happy the young women who find themselves safe in a worthy protection! (III: 377)

At this point, a peaceful existence with Hickman, the dull-swift, seems less intolerable than a life of demeaning subjection to a Lovelace, who, when unrestrained, will not stop at "potions, and rapes, and the utmost violences, necessary to the attainment of his detestable end" (III: 377).

After Clarissa's death, Anna Howe's disgust for the bold man is established irrevocably, and she tells Colonel Morden, in reference to Lovelace:

> At times, sir, let me tell you that I hate your whole sex for his sake; even men of unblamable characters, whom at those times I cannot but look upon as persons I have not yet found out. (IV: 434)

The specious Sir George Colmar initiated in Anna Howe a suspicion and resentment of all men, and Clarissa's calamity at the hands of another rake has reinforced her angry distrust of the meek as well as the bold. She admits to Belford that she cannot yet exempt Hickman from her indictment of all men as "Insolent creepers, or encroachers, all of you!" (IV: 475). And her desire for vengeance on Lovelace is not abated by Belford's plea that his friend's agonies of remorse should excite her compassion. She cuts short her posthumous portrait of Clarissa to say of Lovelace,

"Once more I pray to God to avenge me of him!" (IV: 510). She shows that she has completely exorcised her admiration for the rake when she expresses to Belford her certainty that Lovelace's letters "will, when laid open . . . afford a proper warning to those who read them, and teach them to detest men of such profligate characters" (IV: 475).

Anna Howe must not only relinquish all thoughts of the lively rake, but she must be content with a man who exasperates her. Though she holds out as long as she can before she consents to be a wife, Belford reports that she makes a good one when she does. In spite of her objections to Hickman as a husband, she admits that her suitor has "never once disobliged" her "in word, or deed, or look, except in his foolish perseverance" (IV: 479). In Hickman's obliging behavior, Richardson presents a shadow of Clarissa's magnanimity, of her capacity to bear unjust treatment patiently, a quality that Astell identifies as the hallmark of nobility. And Hickman quotes Clarissa when he explains to Belford his reasons for not resenting Lovelace's insulting behavior at Dormer's:

> That if the reflections thrown upon me are just, I ought not only to forgive them, but to endeavour to profit by them: if unjust, that I ought to despise them, and the reflector too; since it would be inexcusable to strengthen by anger an enemy whose malice might be disarmed by contempt.(IV: 433)

Though tinged with expediency, Hickman's justification of his reluctance to resent Lovelace's disdain applies as well to his equanimity under Anna Howe's petty tyranny. And his

forbearance, like Clarissa's, can be interpreted as a noble acceptance of injustice, implying a real--and a conscious--superiority to his persecutors.

The association of Anna Howe and Hickman is strained severely by the contemporary clichés and customs that reflect the sexist values of their culture. Their personal difficulties are aggravated by the pressures on them to conform to the popular view of marriage as a contest for advantage. And Richardson condemns the conventional attitudes when he shows the basically generous Anna Howe, during their courtship, induced by apprehension to taunt meanly the worthy Hickman. However, Richardson envisions them both as people of native intelligence and good will, and as such, capable of escaping the bondage of the common assumptions. Hickman possesses innately the qualities needed for the successful Marriage proposed by Astell, where the husband governs

> Not as an absolute Lord and Master, with an arbitrary and tyrannical Sway, but as Reason governs and conducts a Man, . . . A Woman will value Him the more who is wise and good, . . . the less he requires, the more he will merit that Esteem and Deference, which those who are so forward to exact, seem conscious they don't deserve. So that the Man's Prerogative is not at all infring'd, whilst the Woman's Privileges are secured. (Astell, Reflections, p. 91)

In their ultimate alliance, both exhibit a capacity to compromise with unyielding reality and to make "a virtue of necessity" (II: 131) as they come to a good understanding, achieving a rational balance of concessions that satisfies her expansive and his compliant needs. Richardson affirms

his moral values through the marriage of Anna Howe and Hickman. He replaces the unequal conventional marriage with a relationship of mutuality, refuting the insidious argument that the learned woman usurps the rights of her husband, and attesting to the happiness that comes from rational control of the passions and from marital choices based on interior rather than exterior qualities. In his conclusions, Belford describes their joy in administering together Clarissa's "poor's fund," with an arrangement that satisfies Anna Howe's need to take command; for she assumes "the whole prerogatives of dispensing this charity: the only prerogative she does or has occasion to assume" (IV: 548). Belford reports that "In every other case there is but one will between them, and that is generally his or hers, as either speaks first on any subject, be it what it will" (IV: 548).

In the domestic happiness of Anna Howe and Hickman, Richardson gives his wholehearted approval of the monogamy of the man of probity and his unequivocal rejection of the inconstancy of the man of pleasure, affirming the permanent values extolled by Clarissa in her posthumous letter to Anna Howe and renouncing the transitory values celebrated by Lovelace in his dreams of marriage with Clarissa on his own terms. Through his characterizations and the represented action of the novel, Richardson implies that Anna Howe's ability to make a pleasant life for herself in a properly regulated marriage rests on her good fortune in being

courted by the man of probity, and conversely, that Clarissa's calamity stems from her ill fortune in attracting the man of pleasure. And finally, that Anna Howe's "durable happiness" (IV: 561) proceeds from her learning through Clarissa's wisdom and experience to make a clear distinction between the two kinds of men.

However, when Anna Howe and Clarissa are viewed as mimetic characters, an ambiguity appears in the "happiness" of their respective rewards in the resolution of the novel. Anna Howe achieves her comfortable marriage at great cost, when in imitation of Clarissa's firm control, she subdues some of her unusual vitality along with the rebellious impulses of her passionate nature. With more tragic consequences, Clarissa's refusal to suppress her passionate resentments in a conventional marriage that could be pleasant leaves her with no choice but the rejection of life in the Harlowes' world. Though Anna Howe's lesser deprivations are obscured by Clarissa's more noble and more tragic sacrifice, both suffer in different degrees from the injurious effects of the contemporary practices based on the subordination of women.

As Richardson approves the institution of marriage, but condemns the inhumane treatment of women within it, he presents the contrasting behavior of Clarissa and Anna Howe as alternative ways of fighting the prevailing abuses. Since he assigns a surrogate sisterhood to the two friends,

he offers their opposite ways of dealing with the oppressed woman's dilemma as worthy of equal consideration. Equivalent in what matters most, in virtue and integrity, they display the marked individual differences common in sisters, and like sisters, approach experience in general from different points of view. In an early letter, Anna Howe attributes to Clarissa "the principal half of the one soul, that, it used to be said, animated the pair of friends" (III: 517). And Clarissa's heroic support of virtue and reason occupies the principal place in Richardson's vision of courageous feminine conduct. But Richardson maintains Anna Howe's status of sisterhood as she earnestly endeavors to adjust Clarissa's ideal of virtuous conduct to the realities of her society; and from this position, he presents her as a secondary, but alternative, heroine of the novel.

Astell recommends to the patient, dutiful, but oppressed, wife, in a society dominated by men, "A Prospect of Heaven," where "her Soul shall shine as the greatest Heroe's" (Astell, Reflections, p. 84). In Astell's view, to maintain such a vision of heaven is for the oppressed woman

> the only Consolation; this makes her a sufficient Compensation for all the Neglect and Contempt the ill-grounded Customs of the World throw on her; for all the Injuries brutal Power may do her, and is sufficient Cordial to support her Spirits, be her Lot in this World what it may.(Astell, Reflections, p. 84)

And Richardson bestows on Clarissa this compensation, for in the heaven Astell describes, men and woman are equal, and

Clarissa will escape from the distinctions of sex which bar woman from "the best Employments, the highest Honours" (Astell, Reflections, p. 84).

But the self-assertive and generous Anna Howe remains in the world to carry on Clarissa's business, and in her future with the modest and generous man of probity, Richardson offers a worldly alternative to Clarissa's tragic worldly defeat. Anna Howe's marriage to Hickman, with its boundaries set to protect prerogatives and privileges, affirms Richardson's belief in the need for a relationship of mutuality between the sexes to replace the masculine domination in the conventional marriage. In the moderation of Anna Howe's impetuosity and Hickman's excessive meekness lies hope for a rational eighteenth-century marriage of mutuality.

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