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Reception, and *The Rape of the Lock*, and Richardson

THOMAS KEYMER

PERHAPS THE CLEVEREST of the spate of burlesques, adaptations and critiques of *Pamela* launched by Fielding's *Shamela* in April 1741 was a late intervention in the quarrel. *Pamela: Or, The Fair Impostor. A Poem, In Five Cantos. By J—— W——, Esq.*, was published in a Dublin imprint of 1743, and a London edition appeared early in 1744.[1] The story told by J—— W—— (a skilful parodist whose identity remains unknown) was by then already familiar. Rejecting *Pamela*'s official status as a tale of *Virtue Rewarded*, he looked instead to the subversive re-reading imposed on the text by Fielding, Eliza Haywood and others. For these 'Antipamelists' (as one contemporary put it), Pamela's dealings with Mr. B. suggested not the guileless piety applauded by Richardson's supporters but instead 'the Behaviour of an hypocritical, crafty Girl, in her Courtship; who understands the Art of bringing a Man to her Lure'.[2] No longer the victim of male predacity, Pamela was redefined as the predator herself; and here is exactly the charge that J—— W—— resumes. Little is new about his tale of plebeian cunning and hypocrisy, in which a wily chambermaid draws her master 'Sir Blunder' to the snare of wedlock. In terms of plot and analysis, the poem is little more than *Shamela* versified.

What is original is the context established by the versification itself,

[1]See D. F. Foxon, *English Verse, 1701–1750: A Catalogue of Separately Printed Poems with Notes on Contemporary Collected Editions* (Cambridge, 1975), I, 551 (entries P25 and P26). The London edition was catalogued in the *Gentleman's Magazine and London Magazine* of January 1744; Foxon notes that the Dublin edition is likely to be later, notwithstanding the date on its title-page.

[2]Peter Shaw, *The Reflector* (1750), p. 14. The passage plagiarises Ludwig Holberg's *Moral Thoughts* (1744): see A. D. McKillop, *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 101–2.

with its mock-heroic elaboration 'In Five Cantos'. For in J—— W——'s hands the amatory struggles of Pamela and Sir Blunder become much more than simply those of servant and master. The poem's heroic couplets bring with them the expectation of mythic analogy, and this expectation is whimsically fulfilled in verses that link the pair with Tarquin and Lucretia, Paris and Venus, Alcides and Deianira.[3] The female garb in which Mr B gains access to Pamela's bed reminds the poet of other seducers in drag: 'So once *Achilles, Thetis'* Godlike Son, / And great *Alcides*, at the Distaff spun, / And *Omphale* and *Deidamia* won' (*FI*, V, 51–3). Martial imagery further inflates the tale as one of heroic conflict. Witness, for example, the tactical circumspection with which the pair manoeuvre in an epic simile from Canto IV:

> As skilful Generals with watchful Eyes
> Concert an Ambush, or avoid Surprize,
> Feign fearful Flights, yet gain Advantage too,
> And sometimes this, and sometimes that pursue;
> Doubt their own Strength, to stand the Chance of War,
> Shun the close Fight, and skirmish from afar:
> The cautious Couple, equally afraid,
> The humble Master, and th'imperious Maid,
> Alike reserv'd, still keep the doubtful Field,
> Contend for Conquest, and disdain to yield;
> While one great End alike directs them all,
> The Hero's Ruin, or the Virgin's Fall.
>
> (*FI*, IV, 1–12)

It is in keeping with this mock-epic tone that Pamela should be seen as 'this heroic Maid' (*FI*, I, 122), while Mr B is raised to a rank that casts him as simply, and repeatedly, 'the Knight'.

Pamela's combat with Sir Blunder, moreover, plays out at supernatural as well as human levels. Avoiding the Christian machinery of Richardson's text, in which Pamela lays claim to the aid of a just and active Providence, J—— W—— turns instead to pagan forces. Blessed by Venus and cursed by Juno, his heroine finds the vigilant chastity on which her schemes depend protected by agents of the former goddess but threatened by those of the latter. And these agents clearly recall the sprites of *The Rape of the Lock*, among which, Pope writes,

> The graver Prude sinks downward to a *Gnome*,
> In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.

[3]J—— W——, *Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor* (1744), II. 58; II. 106; IV. 58. Further references are given to this London edition (hereafter *FI*) by Canto- and line-number in brackets in the text.

> The light Coquettes in *Sylphs* aloft repair,
> And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.[4]

These lines directly inform J—— W——'s account of Pamela's birth and the Olympian conflict that attends it:

> Thus envious *Juno*, from contracted Hate,
> Ere her first Dawn of Life, fore-doomed her Fate;
> And placed malignant Spirits at her Birth,
> Obnoxious Gnomes, and mischievous on Earth;
> Prudes in this Life, who long neglected dy'd,
> Who curse their Folly, and lament their Pride;
> Who all the Malice of their Lives retain,
> The cruel Joy of giving others Pain. [. . .]
> While *Venus* meditates the future Maid,
> And summons Sylphs and Sylphids to her Aid:
> "A Nymph, she cry'd, shall soon the World adorn,
> "Belov'd by me, in distant *Britain* born.
> "Thither, ye bright aërial Sprites repair,
> "And guard from future Harms the Infant Fair;
> "Nor once neglect to watch around her Bed,
> "Or on her Pillow perch, or o'er her Head:
> "Banish th'intruding Fop, and coz'ning Beau,
> "And watch the wide Extremity below.
> "There most I fear—but, much I fear, will fail
> "A guardian Spirit if the Flesh prevail."
>
> (*FI*, I, 129–52)

It is clear at such moments that J—— W—— has more than one precursor-text in mind as he writes; and in case his borrowed machinery is not enough to signal the fact, he also contrives several yet more ostentatious echoes of Pope. In Canto II, as Sir Blunder plots his nocturnal foray into Pamela's bed, Venus's servant Ariel prepares a defence,

> And warns his little Legions of the Air,
> To guard PAMELA with redoubled Care.
> "Some heavy Cloud, which yet the Fates decree,
> "She may, with Care, avoid, (he cry'd) I see
> "Impends, this Night, o'er fair PAMELA's Head,
> "Ere th'unsuspecting Maid foresakes her Bed:
> "Or if a Lover, by Appointment, meets,
> "To gain a Kiss, or slip between the Sheets;

[4] *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson, 3rd edn., The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, Vol. II (London, 1962), I. 63–6. Further references are given to this edition (hereafter *RL*) by Canto- and line-number in brackets in the text.

> "Or if to steal some precious, private Thing—
> "—A secret Lock to beautify a Ring—
> "Her Top-knot, Snuff-box, Girdle, or her Shoes,
> "Or some more trifling Toy a Maid may lose:
> "Of these be diligent, be these your Care,
> "I'll be myself the Guardian of the Hair
> "That on her Head, and that which grows elsewhere.'
>
> (*FI*, II, 73–87)

It is hard to miss the immediacy with which these lines draw on a parallel moment in Canto II of *The Rape of the Lock*. Here Pope's Ariel warns his sylphs of signs similar to J—— W——'s 'heavy Cloud, which yet the Fates decree', and likewise neglects to distinguish between trivial and serious losses:

> This Day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
> That e'er deserv'd a watchful Spirit's Care;
> Some dire Disaster, or by Force, or Slight,
> But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in Night.
> Whether the Nymph shall break *Diana's* Law,
> Or some frail *China* Jar receive a Flaw,
> Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade,
> Forget her Pray'rs, or miss a Masquerade,
> Or lose her Heart, or Necklace, at a Ball;
> Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that *Shock* must fall.
>
> (*RL*, II, 101–10)

It is not only on this passage, however, that J—— W—— draws, for he also concentrates in Ariel's speech a number of further echoes. The 'trifling Toy a Maid may lose' recalls Pope's 'moving Toyshop of their Heart' (*RL*, I, 100); Pamela's 'Top-knot, Snuff-box, Girdle' recall at once the fashionable ephemera of Belinda's toilet (*RL*, I, 138) and the foppery of Sir Plume (*RL*, IV, 123–30); the hair 'which grows elsewhere' makes blatant the innuendo in Belinda's famous 'Hairs less in sight, or any Hairs but these!' (*RL*, IV, 176). And in this attentiveness to Pamela's hair and Sir Blunder's fascinated urge to steal 'A secret Lock to beautify a Ring', J—— W—— of course brings into play the stolen prize, the 'ravish'd Hair' (*RL*, IV, 10), on which Pope's great poem of sexual warfare turns.

Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor, then, is not only a witty burlesque of Richardson's novel but also a bawdy elaboration of Pope's poem. It sharpens its revision of *Pamela* through appropriations from *The Rape of the Lock*, subjecting the novel to an effect, as it were, of mock-mock-heroic, in which its protagonists suffer not only by contrast with

the noble feats of Homeric epic but also by comparison with the debased courtliness of Popeian satire. By combining Richardson's plot with Pope's machinery, *Pamela*'s matter with *The Rape of the Lock*'s manner, moreover, J—— W—— implicitly credits the two texts with some perverse and hidden affinity (and has the confidence in his analogy to sustain it for hundreds of lines). His work thus begs an intriguing question. Was this simply some fortuitous or gratuitous pairing, an arbitrary juxtaposition of texts linked only by their shared concern with amatory conflict, or had J—— W—— stumbled across some more substantial connection?

If ever there was consensus in Pope studies, here we surely have it: there is nothing, it would seem, to be said. When tackling questions of reception or influence, scholars of Pope have seized on heirs more in sight, or any heirs but Richardson. Nor has there been much interest from the other direction. John Carroll and more recently Jocelyn Harris have dispatched for ever old ideas of Richardson as an unlearned genius for whom intertextual allusion was an alien resource.[5] Yet in this case Carroll himself, whose article of 1963 remains the fullest exploration to date of links between Richardson and Pope, makes essentially negative conclusions. Richardson was 'as aware as [...] Dryden or Pope of the value gained by a reference or an allusion', Carroll rightly claims, adding that while some of these allusions are merely casual, others make careful play on the contexts invoked.[6] He is reluctant, however, to put echoes of Pope in this category. Puzzled by some apparent allusions 'because the sources seem so remote from anything Richardson would be likely to have known', he gives as his example a passage (to which I return below) in which Clarissa seems to remember the speech of her namesake in *The Rape of the Lock*. Noting the coincidence not only of name but also of argument, Carroll speculates no further, and continues to insist that there is 'no direct indication here that Richardson is recalling Clarissa in *The Rape of the Lock*'.[7] He leaves unexplained his suggestion that Richardson would not have known one of the most celebrated poems of the age (an odd

[5]See John Carroll, 'Richardson at Work: Revisions, Allusions, and Quotations in *Clarissa*', in R. F. Brissenden, ed. *Studies in the Eighteenth Century II* (Canberra, 1973), pp. 53–71, and 'On Annotating *Clarissa*', in G. E. Bentley, Jr, ed. *Editing Eighteenth-Century Novels* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 49–66; Jocelyn Harris, 'Richardson: Original or Learned Genius?', in Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor, eds. *Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 188–202.

[6]'Richardson at Work', p. 64.

[7]'On Annotating *Clarissa*', pp. 56–7.

assumption made odder by the fact that Richardson had himself printed a commentary on this very poem, John Dennis's *Remarks on Mr. Pope's Rape of the Lock*, in 1728).[8] Carroll's probable reason for dismissing the link is clear, however, from his earlier survey of references to Pope in Richardson's letters. From these sources he compiles a picture of relentless hostility which makes him conclude, not (as one might) that Richardson was evidently fascinated by Pope, but instead that Richardson was unwilling or unable to respond with anything better than catty detraction. Although the letters discuss poems as varied as *Windsor-Forest*, *The Dunciad*, and *An Essay on Man*, Richardson's comments are marked always by reprobation on moral grounds. 'I admire Mr. Pope's Genius, and his Versification: But forgive me, Sir, to say, I am scandaliz'd for human Nature, and such Talents, sunk so low,' he tells Aaron Hill in 1744. A year earlier he tells George Cheyne that Pope makes shameful misuse of 'Talents which adorn and distinguish him above all his Cotemporaries', to the extent that some of his poems 'ought to be called in, and burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman'. Neglecting the simultaneous admiration that gives these strictures their real force, Carroll implies that Pope's was a body of work against which Richardson's predispositions and allegiances prejudiced him too violently for serious, considered response to have been within his reach.[9]

Yet there is another side to this coin. Richardson was deferential in matters of literary judgement, and his correspondence nicely illustrates the point that epistolary argument may be determined as much by the addressee as by the writer. While the letter to Cheyne is an exception, it is significant that most of the reflections quoted by Carroll come in letters to rivals, victims or adversaries of Pope within Richardson's circle (which prominently featured such champion dunces and divers as Colley Cibber and Aaron Hill). Where his correspondence moves beyond this circle, Richardson is equally likely to refer to Pope as simply 'the first Genius of the Age'.[10] Even when writing to Pope's enemies, moreover, his objection is clearly not that Pope is a poor or tedious poet. On the contrary, it is precisely because he finds Pope a

[8]T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 44, 574.

[9]'Richardson on Pope and Swift', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 33 (1963), 19–29, quoting Richardson to Hill, 19 January 1744, and Richardson to Cheyne, 21 January 1743. Both letters are in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford, 1964), pp. 57, 60.

[10]Richardson to Warburton, 17 November 1742, *Selected Letters*, p. 55.

great poet, a poet who demonstrably compels his interest throughout the fifteen years of his own creative life, that his remarks are consistently coloured by such extremes of anxiety and censure. One does not, after all, trouble the hangman to burn boring books. The history of censorship tells us that books are perceived as dangerous not simply when they are objectionable in political, ethical or religious terms, but when they are perceived as conveying their objectionable matter with force and skill — when, in Milton's famous formulation, they seem 'as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men'.[11] Richardson may not exactly have feared that Pope's poems would spring up armed men (though it is an arresting fact that the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 did indeed spring up with the *Epilogue to the Satires* at its lips).[12] It is worth exploring the thought, however, that he found in Pope (perhaps as much by projection as discovery) a voice often persuasively inimical to many of the commitments that animated his own writing, and a voice as a result that had to be challenged. What is certain is that Richardson's talk of burning Pope reflects a response that was both urgent and engaged, and of an intensity far more likely to have made him confront and contest Pope's writing in his own than simply shun it.

Work more recent than Carroll's gives good grounds for interpreting Richardson's vehemence as a sign not of peremptory dismissal but rather of reading that was sufficiently close and engaged to charge the novels themselves. *Pamela* provides a relevant (though in this case not hostile) example. Discussing the visit made to Pamela by an irate Lady Davers, Marie E. McAllister detects a whimsical echo from the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, in which the heroine's 'Tell her I am sick in bed: tell her I am dying' picks up the beleaguered poet's opening cry of 'say I'm sick, I'm dead'. The paraphrase is no mere coincidence, McAllister suggests, but quietly compares Pamela the upsetter of hierarchies and codes with Pope the social satirist, both of whom share a way of measuring the fashionable world and their own relationship to it against

[11] *Areopagitica*, in *Complete Prose Works*, ed. D. M. Wolfe *et al.* (New Haven, 1953–80), III, 492.

[12] See Howard Erskine-Hill, 'Alexander Pope: The Political Poet in his Time', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15 (1981–2), 123–48. Erskine-Hill quotes one of the Jacobite manifestos of 1745, *An Address to the People of England*, which turns to Pope to authorise its complaint that Hanoverian rule had reduced corruption 'to a regular System': 'It could never be said justly, till of late Years, that *not to be corrupted is the Shame*' (p. 148).

the uncorrupted rigour of virtuous parents.[13] Nor is this the only point at which Richardson lends resonance to Pamela's predicament through recollection of Pope. Earlier, her description of her Lincolnshire captivity ('this handsome, large, old, lonely mansion, that looked to me then, with all its brown nodding horrors of lofty elms and pines about it, as if built for solitude and mischief') brings into play the 'darksom pines' of Eloisa's gothic prison, where 'Melancholy [...] breathes a browner horror on the woods'.[14]

Many other congruities might be explored with reference to the wealth of Popeian analogues noted in Jocelyn Harris's edition of *Sir Charles Grandison* (including, in the first volume alone, unmistakable allusions to the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, the *Epistle to a Lady* and the *Essay on Criticism*).[15] The wide distribution and the sheer number of such echoes of a modern in a writer whose allusions are more often to Job or Psalms makes clear the intensity and duration of Richardson's creative response to Pope. But it is not mere frequency of incidence that should be stressed. More important is the character of Richardson's allusions, which on the occasions just noted may suggest simple indebtedness or even like-mindedness, but which in their most sustained and complex examples show him finding in Pope not so much an authority as a formidable antagonist, a writer whose work was more often to be resisted or recuperated than merely endorsed. For those passages or

[13]'Popeian Echoes in *Pamela*: The Lady Davers Scene', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 28 (1992), 374–8. McAllister's comparison between Pamela's parental touchstone and lines 392–9 of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* is perhaps anticipated by J—— W——. Describing Pamela's parents, he seems to draw on Pope's remembrance of a father 'Born to no Pride, inheriting no Strife', a 'Stranger to Civil and Religious Rage' whose austere virtue is uncontaminated by 'Courts' or 'Suits', 'Oath' or 'Lye':

> Strangers to Frauds and Flatteries of Courts,
> To Rumours, Lyes, and busy Fame's Reports;
> The Little, Fortune gave, enjoy'd in Health,
> Far from the Pomp and Miseries of Wealth;
> From mad Ambition, and obnoxious Cares,
> From Councils, Politics, and State Affairs;
> From honest Industry drew all their Store,
> Nor, discontented, ever sigh'd for more.
>
> (*FI*, I, 67–74)

[14]*Pamela*, ed. Peter Sabor, intr. Margaret A. Doody (Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 146; *Eloisa to Abelard*, in *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*, ll. 155, 165, 170. I am grateful to Jocelyn Harris for alerting me to this echo; see also her published remarks on Eloisa and the comparable predicament of *Grandison*'s Clementina, *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 158.

[15]*Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (London, 1972), III. 478; III. 484.

aspects of his work where Richardson most clearly has Pope in mind tend also to show him at his most strenuously ideological. They show him not simply invoking but challenging 'the first Genius of the Age', almost as though to do so was indeed to stage some Bloomian slaying of the creative father, or at least to question some seemingly retrograde trend in this father's text.

Two Pamelas

Useful at this point, beyond the notion of Bloomian misreading, is Gillian Beer's model of how writers 'respond to, internalize, and resist past writing' in their arguments with the past. Beer's model is flexible enough to register competing currents of sympathy and antagonism, congruity and reorientation, and she extends it brilliantly to *Pamela* itself, finding here an attempt 'to prolong, and to dispute with, Sidney's [*Arcadia*]' in which Richardson's anachronistic reading of Sidney in terms of hierarchy and class gives focus to his own more anxious exploration of social structures. Beer's reading also demonstrates how something as simple as coincidence of name can alert us to much deeper affinities and disputes between literary texts: in light of Sidney's pastoral romance, as she notes, problems of gender, genre, and class are brought to the fore and laid open to question by the simple, single stroke of Pamela's naming.[16]

Yet Sidney is not the sole forebear in play here. Pope too offered Richardson the precedent not only for a wise and virtuous Clarissa but also for an upwardly mobile Pamela, and (as with Sidney's pastoral princess) this precedent is important in direct relation to its awkwardness for Richardson's text. Quite clearly, here is not a case of simple analogy, but rather one in which Richardson looks to Pope (as well as in other directions) for initial formulation of his subject, and then pointedly redefines this subject by means of overt and deliberate swerves from the gist of his source.

As Anna Laetitia Barbauld noted as early as 1804,[17] Pamela's otherwise unusual name is conspicuously heralded in Pope's short verse

[16] *Arguing with the Past: Essays in Narrative from Woolf to Sidney* (London, 1989), pp. viii, 8, 3; see also pp. 34–61.

[17] *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1804), I, lxxviii; see also Ian Watt, 'The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding', *Review of English Studies*, 25 (1949), 325–30.

epistle on letters, courtship and other matter close to Richardson's heart, the *Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture* (first published in 1712). This poem describes the hazards of marriage, on which women surrender their premarital power over suitors: then 'The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord', while the bonds of love, when 'rais'd on Beauty, will like That decay'. A passage heralding Clarissa's moral in *The Rape of the Lock* declares: '*Good Humour* only teaches Charms to last, / Still makes new Conquests, and maintains the past.'[18] The problem on which the poem most vividly dwells, however, is that of social misalliance. For the commoner who seeks an aristocratic match will find no happiness, Pope insists, and will only debase the station to which she aspires. 'Nor let false Shows, or empty Titles please: / Aim not at Joy, but rest content with Ease', he warns, introducing his cautionary portrait of a pitifully frustrated parvenue:

> The Gods, to curse *Pamela* with her Pray'rs,
> Gave the gilt Coach and dappled *Flanders* Mares,
> The shining Robes, rich Jewels, Beds of State,
> And to compleat her Bliss, a Fool for Mate.
> She glares in *Balls*, *Front-boxes*, and the *Ring*,
> A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched Thing!
> Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her outward Part;
> She sighs, and is no *Dutchess* at her Heart.[19]

From a Richardsonian point of view, this is a quite extraordinary passage. In its reproof of the adventuress's shallow hankerings for glitter and gilt, its mockery of the fool who elevates his trophy wife beyond her place, and its insistence that her nominal rank can never be truly inward, the passage implies (for all its sympathy for Pamela's predicament) a strong satirical defence of established hierarchies. Such hierarchies are natural and not to be transgressed, the hint is; and in making this hint Pope anticipates with uncanny precision the terms of the *Pamela* controversy of 1741, which in *Shamela* was to begin with yet stronger patrician disdain for the levelling implications of inter-class marriage. 'Young Gentlemen are here taught, that to marry their Mother's Chambermaids [...] is an Act of Religion, Virtue, and Honour', protests Fielding's Parson Oliver, and he offers *Shamela* instead as a cure to 'make young Gentlemen wary how they take the

[18] *Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture*, in *Minor Poems*, ed. Norman Ault and John Butt, *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, VI (London, 1964), 63 (ll. 44, 61–3).

[19] *Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture*, ll. 47–8, 49–56 (T. E. VI. 63).

most fatal Step both to themselves and Families, by [...] improper Matches'.[20] Yet in light of Pope's much earlier poem, it is as though it is not *Shamela* but the *Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture* that is truly the originating Antipamelist satire. It seems to attack, proleptically, a work it antedates by three decades.

One explanation for this coincidence between poem and novel is of course that here is no coincidence at all, and that Richardson's decision to name his upstart heroine Pamela marks some quite conscious desire to take on and refute the socially conservative import of Pope's poem. There is no external proof that he knew the *Epistle*, though Aaron Hill seems to have assumed that he did when reminding him, without further explanation, that in the case of his heroine's name 'Mr. Pope has taught half the women in England to pronounce it wrong'.[21] Internal hints that the novel may not only coincide with but actually answer the *Epistle* are certainly strong enough to justify Hill's assumption. There are many straightforward parallels, as when the novel resumes the subject of Pope's 'Whole Years neglected for some Months ador'd, / The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord': in Pamela's own paraphrase, 'the plain *English* of the politest address of a gentleman to a lady, is, I am now, dear madam, the humblest of your servants: Be so good as to allow me to be your Lord and Master'.[22] Still more interesting are those moments where Richardson seems to contest rather than endorse the words of Pope, intensifying the levelling aspect of his work through apparent reaction to, and very pointed contrast with, the *Epistle.* Two characteristics above all differentiate his heroine from her namesake in Pope. The first is that where Pope's parvenue seeks above all the baubles of wealth, Pamela remains humbly indifferent to luxury, as though to refute in advance the kinds

[20]*Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Douglas Brooks (Oxford, 1970), pp. 355–6, 355; cp. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's view of *Pamela* as 'the Joy of the Chambermaids of all Nations' (*Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1965–7), II, 470).

[21]6 January 1741, quoted in Barbauld's introduction to *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, I, lxxviii; see also Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, p. 117. The discrepancy between Pope's accentuation of the second syllable and Richardson's of the first was conspicuous enough for Fielding to joke about 'a very strange Name, *Pamĕla* or *Pamēla*; some pronounced it one way, and some the other' (*Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, p. 293 (Bk. IV, ch. xii)).

[22]*Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture*, ll. 43–4; *A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments [...] Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* (1755), p. 18, quoting the novel's sequel, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*, 3rd edn. (1742), III. 195.

of suspicion that underlie the *Epistle*. Where Pope's Pamela glories in 'shining Robes' and 'Pomp', Richardson's understands the semiotics of dress too well to make the same mistake. She puts aside her mistress's finery and glories instead in the bundle of homespun which marks her preference for 'poverty with honesty' over 'plenty with wickedness': 'I am sure it will be my highest comfort at my death, when all the riches and pomp in the world will be more contemptible than the vilest rags that can be worn by beggars!'[23] Again, where Pope's Pamela is seduced by 'rich Jewels' which reach only 'her outward Part', Richardson's rejects the initial proposals of Mr B in ways that seem to pick up and throw back precisely the terms of the *Epistle*. Refusing 'your rings, sir, your solitaire, your necklace, your ear-rings, and your buckles', Pamela insists that

> To lose the best jewel, my virtue, would be poorly recompensed by the jewels you propose to give me. What should I think, when I looked upon my finger, or saw, in the glass, those diamonds on my neck, and in my ears, but that they were the price of my honesty; and that I wore those jewels outwardly, because I had none inwardly? When I come to be proud and vain of gaudy apparel, and outside finery, then (which I hope will never be) may I rest my principal good in such trifles, and despise for them the more solid ornaments of a good fame and a chastity inviolate. [. . .] I am above making an exchange of my honesty for all the riches of the Indies.
>
> (*P*, pp. 229–30)

Where Pope's parvenue 'is no *Dutchess* at her Heart', then, Pamela's nobility is genuinely 'inward', and in ways moreover that precede and outweigh her merely social elevation. The militancy of her language at this point indicates the second and most audacious aspect of Richardson's claim on her behalf, at odds as it is with Pope's apparently easy equation between birth and worth. For where the *Epistle* implies that nobility is a matter of blood alone, Richardson's heroine not only redefines nobility in strictly moral terms, so making it available to the humble too; she even claims it as *peculiarly* the province of the humble, and castigates by contrast a depraved aristocracy whose conduct severs whatever links may once have existed between social and moral pre-eminence. 'My *soul* is of equal importance with the soul of a princess, though in quality I am but upon a foot with the meanest slave' (*P*, p. 197), she famously announces. She would happily become 'the wife of some clouterly plough-boy', for she would then 'have been content

[23] *Pamela*, ed. Peter Sabor, intr. Margaret A. Doody (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp. 65, 111. Further references are given to this edition (hereafter *P*) in brackets in the text.

and innocent; and that's better than being a princess, and not so' (*P*, p. 269). Pamela is fully equipped to become a '*Dutchess* at her Heart', the insistence is, since she is already a princess in her soul; her nobility comes from her virtue, not from her marriage, for rank alone gives no such guarantee. Richardson's emphasis here goes beyond mere talk of spiritual equality, and to this extent at least is genuinely levelling; for Pamela's virtue is seen to make her more rather than less noble than such toffs as Lady Davers, who arrives with all the trappings of rank — 'A chariot and six. Coronets on the chariot' (*P*, p. 401) — to berate her new sister-in-law as a social climber. Pamela herself has no wish for the tinsel sported by the likes of Lady Davers or Pope's fake duchess, and she prays: 'O keep me, Heaven! from *their* high condition, if my mind shall ever be tainted with *their* vice!' (*P*, p. 294). Earlier, 'smiling at the absurdity of persons even of the first quality, who value themselves upon their *ancestors* merits, rather than *their own*' (*P*, p. 84), she quotes an unnamed poet to support her claim 'That VIRTUE *is the only nobility*' (*P*, p. 83).[24]

But it is in the representation of Mr B, a gentleman 'fallen from the merit of that title' (*P*, p. 54), that the severity of Richardson's attack on a degenerate élite comes to its highest pitch. 'He intends to go to Court next birthday, and our folks will have it, he is to be made a lord', writes Pamela, resuming her characteristic uncoupling of merit and rank: 'I wish they would make him an honest man' (*P*, p. 100). She also mentions the parliamentary attendance through which Mr B advances his ambitions (*P*, p. 132), and she protests further that he is 'a Justice of Peace, and may send me to gaol, if you please, and bring me to a trial for my life!' (*P*, p. 91). All such remarks show Richardson's readiness to direct the novel's quarrel (however fleetingly) beyond the merely private conduct of rakish squires, touching instead the much larger social, legal and political structures of Walpole's England and their dangerous vesting of power with a greedy and (as Mr B's behaviour suggests) potentially rapacious élite. Pamela is no Tory satirist, however, and for the most part her complaint is simply at the dereliction of nobility inherent in her master's conduct: 'I *will* tell you, if you were a king, and insulted me as you have done, that you have forgotten to act like a gentleman' (*P*, p. 102), she insists. For men of

[24]Peter Sabor suggests George Stepney's 'Virtue alone is true Nobility', *The Eighth Satire of Juvenal Translated* (1693), l. 37 (*P*, p. 521).

his rank to act in such ways is to 'put it in the power of their inferiors to be greater than they' (*P*, p. 56).

As such passages make abundantly clear, Pamela's eventual marriage is for Richardson no transgression of categories at all; rather, it is a proper reunification of the categories, too often severed, of merit and rank. Far from debasing the aristocracy, as Pope's Pamela is seen to do, Richardson's heroine personally saves it from depravity and disrepute. As Mr B himself predicts, 'there is not a lady in the kingdom who will better support the condition to which she will be raised' (*P*, p. 297), while the alliance of noble peasant and penitent squire sealed in their eventual union bears witness to what for many Antipamelists was the novel's most alarming social message — that distinctions of rank in the end mean little, that 'we were all on a foot originally', and that 'at the last, are levelled, *king* and *slave*, / Without distinction, in the silent grave' (*P*, pp. 294–5).

It is interesting to recall that what Pope himself seemed most to value in *Pamela* was the novel's vein of social satire (if not perhaps its levelling subtext). One of his nicest put-downs was passed on to Richardson in all its ambiguity by George Cheyne: 'Mr. Pope here charg'd me [. . .] to tell you that he has read Pamela with great Approbation and Pleasure, and wanted a Night's Rest in finishing it, and says it will do more good than a great many of the new Sermons.'[25] Such words leave unclear whether *Pamela* kept Pope awake or put him to sleep, and they neglect to count how many other sermons, old or new, the novel had failed to beat. If Pope hints here at some impatience with *Pamela*'s preaching, however, his praise seems less studiously faint when William Warburton later reports their shared responses to Richardson's sequel of 1742, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition*:

> Mr. Pope and I, talking over your work when the two last volumes came out, agreed, that one excellent subject of Pamela's letters in high life, would have been to have passed her judgment, on first stepping into it, on every thing she saw there, just as simple nature [. . .] dictated. The effect would have been this, that it would have produced, by good management, a most excellent and useful satire on all the follies and extravagancies of high life; which to one of Pamela's low station and good sense would have appeared as absurd and unaccountable as European polite vices and customs to an Indian. [. . .] And what could be more natural than this

[25]Cheyne to Richardson, 12 February 1741, quoted by McKillop, *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist*, p. 50.

> in Pamela, going into a new world, where every thing sensibly strikes a stranger?[26]

At first sight this letter appears to recommend a further and improved sequel — a sequel perhaps that would intensify that affinity between *Pamela* and *The Rape of the Lock* on which J—— W—— was shortly to build. Yet Pope's and Warburton's idea of using the novel to satirise 'the follies and extravagancies of high life' in fact takes its cue from a significant strain of satire at work in the text from the start. Margaret Anne Doody points to the masquerade scene of *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* as already satirical in much the way that Warburton and Pope would recommend; she also mentions the moment when Pamela begins 'a Subject, which never fails to make the worst of Weather agreeable to a fine Lady; that of praising her Beauty'.[27] While as a whole this sequel may indeed draw the sting from its precursor, tactfully silencing the stridency of Pamela in her peasant condition, its occasional digs at high-life frivolity thus retain at least something of the novel's original charge. Yet Richardson's shift from forthright denunciation to gentler satire in fact begins in the volumes of 1740, towards the end of which the heroine's gradual accommodation in high life comes to mute the trenchancy of her first complaints. Focus moves from Pamela's own status as transgressive upstart to turn on the havoc played by others with natural order: one need only recall Mr B's satirical view of those who 'think it the privilege of birth and fortune, to turn day into night, and night into day, and seldom rise till 'tis time to sit down to dinner; and so all the good old rules are reversed: for they breakfast when they should dine; dine, when they should sup; and sup, when they should retire to rest; and, by the help of dear quadrille, sometimes go to rest when they should rise' (*P*, p. 393).

Games at cards return us of course to *The Rape of the Lock*, in which the game of ombre gives Pope space not only to mock 'the follies and extravagancies of high life' but also to push his satire more covertly into affairs of state.[28] It is intriguing in this context to see Richardson follow a similar route from social to political satire (if with

[26]Warburton to Richardson, 28 December 1742, *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, I, 134.

[27]*A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford, 1974), p. 91; see also Terry Castle on the masquerade scene and Pamela's attempt to mount (as one masquerader puts it) 'a general satire on the assemblée', *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (London, 1986), p. 174.

[28]See Erskine-Hill, 'The Satirical Game at Cards in Pope and Wordsworth', in Claude Rawson, ed. *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 183–95.

a somewhat heavier hand), drawing like Pope on traditional ways of encoding political reflection in games of cards:

> I had all four honours the first time, and we were up at one deal. 'An honourable hand, Pamela,' said my master, '*should* go with an honourable heart; but you would not have been up, if a knave had not been one.' 'Whist, sir,' said Mr Perry, 'you know was a court game originally; and the knave, I suppose, signified always the prime-minister.'
>
> (*P*, p. 427)

It is through his own knavery, Mr B hints here, that Pamela has reached her happy state; but his point about the production of good ends from bad means only slightly softens Mr Perry's abrupt hit at a target hard to mistake.

At such moments of oppositional innuendo, one glimpses a further, political, aspect to the bizarre affinity between *Pamela* and *The Rape of the Lock*; and here too the work of J—— W—— seems peculiarly prescient. As well as the more obvious gestures of mock-heroic discussed at the start of this essay, *Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor* takes from *The Rape of the Lock* and applies to Richardson's novel two particular satirical gambits which Pope uses to voice very marked (if elsewhere mitigated) hostility to the world he describes. The most familiar is Pope's wry misapplication of forms and conventions traditionally used to celebrate epic endeavour, thereby highlighting a disparity between heroic form and post-heroic content in which the empty frivolity to which courtly society has now decayed is clearly exposed. 'There Heroes' Wits are kept in pondrous Vases, / And Beaus' in *Snuff-boxes* and *Tweezer-Cases*' (*RL*, V, 115–6): such contrasts ridicule a debased courtliness, measuring the trivial sexual warfare of Hampton Court against the truly heroic feats of a chivalric past.[29] J—— W—— points just such disparities between epic language and foppish action to achieve his own comparable belittling of Sir Blunder's world, but he also draws on the more specifically topical scope of *The Rape of the Lock*, and on those memorable moments where Pope looks beyond the vile bodies of Belinda and her set to take in the larger structures of injustice on which the leisurely high jinks at Hampton Court must finally rest. The celebrated couplet in which Pope looks

[29]See Peter Hughes's account (taking in both *The Rape of the Lock* and *Pamela*) of 'the long process by which the heroic mode had been transferred from war to love and sensation, from heroic fury to tendresse and sadism': 'Wars within Doors: Erotic Heroism in Eighteenth-Century Literature', in Robert Folkenflik, ed. *The English Hero, 1660–1800* (Newark, 1982), pp. 168–94, 191.

past the snuff, fans and chat of his feckless protagonists to see that 'The hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign, / And Wretches hang that Jury-men may Dine' (*RL*, III, 21–2) is not an irrelevant digression, nor is it simply a point about sloppy procedures. Beneath that obvious complaint, Pope also targets the questionable justice of laws used throughout the period to preserve the livestock and game of a propertied élite which stood in relation to these laws as both administrators and prime beneficiaries. The implication of his couplet is not simply that wretches hang that judge and jury may end their sitting early. Wretches hang as a matter of policy and public example, that the propertied may dine on the fruits of enclosure safe in the knowledge that a sanguinary body of law (shortly to culminate in the notorious Black Act of 1723) could be called on, and conspicuously enforced, to keep their feast from the dispossessed.[30] We should not need the authors of *Albion's Fatal Tree* to remind us that hanging and the threat of hanging were a primary means by which the main beneficiaries of Hanoverian rule were able to protect the gains of enclosure. And while it may have been fanciful of E. P. Thompson to read *Windsor-Forest*'s hostile depiction of Williamite rule as indicating 'what Pope's feelings might have been' about the imminent rule of the Black Act,[31] in this couplet at least one cannot escape Pope's barbed reflection on the intimidatory legislation enacted throughout his lifetime to defend the plenty of those whose privilege it was to legislate, judge and sentence.

In J—— W——'s hands, these most socially critical aspects of *The Rape of the Lock* work intriguing effects on *Pamela*. The inherent satirical tendencies of Pope's form enable J—— W—— to rewrite the novel as a mock-heroic exposure of a world increasingly close to that of Pope's poem — a debased, frivolous and self-gratifying world of titled oafs and social climbers. The elevation of Mr B as 'Sir BLUNDER, proud of an illustrious Line' (*FI*, I, 36) intensifies Richardson's original attack on aristocratic degeneracy; and this point is reiterated as the

[30]Compare Fielding's ironic applause for the smug frankness with which one contemporary justice hanged a wretch that jurymen might ride: ' "For it is very hard, my lord," said a convicted felon at the bar to the late excellent Judge Burnet, "to hang a poor man for stealing a horse." "You are not to be hanged, Sir," answered my ever-honoured and beloved friend, "for stealing a horse, but you are to be hanged that horses may not be stolen" ' (*The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, ed. Thomas Keymer (London, 1996), p. 16.

[31]E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 291; on the gallows and judicial coercion, see Douglas Hay *et al.*, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth, 1977), esp. pp. 17–63.

knightly combats, trials and quests which the poem affects to celebrate are revealed as no more than a sequence of inept and clumsy gropings. Pamela's persecutor comes to sound, in fact, like no one so much as Sir Plume, not so much the venerable knight as upper-class twit of the year:

> Vain of his Wealth, he ev'ry Beauty storms;
> 'Dem me, — I love you, Me'm — but I hate Forms;
> 'What say you? tell me, can you like me, Miss?
> He pauses — and then struggles for a Kiss;
> Looks at his Watch: — 'A Pox! I must be gone;
> 'Adieu, my Angel. — Call the Chariot, JOHN.'
>
> (*FI*, I, 39–4)

J—— W——'s Pamela, for her part, comes closer to her namesake in Pope's *Epistle to Miss Blount* than to Richardson's paragon, and the height of her ambition is represented in the kind of gaudy paraphernalia derided in both the *Epistle* and *The Rape of the Lock*. Both she and her master seem locked in some mutually devious struggle of varying lusts, for cash on her part, for flesh on his:

> With deep Designs he acts a double Part;
> To win, and to betray, PAMELA's Heart.
> With deeper Art yet acts the cautious Fair,
> Nor bids him hope, nor bids him yet despair;
> Throws forth those Lures so seldom known to fail,
> Yet doubtful holds the Balance of the Scale.
> Sudden she darts the Lightning of her Eyes,
> Calls forth her Charms, and bids her Colour rise;
> Then looks with meek Confusion on the Ground,
> While glowing Blushes give a deeper Wound:
> With vary'd Art she plays the subtile Game,
> And e'en her Frowns but fan the rising Flame.
> The future Prospect of a happy Life,
> Of rumbling Coaches, and an honour'd Wife;
> Of Flambeaux, Titles, Equipage, and Noise,
> And a long Series of protracted Joys;
> Of Courts, Plays, Operas, Assemblies, Beaux,
> Of Lap-dogs, Parrots, Masquerades, and Shows,
> The chief Ambition of the Female Kind,
> Like flowing Tides come rushing on her Mind.
>
> (*FI*, II, 33–52)

Here the struggles of Pamela and her master come close to those of Pope's Belinda and the Baron, whose real-life counterparts were embroiled in games of courtship where, for all the superficial frivolity

of the manoeuvres, much indeed was at stake.[32] And J—— W—— also takes from Pope his broader sense that the struggles he describes somehow typify, indeed symbolise, the shallow and devious acquisitiveness of a whole culture shot through with corruption. Where Pope links 'the long Labours of the *Toilette*' with the similarly calculating manoeuvres of judges and merchants (*RL*, III, 21–4), or where he builds a picture of global hypocrisy from 'The Courtier's Promises, and Sick Man's Pray'rs, / The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs' (*RL*, V, 119–20), J—— W—— is ready to follow. Finding in Pamela and Sir Blunder the true representatives of a thoroughly spiv society, he repeatedly links their conduct with wider targets:

> Not more the Wretch who haunts a Court in vain,
> The Country Curate, or the City Dean,
> The half-pay Hero, long disus'd to fight,
> The voting Burgess, or the cringing Knight,
> Sighs for Preferment, than Sir BLUNDER sighs
> To make the fair PAMELA's Heart his Prize.
> Not more a broken Gamester longs to play,
> Nor the high Pensioner for Quarter-Day;
> Not more a Lady longs new Modes to try,
> Or the young Heir to see his Father die,
> Than he to bribe PAMELA to his Will,
> And yet keep free from galling Wedlock still!
>
> (*FI*, III, 121–32)

The opening of Canto III is similarly indebted to the equivalent moment in Pope for its survey of the noonday nation:

> Now pleading Counsels were by Fools retain'd;
> And ruin'd Clients of their Money drain'd:
> Now the new Bridegroom long had left his Bride;
> And Judges, brib'd, had set Decrees aside:
> *Betty* had stolen from her Master's Room;
> And trembling Criminals attend their Doom.
> Now busy Footmen brush th'unpaid-for Clothes,
> And the stiff Dun to's Lordship's Levee goes.
> The greasy Duchess at her Toilet now
> Repairs the wrinkled Face, and grizly Brow.
> *Phoebus* had half the teeming Earth survey'd,
> Ere yet his Beams awak'd the lovely Maid.
>
> (*FI*, III, 1–12)

Yet in using Pope to rewrite *Pamela* as a satire on high-life degeneracy,

[32]See Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 48–82.

and more generally on the shabby enterprise culture on which it rests, J—— W—— was not grafting something alien on to Richardson's novel so much as drawing from it, and making more evident, an aspect of *Pamela* inherent in the text all along. Richardson of course shows little interest in mock-heroic and its potential to satirise the present (though it is intriguing to find Parson Williams reading *The Rape of the Lock*'s precursor-text, 'Boileau's Lutrin' (*P*, p. 339)).[33] He is also far less hostile to his heroine than is J—— W—— (though it is worth remembering that the novel is ambivalent enough about Pamela to contain within itself all the allegations of vanity, hypocrisy and ambition on which the Antipamelist parodists were later to play).[34] But Richardson is, or allows his heroine to be, very openly hostile about the dereliction of nobility of which Mr B and his sister are so conspicuously guilty, and he fully shares the mock-heroic's interest in disparities between worth and birth. It has already been noted how, in its conspicuous valuation of plebeian virtue over aristocratic vice, the novel repeatedly sharpens its didactic surface with a levelling edge. Merit is a matter of conduct and not blood, and may reside more with the disenfranchised like Pamela than with those, like Mr B, who will abuse the role of Justice of Peace or go to Court to be made a lord. At least until the uneasy reconciliation of the novel's conflicts in marriage between squire and peasant, *Pamela* thus implicitly targets not just one degenerate noble but a whole oligarchy of courtiers who preside over society, legislate in their own interests, and feather their own nests. The card game, in which the knavery of Mr B is fleetingly linked with that of Walpole, makes the political point as plainly as Richardson is prepared to allow. He then develops a coded plea for harmonious reconciliation in the nation, and for the rule of law in a state whose constitution should defend its people against the corruption of kings or knaves:

> This introduced a pretty conversation, though a brief one, in relation to the game at whist. Mr B. compared it to the English constitution. He considered, he said, the *ace* as the laws of the land; the supreme welfare of the people.

[33]Richardson would have been acquainted, as printer, with Dennis's hostile comparisons between *The Rape of the Lock* and Boileau's 'noble and important satirical Poem, upon the Luxury, the Pride, the Divisions, and Animosities of the Popish Clergy' (*Remarks on Mr. Pope's Rape of the Lock* (1728), in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore, 1943), II. 330). Boileau is more precisely cited by Lovelace in *Clarissa* 3rd edn (1751; repr. New York, 1990), IV, 19.

[34]See Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 30–2.

> 'We see,' said he, 'that the plain, honest-looking *ace*, is above and wins the king, the queen, and the wily knave. But, by my Pamela's hand, we may observe what an advantage accrues when all the court-cards get together, and are acted by one mind.'
>
> Mr. Perry having in the conversation, observed, that it is an allowed maxim in our laws, that the king can do no wrong, 'Indeed,' said Mr B., 'we make that compliment to our kings indiscriminately; and it is well to do so, because the royal character is sacred; and because it should remind a prince of what is expected from him: but if the force of example be considered, the compliment should be paid only to a sovereign who is a good man, as well as a good prince [. . .].'
>
> (*P*, p. 428)

This is measured language, and the regenerate Mr B is scrupulous in his mediation between the sanctity of monarchy and the supreme welfare of the people; but the oppositional gist of the passage as a whole is hard to miss. So too is the change in Mr B himself, whom Pamela seems by now to have reformed not only as a moral husband but also as an anti-Walpole patriot. At any rate, if here Mr B may indeed be deem'd 'a *Whig* for my Opinion' (as he admits in the novel's first edition), he is very emphatically an opposition or 'Old Whig' of the ambiguous kind with whom Richardson was once embroiled as printer of *The True Briton*.[35]

To return to my original question, then, it would seem that *Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor* does indeed alert us to very real affinities between *Pamela* and *The Rape of the Lock* (albeit affinities complicated by nuances of style and ideology which pull in very different directions). It is not that *Pamela* itself specifically bears the mark of *The Rape of the Lock* (though it does apparently bear that of the *Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture*). Rather it is that in combining the two texts, J —— W —— reveals a continuity of interest between them, focusing both in a composite attack on aristocratic degeneracy and abused privilege which retrospectively illuminates (albeit by exaggeration and simplification) an important strain that these otherwise contrasting works retain in common.

[35] *Pamela*, ed. T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel (Boston, 1971), p. 336; on Richardson's oppositional (even at times crypto-Jacobite) printing in the 1720s, see Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, pp. 19–36.

Two Clarissas

One further question is whether Richardson himself, though not alluding directly in *Pamela* to *The Rape of the Lock*, subsequently saw the connection. We cannot know for certain that he read J—— W——'s parody, but we do know that he monitored Grub Street closely enough to have recorded (in an undated manuscript note) that *Pamela* 'gave Birth to no less than 16 Pieces, as Remarks, Imitations, Retailings of the Story, Pyracies, &c.'[36] It is not unlikely that the poem reached him, and if so it could not have failed to put him once more in mind of *The Rape of the Lock*, and at the very time when his second and more devastating novel about aristocratic rapacity and sexual warfare (parts of which began circulating in manuscript late in 1744) was being drafted and first revised. Certainly Pope was in his mind at this time for other reasons: the revised *Dunciads* of 1742–3 and Pope's death in 1744 made the poet's writing and reputation share with the preparation of *Clarissa* a central place in Richardson's correspondence with Aaron Hill throughout the middle of the decade.[37] The published *Clarissa* bears obvious traces of these interests: the Postscript has a lengthy quotation from the *Epistle to Augustus*, and Richardson privately identified as a reference to Pope a reflection of Anna Howe's on the excessive vanity of 'a celebrated Bard'.[38]

More interesting is the shadowy presence in the novel's ideological struggles of the *Epistle to a Lady*. Lovelace looks to Pope as an authority to support his rake's creed, and one maxim in particular bolsters the confidence with which he sets himself to prove Clarissa fallible. 'And this made the poet say, That every woman is a Rake in her heart' (*C*, III, 106), he reminds Belford, drawing conspicuously on Pope's 'But ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake'.[39] Earlier, as he laughs at Clarissa's confused and hesitant flight from Harlowe Place, his exclamation '*The Sex! The Sex, all over*! — Charming contradiction!' (*C*, III, 30) may recall and conflate the same poem's 'Woman's at best a Contradiction still' and ''Tis to their Changes that their charms they

[36]Victoria and Albert Museum, Forster MSS, XVI, 1, fo. 56.

[37]Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, pp. 576–7.

[38]*Clarissa*, 3rd edn. (1751; repr. New York, 1990), VIII. 285–6; II, 13; *Selected Letters*, p. 227 n. Further references are given to this edition of *Clarissa* (hereafter *C*) in brackets in the text.

[39]*Epistle to a Lady*, in *Epistles to Several Persons*, ed. F. W. Bateson, 2nd edn. (London, 1961), l. 216.

owe'.[40] In this context, at any rate, it is hard not to think again of the *Epistle to a Lady*'s portrait of dissimulating femininity, 'Bred to disguise',[41] when on the other side of the novel's great debate about gender and virtue Clarissa quotes a verse epistle by a friend, 'Miss Biddulph's answer to a copy of verses from a gentleman, reproaching our Sex as acting in disguise' (*C*, I, 11). The verses in question allow this reproach, but they blame female disguise on conditions determined by men: '*Your own false hearts* / Compel *our Sex to act dissembling parts.*' Whether or not one finds a hit at Pope in these particular lines, Lovelace's own more overt use of the *Epistle to a Lady* proves not only Richardson's imaginative attraction to the poem but also his association of its argument with modes of thought and conduct he seeks to discredit.

Yet if *Clarissa* may be read in part as engaging in dialogue with the *Epistle to a Lady*, or as drawing the *Epistle* directly into its own dialogic narrative structure, something similar may also be said of *The Rape of the Lock*. It need not be significant that the name of Richardson's saintly martyr echoes that of Pope's 'grave *Clarissa* graceful' (*RL*, V, 7), or indeed that the names of the quarrelling lovers at the novel's start, Arabella Harlowe and Robert Lovelace, echo those of Pope's real-life protagonists, Arabella Fermor and Robert Lord Petre. But, as with the precedent of Pope's Pamela, such coincidences may at least alert us to important connections between the basic dilemmas explored in both these texts. Both are profoundly concerned with the constraints placed on individuals in a culture where marriage secures not simply emotional attachments but also transmission of property, title and wealth. By the same token, both combine evident hostility to aspects of their heroines' conduct with evident sympathy for her entanglement in the unyielding laws of courtship and marriage of interest. As Christopher Hill argued long ago, the early stages of Richardson's novel examine the competing claims of inclination and money, pitting Clarissa's case for self-determination against the Harlowe 'darling view [...] of *raising a family*' (*C*, I, 72) through alliance of interest to Solmes. More recently, Valerie Rumbold's discussion of the social and economic background to *The Rape of the Lock* makes plain the real tensions and stakes that underlie the erotic combats of Pope's beleaguered Catholic heirs, as well as the genuine gravity of a situation that

[40] *Epistle to a Lady*, ll. 270, 42.
[41] *Ibid.*, l. 203.

leaves Belinda 'a degraded Toast, / And all your Honour in a Whisper lost!' (*RL*, IV, 109–10).[42] Both works, moreover, pursue their treatment of marriage markets into the murkier psychological realms of sexual obsession, struggle and rape, and for all the differences of tone between Pope's ostentatious whimsy and Richardson's tragic turn, the underlying seriousness in each case is beyond doubt. (It is perhaps an indication of this seriousness that the *locus classicus* of Lucretia is an important point of reference in each case, though with Pope it becomes explicit only in his supplementary verses 'To Belinda on the Rape of the Lock'.)[43] Finally, both works share a common concern with the lost vocation, in a post-heroic age, of an increasingly delinquent nobility — a nobility which in Pope sinks to the trivial pursuits of Hampton Court and in Richardson to an utterly destructive libertinism.

Like the *Epistle to Miss Blount* in relation to *Pamela*, *The Rape of the Lock* presents Richardson with a distinguished precedent for *Clarissa*'s subject, but at the same time one very different in genre, tone and implication, and one that Richardson seems to have been as anxious to contest as to follow. It is perhaps unlikely that Clarissa's bizarre exclamation, 'Were ours a Roman Catholic family, how much happier for me' (*C*, I, 84), is a hint that the very Protestant context of Richardson's novel must be seen to pose dilemmas of courtship yet more acute than those of Pope's poem. But there is unmistakable reference to *The Rape of the Lock*, and reference by extension to *The Rape of the Lock*'s own use of *Paradise Lost*, in the novel's grim depiction of post-heroic depravity. Linking Lovelace's rape of Clarissa with the Baron's rape of the lock, and looking past both to a mythic primal scene, Richardson rewrites his Popeian source in ways that

[42]Hill, 'Clarissa Harlowe and Her Times', *Essays in Criticism*, 5 (1955), 315–40; Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World*, pp. 48–82. Here too J—— W—— finds occasion to link Richardson and Pope, describing how Pamela risks exactly Belinda's fate. 'I'm now amongst the Beaux a reigning Toast, / Must make my Fortune e'er my Beauty's lost' (*FI*, III, 51–2), she resolves, and is anxious to avoid the situation of those who

> find it fatal, to their Cost,
> When Virtue, Honour,—all that's dear is lost:
> Like Roses pluck'd, the Fav'rites of a Day,
> A while admir'd, then cheaply thrown away;
> The pointed Mark of all malicious Sneers,
> And the sad Subject of dull Sonnetteers.
>
> (*FI*, I, 53–8)

[43]See Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and Its Transformations* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 57–82, 97, 183.

conspicuously polarise, and implicity censure, the moral ambiguities of the text he recalls.

Refusing in this second novel to draw the sting to bring his plot to the wishful reconciliation of penitence and reform, Richardson creates in Lovelace a high-born anti-hero whose violent libertinism marks an extreme depth of aristocratic degeneracy, a falling away from traditional heights of chivalric virtue that is precisely Satanic both in its direction and in its depth. It is striking that, in so doing, he follows Pope by focusing his rake's destructive will as though with symbolic force on his victim's locks, desired as something at once vulnerable, forbidden, and of course (as Pope's 'Hairs less in sight' make plain) profoundly sexual. Unlike Pope, however, Richardson scrupulously avoids identifying these locks as those of a partly culpable temptress, thereby refusing to dilute the absolute culpability of her assailant. Significant here are the lines from Canto II of *The Rape of the Lock* in which Pope imbues Belinda's hair with an ominous mythic import:

> This Nymph, to the Destruction of Mankind,
> Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
> In equal Curls, and well conspir'd to deck
> With shining Ringlets the smooth Iv'ry Neck.
>
> (*RL*, II, 19–22)

Belinda is credited here with a ruinous allure that looks back to the Fall, her Eve-like 'Ringlets' 'conspiring' together in ways that threaten 'the Destruction of Mankind'. Similar connotations of danger and entrapment are involved in the precedent faintly recalled by Pope at this point, when Milton's Eve 'Her unadorned gold'n tresses wore / Dissheveld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd / As the Vine curles her tendrils';[44] and the 'Destruction of Mankind' on which Pope plays here is comically recapitulated in the helpless temptation of the Baron, for whom Belinda's locks act like those 'hairy Sprindges' or 'Slight Lines of Hair' which betray fowl and fish to their hunters (*RL*, II, 25–6). If Pope leaves room to see the Baron as at least in part the victim of some Eve-like temptress, however, Richardson leaves no doubt, by way of emphatic contrast, that Lovelace must be exclusively seen as tempter rather than tempted. Whatever Clarissa herself may think when she talks of quarrelling with Lovelace 'like the first pair (I, at least, driven out of my paradise)' (*C*, III, 15), Richardson is careful to

[44] *Paradise Lost*, *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Helen Darbishire (London, 1958), IV. 305–7.

reformulate the language of Fall in ways that very clearly cast the rake in Satan's, not Adam's, role.[45] It is in this role that he sees Clarissa as an Eve of some thoroughly innocent kind, tricked helplessly beyond the realm of her father's garden, and he seems to conflate Pope's 'shining Ringlets' with Milton's 'wanton ringlets' as he fantasises greedily about 'the wavy Ringlets of her shining hair [...] wantoning in and about a neck that is beautiful beyond description' (*C*, III, 28). Here Richardson refuses to laugh away his rake's possessive desires as partly provoked by their object, and as the novel progresses he seems almost to censure Pope's comic indulgence towards the Baron by insistently associating the trivial crime of *The Rape of the Lock* with the great one of his own novel. For Lovelace's later failure to win his victim's love, as opposed to her body, is chillingly voiced in the mad obsession that seizes him, after the rape, to possess again these talismanic locks. He demands (as though in grisly recapitulation of the rape) 'that my ever-dear and beloved Lady should be opened and embalmed', and he sends to Belford meanwhile for 'a lock of her hair instantly by the bearer' (*C*, VIII, 44, 46). 'But her dear heart and a lock of her hair I will have, let who will be the gainsayers!' (*C*, VIII, 47), he repeats, plainly betraying his catastrophic failure to distinguish between physical possession and volunteered love.

Earlier, Lovelace seems more knowing about his status as some second Baron, redrawn, with new hostility, as one whose rapacious obsessions precipitate a far more calamitous loss. In a flight of fancy clearly indebted to Pope, he exclaims: 'Why, Belford, the Lady must fall, if every hair of her head were a guardian angel, unless they were to make a visible appearance for her, or, snatching her from me at unawares, would draw her after them into the starry regions' (*C*, III, 104–5). His words again bizarrely recall Belinda's lock, while also suggesting the sylphs who guard it and the lock's inevitable ascension 'to the Lunar Sphere, / Since all things lost on Earth, are treasur'd there' (*RL*, V, 113–4). The irony of this echo is very much at Lovelace's expense, for his joking prediction is later fulfilled in Clarissa's death and his own dream of her saintly ascension 'to the region of Seraphims' (*C*, VII, 148). Clarissa must indeed be drawn to these regions, to the lunar sphere, for in Richardson's tragic resumption of Pope's subject it is not simply a lock of hair that is lost to the world but the world's

[45]See Gillian Beer, 'Richardson, Milton, and the Status of Evil', *Review of English Studies*, NS 19 (1968), 261–70, reprinted in *Arguing with the Past*, pp. 62–73; Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, pp. 111–4, 190–6.

brightest ornament. The point is further reinforced when Lovelace whimsically foresees his victim's loss in ways that echo the comparable 'upward rise' of Belinda's lock ('A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid Air, / And drew behind a radiant *Trail of Hair*': V, 123, 127–8). In his own words, Clarissa too becomes some such sudden star, who soars to the lunar sphere: 'I was *in danger of losing my Charmer for ever.* — She was soaring upward to her native Skies. She was got above earth, by means, too, of the *Earth-born*: And something extraordinary was to be done to keep her with us Sublunaries' (III, 276).[46] The association, again, is inescapable: drawing insistently on the connotations of Pope's poem yet at the same time resisting its comic tone, Richardson seems at such moments to offer his novel as some tragically literal resumption of what in Pope remains largely *jest.*

As these uneasy echoes of Pope make plain, *Clarissa*'s relationship to *The Rape of the Lock* is real yet also evasive, as though unable to settle itself finally between homage and critique. On the one hand, the richness of significance attached by the novel to its heroine's locks shows profound understanding of the subtlety with which Pope had used the lock and its rape to hint at larger, darker conflicts. Yet at the same time Richardson's allusive rewritings of certain lines shy away from Pope's playful obliqueness, as though to insist that here is no laughing matter, and that the full seriousness of the subject they share can only be reached through *Clarissa*'s distinctive mode of Christian tragedy. In one point, however, the two texts seem to meet in at least approximate accord, with the readiness of Richardson's heroine to echo (albeit in starker form) the conclusions of her namesake in Pope. Perhaps by now we may dispense with John Carroll's assumption that Richardson's heroine failed to pay serious attention to Pope in general and *The Rape of the Lock* in particular, and return in conclusion to that echo of Canto V which Carroll himself was first to note. The source is the famous moral in which 'grave *Clarissa* graceful' asks 'why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most', going on to remind her audience that 'frail Beauty must decay' and 'Locks will turn to grey, / Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade, / And she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid'. Clarissa's purpose here is to raise the enduring virtues of 'good Sense' and 'good Humour' above the matter of mere

[46] I am indebted here to Jocelyn Harris's account of Miltonic echoes in *Clarissa*, in which she notes in passing Richardson's use of 'an image from that other poem of Fall, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*': see *Samuel Richardson*, p. 67; also 'Richardson: Original or Learned Genius?', p. 194.

evanescent beauty, and she concludes that esteem must therefore come from more than surface alone: 'Beauties in vain their pretty Eyes may roll; / Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul' (*RL*, V, 9–34). With much of which Richardson's heroine would clearly agree. Her own version of the moral, however, is of a different tone and emphasis:

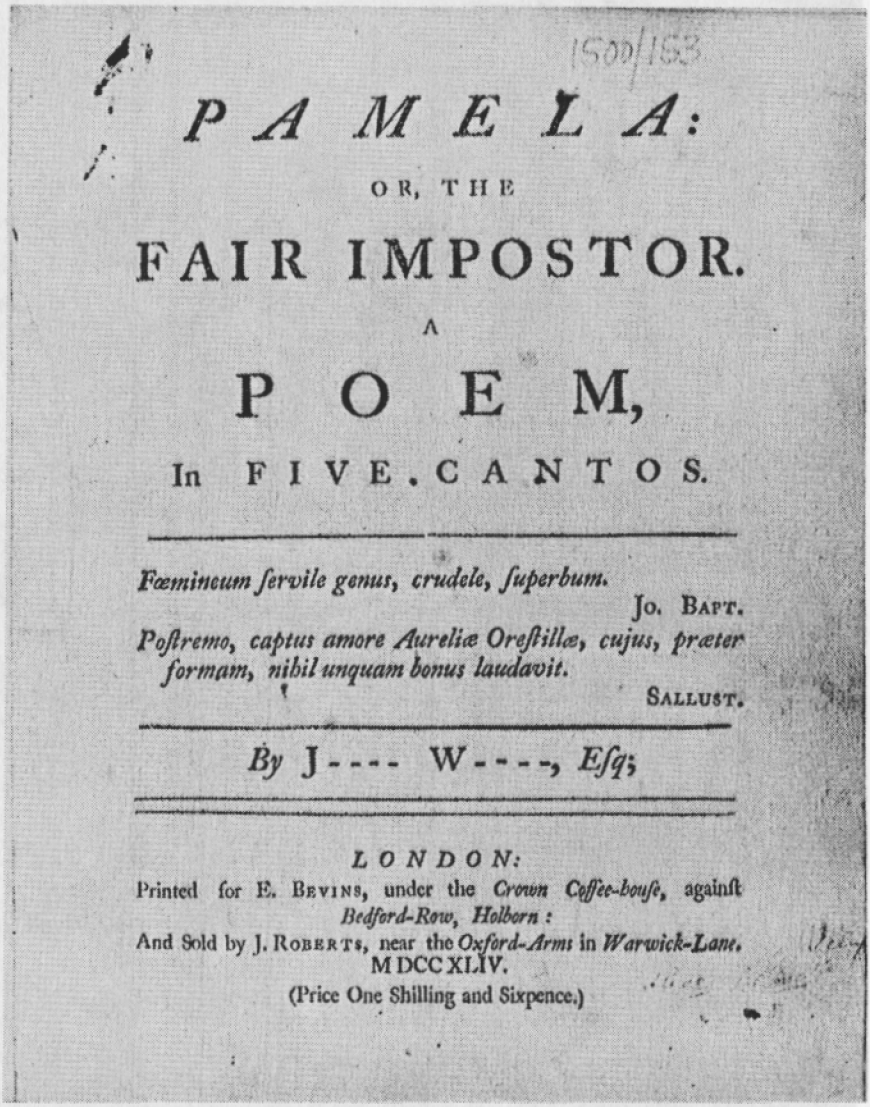
> For, as to our Sex, if a fine woman should be led by the opinion of the world, to be vain and conceited upon her form and features; and that to such a degree, as to have neglected the more material and more *durable* recommendations; the world will be ready to excuse her; since a pretty fool, in all she says, and in all she does, will please, we know not why.
>
> But who would grudge this pretty fool her short day! Since, with her summer's sun, when her butterfly flutters are over, and the winter of age and furrows arrives, she will feel the just effects of having neglected to cultivate her better faculties: For then, like another Helen, she will be unable to bear the reflexion even of her own glass; and being sunk into the insignificance of a *mere old woman*, she will be entitled to the contempts which follow that character. While the *discreet matron*, who carries *up* [...] into advanced life, the ever-amiable character of virtuous prudence, and useful experience, finds solid veneration take place of airy admiration, and more than supply the want of it.
>
> (*C*, I, 278)

Like her namesake in Pope, Richardson's Clarissa thus contests the value placed by her culture on mere beauty, but she does so with greater severity: for all her talk of excusing the 'pretty fool', her language of vanity, conceit and folly goes significantly beyond that of her predecessor. This is not her only departure from the Popeian moral, however, for (in keeping with Richardson's emphasis throughout the novel) her argument resists the tradition of satire against women, and the fullest weight of her censure falls instead on a decadent masculinity. Devoting as much space again to male vanity as to that of women, she further intensifies her language to speak of fops and coxcombs as 'the scorn of one Sex, and the jest of the other' (*C*, I, 279), pointedly redirecting the force of her predecessor's words. The end point of her argument, of course, is Lovelace, whose own 'despicable [...] self-admiration' (*C*, I, 279) will soon deny Clarissa everything, including what seems in context the happy enough outcome feared by her namesake in Pope — that 'she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid'.

Here again, then, we find Pope acting on Richardson in a role poised intriguingly between that of influence and that of antagonist, informing the direction of Clarissa's thought but also giving focus to the departures and counter-arguments which his own Clarissa's moral

seems here to provoke. It is plain at this point, as in general, that Richardson's thinking about Pope was indeed marked by argument and resistance as well as influence and acceptance, but it is equally plain that we cannot take the intermittent hostility apparent in his more general reception and rewriting of the poems to mean that Richardson withheld his serious attention from the writer he called 'the first Genius of the Age'. On the contrary, we have in Richardson's novels a fine example of creative misreading and wilful rewriting of Popeian topoi, a fascinating and underexplored set of connections with much to tell us about the distinctive methods and emphases of both writers. This essay has attempted to sketch the ways in which both share common interests in conflicts of courtship and marriage, gender and class; in censure of an aristocracy that is at best (in the Baron) self-gratifying and at worst (in Lovelace) all-destroying; and in efforts to define notions of nobility and virtue, together with their problematic relationship to blood and birth. In all these matters, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Richardson's novels are significantly provoked by Pope. This, however, is hardly to exhaust the complex connections between these two vast bodies of work: there remain other stories to tell about Richardson and Pope, and perhaps also about that ingenious reader and wit, J—— W——.

PLATE 4



PAMELA:

OR, THE

FAIR IMPOSTOR.

A

POEM,

In FIVE CANTOS.

Fœmineum ſervile genus, crudele, ſuperbum.

Jo. Bapt.

Poſtremo, captus amore Aureliæ Oreſtillæ, cujus, præter formam, nihil unquam bonus laudavit.

Sallust.

By J---- W----, *Eſq;*

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