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Abstract
Richardson's second novel, Clarissa, takes for its heroine a woman who writes her will; his last, Sir Charles Grandison, is named instead after a hero who executes others'. Grandison executes the will of a man who has tried to kill him, the wills of two men whose lives he has saved, and even a will that does not exist. After his father dies intestate, Grandison takes advantage of the semantic overlap between "will" and "intention" to claim that there is something for him to execute: "that intention will I execute with as much exactness, as if he had made a will."' Sir Hargrave Pollexfen asks Grandison to administer his property in the same breath as he asks a clergyman to care for his soul: "Be my executor. And do you, good Bartlett, put me in the way of repentance" (6:31:143). The desire of women throughout Europe to make Sir Charles their husband is matched only by the wish of men throughout England to make him their executor-requests which, unlike the competing demands of four English and two Italian ladies, he never refuses.

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Why does Grandison spend so much time executing wills? This essay proposes two answers: executorship serves to displace marriage as the legal transaction which creates families, distributes wealth, and structures the novel; and the executor's peculiarly indirect relation to property that he distributes without owning and the decisions he makes in other people's names resolves conflicts between competing models of literary property and attribution in the epistolary novel itself.

1 Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 2:21:372. References are to volume, letter, and page of this edition.

"Relationship remembered against relationship forgot"

Richardson claims in the "Letter to a Lady" appended to *Grandison* that the "great and decisive event" of a novel can be either "a *Death*, or a *Marriage*" (3:471). Readers have disagreed about which constitutes the decisive event in *Grandison* itself. Lady Bradshaigh tells Richardson that "death, death, death is your *darling*," but the author of the *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela* accuses him of making "Love, eternal Love, the subject, the burthen of all your writings."[2] The novel itself inscribes this disagreement by making characters wonder whether to interpret Grandison's behaviour as that of a lover or an executor. The trips to Canterbury which Harriet and Grandison's sisters initially impute to a courtship, even to the point of making "this Canterbury" and "that Canterbury" code-words for love affairs, turn out to have been undertaken for an executorship instead (2:6:290, 291). The brother's definitive account of his journeys as business transactions with a male merchant corrects the sisters' mistaken invocation of romance and their invention of a nonexistent female character: "I thought there was a Lady in the case" (2:28:394). Death replaces marriage at the same time as the masculine truth of business replaces the feminine falsehood of love.

In Richardson's earlier novel, Clarissa's executor, Belford, takes the place of her lover, Lovelace. After appropriating the ellipsis Lovelace had used to refer to Clarissa's rape ("I can go no farther") to describe her death ("I can write no more"), Belford goes on to replace Lovelace as the object of the Harlowes' financial and sexual jealousy. "They both, with no little warmth, hinted at their disapprobation of you, sir, for their sister's executor," Morden writes Belford. "They said there was no need of an executor out of their family ... They were surprised that I had given up to you the proceed of her grandfather's estate since his death."[3] The Harlowes' suspicion of Belford's presence in Clarissa's lodgings suggests, as Harriet's and the Grandison sisters' mistake confirms, that executors are too easily misread as lovers. Yet the Harlowes' jealousy is

2 Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, 22 February 1754, quoted in Margaret Anne Doody, "Identity and Character in *Sir Charles Grandison*," in *Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 127; *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela* (London: J. Dowse, 1754), 39. The word "intention" itself points in both directions, for it can be used both as a synonym for "will" in its general and specifically testamentary senses (as in Grandison's promise to execute his father's intentions), and, in the plural, as an abbreviation for "intentions of proposing marriage."

3 Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*, ed. Angus Ross (New York: Viking, 1985), 257:883, 481:1362, 301:1401. References are to letter and page of this edition.

not entirely unfounded, for Belford does end up uniting himself to their family—not by marriage to Clarissa, but by the promise that binds him and Morden to execute each other's wills.[4]

Grandison, too, substitutes an executorship in the place where one might expect a marriage. The novel concludes not with Harriet becoming one suitor's wife (an event buried in the sixth volume), but with her becoming the administrator of another suitor's charitable bequest, "a very large Legacy in money and his jewels and plate" (7:61:462). The conclusion substitutes something very like executorship for rape as the bond between Harriet and her would-be abductor Pollexfen: from sex without affection and familial consent, the novel has progressed to affection and a transfer of property between families (including the Pollexfen jewels and plate) without sex. In fact, the rejected suitor's bequest to the woman he formerly loved—or, better yet, directly to her husband, as in Pollexfen's legacy to Sir Charles—constitutes something of a leitmotif in *Grandison*. Sir Hargrave's legacy to Harriet is foreshadowed first by her ex-suitor Mr Fowler's bequest of his entire fortune to her (4:29:402), and then by Belvedere's to the Porretta family following their daughter's refusal of his hand (7:49:422). Each of these wills takes the place of marriage, effecting through death the redistribution of property that a marriage would have accomplished.

By rendering marriage unnecessary for the transfer of property between the suitor and his beloved or her family, these legacies strip the woman's refusal of financial consequences. In Belvedere's bequest to the Porrettas, Clementina's own name never officially appears:

> The Count has made his will, and left all that he could leave, and his whole personal estate, *to their family*, in case he should die unmarried. *He would not leave it to Lady Clementina*. (7:49:422, emphasis added)

The Count's estate passes to the Porretta family not only without Clementina's agreement—as one can imagine happening through a forced marriage—but without her knowledge—which a marriage, in contrast, would have required. Belvedere's attempt to link himself directly to a family of in-laws without going through the intermediary of a wife echoes Grandison's refusal to marry his sister to his best friend: "The friendship, Charlotte, that has for some years subsisted, and I hope will for ever subsist, between Mr. Beauchamp and me, *wants not* the tie of relationship to strengthen it" (3:17:98, emphasis added). Grandison's love for Beauchamp renders Charlotte herself "unwanted," unnecessary as a

4. Since Belford begins with two wills to execute and later takes on Clarissa's and Lovelace's, that promise brings the total number of wills for which he is responsible to five.

link between two men who can bond more directly; in fact, his treatment of lovers as sisters and sisters as lovers suggests that his ability to bypass the traffic in women has rendered the incest taboo superfluous as well.[5]

The subordination of spouses to in-laws, however, renders husbands no less superfluous than wives. Lady Gertrude, a spinster member of Grandison's "family of love," argues that "women who have by their numerous relations many connexions in the world, need not seek out of their own alliances for protection and defence" through marriage (7:43:408). Harriet reduces the husband to a link between women when she asks "Is there no obtaining such a mother[-in-law as Lady D.], without marrying Lord D.?" (2:5:278). Clementina reproduces the logic of the bequests made by Fowler, Pollexfen, and Belvedere when she asks "that a family friendship may be cultivated among us [the Grandisons and the Porrettas], *as if* a legal relation [i.e., a marriage] had taken place" (7:57:450, emphasis added). Clementina's wish for an alliance "as if" she had never rejected Grandison's suit, and "as if" he had not in fact married another woman, echoes the letter that Lovelace's four female relatives (along with Lord M.) send to Clarissa after she rejects his offer: "We each of us desire ... to be considered upon the same foot of relationship, *as if* what was once so much our pleasure to hope *would* be [a marriage between Clarissa and Lovelace], *had* been."[6] The M. family's collective desire to acquire Clarissa via Lovelace repeats the Harlowe family's collective desire to keep her through Solmes. If, as one critic has argued, Solmes is merely a proxy for the Harlowes, Lovelace himself can be reduced to a proxy for his female cousins and aunts: a matrimonial proxy

5 On the relation between the incest taboo and marital exchange, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon, 1969): "The prohibition of incest is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister, or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister, or daughter to be given to others" (p. 481). For eighteenth-century arguments that incest must be forbidden in order to create alliances between families, see, for example, Thomas Salmon, *A Critical Essay Concerning Marriage* (London: Rivington, 1724), which cites Bishop Cumberland's explanation that incest is forbidden "that by this means new Friendships, and stricter bonds of Amity, should be contracted between Families and Persons not nearly related in Blood, from whence a large Diffusion of Friendship and Kindness proceeding from this Relation, might be spread amongst Persons, not only of the same Commonwealth, but of divers Nations; and also that those Factions and Enmities which would often happen between particular Men and Families, were they only to marry into their own Clan, or Tribe, may be prevented; or if begun, may by fresh Alliances be reconciled and taken away" (p. 175). Salmon's reasoning is less gender-specific than that of *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (London: G. Walker, 1814), where Mr Stanley declines his son-in-law's offer to send his wife home, arguing that "were families to accumulate for a few generations, and the bands of relationship to be unbroken, society would not be divided into nations, but into clans, and perpetual feuds would be the consequence; it therefore becomes necessary that these connections should, after a few generations, be lost and absorbed in the grand ocean of mankind" (p. 38).

6 *Clarissa*, 394:1181.

in Clarissa's relation to the ladies of the M. family as much as a sexual proxy in Clarissa's relation to the whores.[7] The "as if" of Clementina and the M. family does with sentiment what the bequests of Pollexfen, Fowler, and Belvedere do with money: it erases the difference between marrying and not marrying.

In fact, in a text sometimes taken as a prototype of the courtship novel, it is surprising how few consequences arise from the acceptance of one partner and rejection of the others. The series of royal marriages that Richardson invokes as historical analogues to Grandison's private dilemma seem designed to raise the stakes of the choice between Clementina and Harriet, but they can just as easily remind readers, by contrast, of how much less is at stake in the novel itself. Grandison's decision first to rescue and then to marry Harriet does not cause a single duel, despite the threats of multiple rakish admirers. Nor does his decision *not* to marry Lady Frances N. prevent her family from loving him: "Sir Charles Grandison, Lord N. once said, knew better by non-compliance, how to create friendships, than most men do by compliance" (2:23:377). Clementina's decision against marrying an English Protestant who would take her away from her country and her religion does not prevent her from coming to England after all or her family's portrait from ending up in Grandison-Hall, any more than her rejection of Belvedere alters the disposition of his property. Terry Eagleton's argument that the sexual behaviour of a male hero like Grandison has no financial value could be extended to all the characters in *Grandison*, female as well as male: the fact that Harriet will never have sexual relations or children with Pollexfen or Fowler (or Clementina, presumably, with Belvedere) does not dissuade the men from leaving the women their estates.[8] If *Grandison* feels plotless, as Johnson's famous denial that Richardson can be read "for the story" suggests, it is less because nothing happens than because what does happen rarely matters.[9]

In a novel where the administration of property is transferred between friends through executorships more often than between spouses through marriage-articles, courtship loses its centrality. By stripping romantic choices of financial consequences, Richardson also strips them of their narrative interest: death replaces marriage as the moment at which

7 John Allen Stevenson, "The Courtship of the Family: Clarissa and the Harlowes Once More," *ELH* 48 (1981), 760. For the argument that Clarissa is raped not by Lovelace but by the whores, see Judith Wilt, "He Could Go No Farther: A Modest Proposal about Lovelace and Clarissa," *PMLA* 92 (1977), 19–32.

8 Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 99.

9 James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 480.

feelings can be measured in money and officialized by law[10]—and even by clothing, in Charlotte's offer to wear mourning for the man whose will her brother is executing (2:28:393). The "family of love" (1:26:133) with which Sir Charles replaces the family of blood is also a family of money, a family-in-law in the most literal sense.[11] When Emily's biological mother claims that Grandison has "robbed [her] of [her] daughter" by refusing to let Emily live with her, Grandison replies by linking "person" to "fortune": "Her *person* and *reputation*, as well as *fortune*, must be in my care" (3:4:17). Emily's scandalous love for Grandison is incestuous not because they are related through birth or marriage, but because they are related by the administration of property. Grandison inherits Jervois's daughter at the same moment at which she inherits her father's fortune: he "*bequeathed* to my care, on his death-bed, in Florence, this his only child" (2:1:226, emphasis added). Grandison is already allied to Emily by death—financially, legally, sentimentally. For them to become related by marriage would waste an opportunity for new affections to be forged and for property to change hands. Grandison does not allow this to happen. After refusing to give his sister by birth, Charlotte, to Beauchamp (3:17:98), Grandison instead gives him his daughter by death, Emily. Death displaces sex in the same way that the ostensible "matrimony-promoter" (4:12:323) and "friend to the married state" (2:6:290), Sir Charles, makes ladies ignore their own "humble servants" and vice versa (6:53:233, 7:3:262), and prompts single ladies to declare that "We never, never, can think of marrying, after we have seen Sir Charles Grandison" (6:54:239).[12]

10 Grandison describes wills as "arguments in effect" when he appeals to financial dispositions to back his own verbal persuasions: "Did not your grandfathers, madam, *in effect*, argue as I argue, when they made their wills?" (7:50:431). Similarly, the Countess in *Pamela* parallels testamentary "Deeds" (in both senses) to "Words": "nobody, her Youth consider'd, thought her a bad Wife; and her Lordship's Goodness to her, at his Death, had demonstrated his own favourable Opinion of her, by Deeds, as he had done by Words, upon all Occasions." Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head, 1929), 4:47:295. References are to book, letter, and page of this edition. And just as wills combine numbers with words, performatives with descriptions of the testator's relation to the heirs, the casket that Lady Grandison leaves to her children jumbles together jewels (which the sisters take), coins and bonds (which they offer to their brother), a picture of her, and a purse labelled with a panegyric on Sir Charles's character (2:20:368).

11 On the relation of non-biological ties in *Grandison* to "bastard kinship" in government, see John A. Dussinger, "Love and Consanguinity in Richardson's Novels," *SEL* 24 (Summer, 1984), 514.

12 Compare Hester Mulso's remark that *Sir Charles Grandison* would "occasion the kingdom's being overrun with old maids." Hester Mulso Chapone to Elizabeth Carter, in R. Brimley Johnson, ed., *Bluestocking Letters* (London: John Lane, 1926), 175, quoted in Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1986), p. 91. John Allen Stevenson points out that "nowhere does Richardson give his readers a marriage-ending." "'A Geometry of His Own': Richardson and the Marriage-Ending," *SEL* 26 (1986), 469.

Love for the executor ultimately supplants love within the family, as Grandison's virtue threatens to break up the very families that it claims to unite. Sir Rowland warns his nephew that "if you envy such a man as [Grandison] his good fortune, by mercy I will renounce you" (7:11:298); and when Grandison dubs his uncle's fiancée Miss Mansfield his aunt, her sister replies by offering to give up her own relation to Miss Mansfield: "If my sister should ever misbehave to her benefactor, I will deny my relation to her" (4:2:271). Diderot's praise of Richardson's works as "un évangile apporté sur la terre pour séparer l'époux de l'épouse, le père du fils, la fille de la mère, le frère de la sœur"[13] is anticipated in less flattering terms by Lady Beauchamp, who asks Grandison "Pray, Sir, are good men *always* officious men? Cannot they perform the obligations of friendship, without discomposing families?" (4:4:273).

"A Double Principle"

Why do marriages matter so little in *Grandison* and executorships matter so much? One reason, I have suggested, is that marriages can link two men only through the intermediary of a woman, while executorships can link one man directly to another; or, to put it differently, that marriages can formalize only the relation between a man and a woman, while executorships can link men to other men. In a society where only women can be legally dead during their biological lifetimes, men must die before they can prove their love of a man by surrendering the administration of their property definitively and irrevocably into his hands. Given that only executorship legalizes men's relationships with other men as marriage does men's relationships with women, it makes sense for Richardson's self-consciously masculine novel to give wills the prominence usually reserved for marriage articles. Conversely, Grandison's role as a disinterested conduit for other men's property could be ranked along with virginity and the use of smelling-salts among his feminine traits: like a woman, he makes possible alliances and property transfers in which he himself is not a party.

A second explanation, however, is that executorships are less exclusive than marriages. Like affection between in-laws and discussions of polygamy, executorship allows characters to circumvent the exclusivity of romantic love. "Love is a selfish deity," Sir Charles laments (2:25:454). It requires the repudiation of one's family and the renunciation of other possible lovers—a concept whose antisocial force Richard-

13 Diderot, "Éloge de Richardson," *Œuvres complètes*, ed. André Billy (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 1066.

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son emphasizes by concentrating all of the jealousy that the other characters are not allowed to feel in the homicidal, hyperbolic, and only intermittently sane figures of Greville and Olivia. Grandison does not have to choose among Danby, Jervois, and Pollexfen as he does among Harriet, Emily, Clementina, Olivia, and the shadowy Lady Anne S. and Lady Frances N.—or rather, as he would have in another novel. For Sir Charles's interest in polygamy is not as purely theoretical as it might appear: despite the notorious virginity which guarantees his lifelong sexual monogamy, he does ally himself through multiple women to multiple families.[14] Clementina's wish "that a family friendship may be cultivated among us [that is, her family and Grandison's], as if a legal relation [that is, a marriage] had taken place" (7:57:450), like Grandison's desire to "consider their and his as one family, ever to be united by the indissoluble ties of true friendly Love" (7:36:375), and his plan to make the Porretta family portrait "the principal ornament of Grandison-Hall" where Harriet also imagines her own portrait hanging (5:40:651), suggest that Grandison has in fact achieved a kind of polygamy, a division of labour in which the orphan Harriet supplies biological offspring and Clementina affine "friends."

The plot of *Grandison* appears at first to be structured by the choice between Harriet and Clementina, but ultimately the narrative lacks exclusive choices, its syntax governed by "and" instead of by "or"—for Sir Charles, sex with Harriet *and* alliance with the Porrettas; for Harriet, marriage to Grandison *and* Mr Fowler's money *and* the Pollexfen family plate. Even the initial opposition between Protestants and Catholics collapses under the latitudinarian generosity of Sir Charles, who approves equally of Catholics and Methodists and reminds Father Marescotti that his church allows for salvation outside its pale. Unlike Clarissa and (initially) Mr B., neither Grandison nor Harriet has to choose between family and lover, between an old life and a new one. If marriage requires the repudiation of old ties, executorship allows their preservation: in the terms that Clarissa applies to a very different situation, marriage creates "relationship forgot," executorship "relationship remembered."[15] Despite Richardson's insistence on Harriet's consciousness of Sir Charles's sexuality ("he downright kissed me—My lip; and not my cheek—and in so fervent a way," 6:31:142), the novel tends to make alliances with

14 For one female reader's hostile response to the polygamy theme, see Margaret Anne Doody's discussion of Lady Bradshaigh in "Identity and Character," pp. 128–29. On Richardson's theories of polygamy in general, see Morris Golden, *Richardson's Characters* (Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 21, and Jean Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 215–16.

15 *Clarissa* 8:62.

many people upstage sex with one, in the same way that Grandison replaces Clementina's miniature, the portrait of one person worn next to another's body, with "the pictures of the whole family, in one large piece" (5:40:651) to be hung in the gallery at Grandison-Hall.

That multiplicity leads to surplus and surfeit. The text is too long, letters circulate to too many readers, the hero has too many virtues, the characters have too much money, too many characters are in love with Grandison—and, if only by a margin of one, Grandison loves too many of them in return.[16] This copia is literalized by Grandison's habit of distributing letters as freely as money. The mass mailings of his Italian narratives introduce the logic of book-publishing into the novel itself, reducing Bartlett to a kind of scribal publisher and Sir Charles himself to a supplier of copy. Eagleton's observation that Grandison's chastity has less value than Pamela's is equally true of the letters which Pamela guards so fiercely but which Grandison circulates in multiple copies. As Tassie Gwilliam has argued, what was voyeurism in *Clarissa* becomes exhibitionism in *Grandison*.[17] Grandison's aristocratic virtue of giving away money replaces Pamela's bourgeois virtue of saving it at the same time as a novel in which letters are displayed succeeds a novel in which letters were hoarded.[18]

Everard is not entirely absurd in attributing to Grandison "the Roman Catholic doctrine of Supererogation" (the performance of good works beyond what is required for salvation, 2:27:392): Grandison has not only too many wives and too many inscribed readers, but too many virtues. "The Domestic Man, The chearful Friend, The kind Master, The enlivening

16 For the complaint that *Grandison* is too long, see (as well as the implicit testimony of the various abridgements) Francis Plummer, *A Candid Examination of the History of Sir Charles Grandison* (London: Dodsley, 1754): after the marriage, he writes "it seems as if Mr. R—n begun to consider himself a *Bookseller* as well as an Author ... or he could not, in writing for Reputation only, have surfeited us so much with tedious Repetitions and very trifling unentertaining Circumstances" (p. 4).

17 Eagleton, *Rape of Clarissa*, p. 99; Tassie Gwilliam, *Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 113. Compare Doody's link between polygamy and the lack of secrets in *Grandison*: "Reserve is also at an end, the final 'reserve' whereby a person reserves the love of another to herself. Harriet's tendency to communicativeness could go no further than for her to communicate not only her love but her beloved" ("Identity and Character," p. 129); and Terry Castle's remarks on a "subbureaucy of writers" in *Grandison. Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 55.

18 The contrast between the epistolary economies of *Grandison* and *Pamela* mirrors the difference between the domestic economies proposed by the two novels. While Grandison's executorships make sentimental relations coincide with financial ties, Pamela takes pains to dissociate the two: she asks her parents to show their accounts to a third party rather than to her, in case she might be thought to be swayed by her affection (*Pamela*, 3:5:26); and she argues against the extended family so prominent in *Grandison*, and, more specifically, against employing relatives and mixing familial affection with business dealings (3:4:21).

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Companion, The polite Neighbour, The tender Husband" (7:7:281), he combines mutually exclusive attributes: masculine and feminine virtues, commercial and courtly skills. He demonstrates "great dexterity in business" (2:19:361) and masters "the mercantile style" (2:35:455), even though "pecuniary sacrifices could not have affected" him (Letter to a Friend, 471); "his complexion seems to have been naturally too fine for a man" but "his face is overspread with a manly sunniness" (1:37:181). While Grandison's predecessor Mr B. had to choose between wealth and birth on the one hand and virtue on the other, and Harriet's successor, Julie d'Etange in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, must choose between a sexually attractive Saint-Preux and a paternal Wolmar, Harriet sacrifices nothing for Sir Charles. The economy of *Grandison* depends on excess and waste as much as the transportation arrangements in one sequel to *Pamela*, where the question of who should take precedence by riding forward in the carriage is avoided by the extravagance of ordering an extra carriage so that four people can choose among eight seats.[19]

Charlotte characterizes her brother at once by linguistic wealth and by the verbal equivalent of polygamy when she contrasts him to those ordinary men whose "poverty of genius" forces them to choose whom to praise:

> Poverty of genius!—They cannot praise one woman, but by robbing the rest. Different, however, from all men, is my brother. I will engage he could find attributes for fifty different women, yet do justice to them all. (5:9:497)

Charlotte's allusion to Grandison's lack of "poverty" of genius serves as an oblique euphemism for his lack of literal poverty—poverty of money. Just as his superabundance of genius allows him to give praise to one woman without taking it away from another, his bottomless funds allow characters to give money to others without "robbing" themselves. After Lord W. accedes to Grandison's request that he increase his ex-mistress's annuity, Sir Charles makes up the difference "out of [his] own pocket" (3:10:55); when his dissolute cousin Everard finally decides to pay his debts, Sir Charles reimburses him with "a brother's part of my estate" (5:12:513); and once he has bullied Mrs Beauchamp into offering to reinstate her stepson's allowance, he offers to pay it himself instead (4:4:283). *Grandison* is embellished with many discussions of the coincidence between religion and "policy" (2:15:331, 3:1:5, 7:3:263, 5:45:665, 5:14:543). It is unclear that this maxim would hold in a world without Grandison to play Providence, however, or in a world where the philanthropist had finite resources. All that prevents the mistress's gain from

19 [John Kelly], *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* (London: Ward and Chandler, 1741), p. 34.

being the keeper's loss, the creditors' money from being subtracted from the debtor's, the stepson's enrichment from requiring the stepmother's impoverishment, are Grandison's infusions of extra money.

The Invisible Hand

Grandison's relation to that superabundant property is curiously oblique. His executorship draws our attention away from his ownership: it allows him to misrepresent his property and his decisions as those of others. After his father dies intestate, leaving nothing to the daughters he hates and everything to his son, Grandison gives £10,000 to his sister with the words "Look upon me only as an executor of a will, that *ought* to have been made" (2:25:383), and asks her to "receive these *as from* your father's bounty" (2:25:382, emphasis added). That phrase reappears when Grandison asks Major O'Hara's wife to "accept, *as from* the *Major*, another 100 *l.* a year, for pin-money, which he, or which you, madam, will draw upon me for ... For this 100 *l.* a year must be appropriated to your sole and separate use, madam; and not be subject to your controul, Major O-Hara" (4:9:310, emphasis to "as from" added). Unlike Sir Thomas, Major O'Hara is not yet dead; in both cases, however, "as [if] from" marks what follows as a fiction, in which Grandison's money and Grandison's generosity are misattributed to other men.

Grandison presents as the obedience of an executor what is really the agency of an heir. His power to give non-existent bequests to his father's mistress and daughters depends on his position as the male heir. Similarly, it is Grandison's status as Danby's heir, not as his executor, that allows him "to amend a will, made in a long and painful sickness, which might sour a disposition that was naturally all benevolence"—an amendment which consists of dividing the money Danby meant to leave him among those whom Danby had intended to punish (2:25:455).[20] Feminized in this as in so much else, Grandison seems to have inherited his habit of posing as another's agent from his mother, who, even before Sir Thomas's death,

would confer benefits in the name of her husband, whom, perhaps, she had not seen for months, and knew not whether she might see for months to come. She was satisfied, tho' hers was the *first* merit, with the *second* merit reflected from that she gave him: "I am but Sir Thomas' almoner: I know I shall please Sir

20 Similarly, at the close of *Pamela* 2, Mr B., to whom Mr Longman has left his money, gives his legacy to Longman's disinherited relatives, changing himself from an heir to an executor who disobeys the testator's wishes.

Thomas by doing this; Sir Thomas would have done thus: Perhaps he would have been more bountiful had he been present." (2:11:312)

From his father Grandison inherits property; from his mother, the practice of giving away property that they claim was never theirs.

Clarissa reverses that move when she transfers authority from testatrix to executors. After referring to "some blanks which I left to the very last" in her will, she adds:

> In case of such omissions and imperfections, I desire that my cousin Morden will be so good as to join with Mr Belford in considering them, and in comparing them with what I have more explicitly written; and if, after *that*, any doubt remain, that they will be pleased to apply to Miss Howe, who knows my whole heart; and I desire that their construction may be established; and I hereby establish it, provided it be unanimous, and direct it to be put into force, *as if I had so written and determined myself*.[21]

Like "as from" in *Grandison*, the phrase "as if I had so written" invites the executors to replace the testatrix as author of the will. Clarissa's editors do in fact usurp her authorship. The inscriptions that Clarissa herself composed for her coffin are replaced by her executor's reproduction of them, when Anna's tears prevent her reading the coffin itself and force her to ask one executor, Morden, to transcribe its inscriptions.[22] Clarissa's other executor, Belford, becomes the editor of the letters (including hers) that make up the novel.

Clarissa's "as if" differs from Grandison's "as from" in one essential point, however: the former is written by the testatrix, the latter by the executor. Between *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, as the task of misattribution shifts from eponymous testatrix to eponymous executor, our attention shifts from the character who produces and signs a document to the character who interprets and enforces it. The executor Belford is no more the hero of *Clarissa* than the testators Pollexfen, Sir Thomas, and Danby are the heroes of *Grandison*. The latter is never even mentioned until after his death: he becomes a character only once his will needs executing. Conversely, Clarissa's elaborate death is not matched by Jervois's (and Danby's) offstage demise or Pollexfen's and Sir Thomas's briefer exits; and Grandison himself, of course, is still alive at the end of the novel.

Where *Clarissa* makes the executor an editor, *Grandison* makes him the author of a fiction. In misattributing his own decisions to nonexistent documents—in claiming authority while disclaiming authorship—Sir Charles reproduces an ambivalence about property and signature that

21 *Clarissa*, 507:1420 (emphasis added).
22 *Clarissa*, 502:1404.

characterizes the epistolary novel as a genre. Grandison's strategic confusion between his roles as his father's heir and his father's executor simply literalizes the double metaphor that Richardson had used already in his own sequel to *Pamela*, where the "editor" claims the authority to represent Pamela by figuring himself at once as her literary executor and as her literary heir. After criticizing the authors of sequels that "have murder'd that excellent Lady, and mistaken and misrepresented other (suppos'd imaginary) CHARACTERS," he announces that all the copies of Pamela's writings

> are now in *One Hand Only*: And that, *if ever* they shall be published, (which at present is a point undetermined) it must not be, till after a certain event, as unwished, as deplorable: And *then*, solely, at the Assignment of SAMUEL RICHARDSON, of *Salisbury-Court, Fleetstreet*, the Editor of these Four Volumes of *PAMELA*; OR, VIRTUE REWARDED.[23]

The reference to Pamela's death figures the proprietorship of her character at once as a battle between literary executors and as a contested inheritance. The question of who represents and who "misrepresents" Pamela is answered by whoever ends up with the letters in hand, just as Sir Thomas's intentions are reconstructed by whoever gets his property. The coincidence of Grandison's role as executor with his status as heir, like the slippage between the narrator's knowledge of Pamela's wishes and his possession of her letters, suggests that the ease with which owners of property can pose as interpreters of texts ultimately blurs the distinction between the two. Grandison's double role as obedient executor and self-willed heir repeats the tension between the authorial self-effacement of the epistolary form and Richardson's attempt to monopolize the right to write a sequel; between the multiple authorship of the hypothetical letters (presumably written in various "hands," as Lovelace's difficulty in forging Clarissa's and Anna's handwriting reminds us) and the single ownership of the letters once collected and printed in a single standard type; or, to put it differently, between *Pamela*'s claim to be the work of several hands and its claim to be the property of "one hand only."[24]

23 "Advertisement," *Pamela*, 4:457. Ironically enough, Richardson seems to have stolen or inherited both images for literary property—executorship and inheritance—from one of the rival sequels with which he disputes that property. *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* is introduced by a correspondence between Mrs Jervis's niece, who has inherited her aunt's letters, and the publisher, who assures readers that she will use the cash value of the inheritance to keep alive her aunt's charitable projects, which are in turn represented as merely an extension of Pamela's will: "A Profit will certainly arise from their Sale ... and as your easy Fortune sets you above applying to your own Use such unexpected Money, you may succeed your Aunt in the Post of Almoner, as you did in that of House-keeper to the illustrious Pamela" (pp. iii–iv).

24 *Clarissa*, 229:752, 239:814.

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The single hand as an image for literary property spans Richardson's career. He invokes it to discredit not only rival sequels to *Pamela*, but a pirated edition of *Grandison*. In *The Case of Samuel Richardson ... with Regard to the Invasion of his Property in The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), Richardson's attack on the pirated Irish edition of the novel, he argues:

> Never was Work more the Property of any Man, than *this* is his. The Copy was never in any other Hand: He borrows not from any Author: The Paper, the Printing, entirely at his own Expence.[25]

As in *Pamela*, the ambiguity of "in Any other Hand" grounds Richardson's "Property" at once in writing and in possession. It remains unclear whether *Grandison* is "more the Property" of Richardson than other novels are the property of their publishers, or than other novels are the property of their "Authors." This overdetermined claim opposes private property both to financial collaboration in procuring materials ("at his own Expence") and to intellectual collaboration in procuring ideas ("he borrows not from any Author"). Richardson's double derivation of his own property rights leaves open the question of to whom the "Work" would belong if the printer's hand and the writer's were not "one Hand only." By defining himself metonymically as that single "Hand," Richardson presents himself as a figure of mediation like Grandison or like Pamela, and his own career as a union of opposites like *Grandison* or like *Pamela*. The eponymous hero's habit of reconciling feuding in-laws and duellists mirrors the attempt of *Grandison* itself to reconcile the alternatives which each of Richardson's novels claims to unite: masculine with feminine values, "policy" with "religion," "mercantile style" with *noblesse oblige*; in the figure of the executor/heir, those who administer property with those who own it; and, in the figure of the author/publisher, the hand that produces the text with the hands that reproduce it, now "One Hand Only."[26]

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25 Samuel Richardson, *The Case of Samuel Richardson* (1753), p. 2. A different attack on the pirated edition, the "Address to the Public," appears at the end of the first edition of *Grandison* itself—that is, in the same position in which the "Advertisement" to *Pamela* 2 appears. See *History of Sir Charles Grandison* (London: Samuel Richardson, 1754), 7:425–42. I am indebted to Mark Rose's incisive discussion of the *Case*, and, more generally, of Richardson's role as an "emblem of the link between the book trade, concerned with property, and the discourse of originality." See *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 117.

26 My thanks to Ruth Yeazell for helpful comments on a draft of this essay.