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Abstract
The creator of Lovelace, the most adroit and beguiling manipulator in eighteenth-century fiction, was in his own life unusually susceptible to deception and fraud. In Samuel Richardson's last years, having made compassionate loans totalling £50 to Eusebius Silvester, a feckless attorney he came to regard as a confidence trickster, he sought to retrieve his full correspondence with Silvester as a memorial of exploited trust.

Keywords
Samuel Richardson, printer, printing history, corporate fraud

Cover page footnote
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Parliamentary Printing, Paper Credit, and Corporate Fraud: A New Episode in Richardson's Early Career

Thomas Keymer

The creator of Lovelace, the most adroit and beguiling manipulator in eighteenth-century fiction, was in his own life unusually susceptible to deception and fraud. In Samuel Richardson's last years, having made compassionate loans totalling £50 to Eusebius Silvester, a feckless attorney he came to regard as a confidence trickster, he sought to retrieve his full correspondence with Silvester as a memorial of exploited trust. He wished (as he instructed a proxy to tell Silvester)

> to have his Collection complete, for a Warning Piece to his Friends and Family to be joined with one of just such another Imposition put upon him by an Attorney too, out of his own Profession, but which indeed he pretended not to abhor for righteous Reasons, as you do in many of your parading Epistles. By which however he could not take Warning, tho' it was Years before he was attacked by you, in so artful and designing a Manner, as now appears on Proof.[1]

Richardson then meticulously organized and edited his correspondence with Silvester, adding explanatory annotations and interpolating connecting text. This correspondence is among the Forster manuscripts in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and has been thoroughly analysed from biographical and critical points of view.[2]

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1 John Douglas to Eusebius Silvester, 21 August 1759, Forster MSS 15-1, fol. 58, Victoria and Albert Museum. "His Friends and Family" replaces the deleted word "Posterity."

2 For a biographical account, see T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 465–70; on the formal implications, see Tom Keymer, *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*

Whatever record Richardson kept of the other "Imposition put upon him by an Attorney" has not survived, but new evidence from the archives makes it possible to identify the episode in question, which did indeed take place years before the Silvester affair—a quarter of a century beforehand, at a time when evidence of the future novelist's activities is frustratingly patchy. Reconstruction of the episode casts new light on Richardson's early career as a printer (our emerging understanding of which I trace in the first part of this article) while also connecting him intriguingly to one of the major financial scandals of the Walpole era.

It has long been recognized that Richardson was thinking of his extensive contracts as a parliamentary printer when summarizing his career in 1753: "I began for my self, married, and pursued Business with an Assiduity that, perhaps, has few Examples; and with the more Alacrity, as I improved a Branch of it, that interfered not with any other Person; and made me more independent of Booksellers (tho' I did much Business for them,) than any other Printer."[3] At first, it was assumed that Richardson refers only to official government contracts. A chapter of William Merritt Sale's ground-breaking *Samuel Richardson: Master Printer* (1950) was devoted to this crucial branch of his business, documenting his activities from 1733 as sole official printer of bills and committee reports for the House of Commons. These commissions led in turn to Richardson's appointment in 1742 as the first, and again exclusive, printer of the *Journals of the House of Commons*. The contract involved was enormous: the task included printing not only recent transcriptions but also manuscript records of sessions dating back to 1547 (the number of words to be printed was at first estimated, with eye-watering precision, at 26,537,603), so that Richardson was embroiled for the rest of his life in a massive Shandean catch-up operation that was only nearing completion in 1761, the year of his death, when the proceedings to November 1757

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 34–44.

3 *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to "Clarissa,"* ed. William C. Slattery (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 25–26. Citing this passage, Eaves and Kimpel assume—mistakenly, for reasons set out below—"that branch of his business ... did not begin until 1733, and in his early years he was presumably not so independent of the booksellers" (*Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, 19).

had just appeared.[4] This undertaking proceeded while Richardson was also conducting other branches of a large and diverse business, to say nothing of writing major novels and corresponding on a prodigious scale. As he told Aaron Hill in a heartfelt letter of 1749: "Did you but know, how extremely I have been harassed by Business in the House of Commons Way. Half a Day every Day obliged to be thrown away on a personal out-doors Attendance."[5] The contract for the *Journals* then passed via John Hughs (1703–71) to Luke Hansard (1752–1828), by whose name the official transcript of parliamentary debates is still known.

While giving the fullest account to date of these professional activities, however, Sale was primarily interested in the book trade proper and in Richardson's dealings with booksellers and authors. Parliamentary printing was the key source of the status, wealth, and independence that Richardson had secured by the time *Pamela* appeared, but this employment occupies just twelve of Sale's 400 pages, which until recently provided the standard account of his printing career. T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel relied largely on Sale for this aspect of their monumental biography of 1971, and here again parliamentary printing is confined to a handful of pages. Though clarifying the patronage route through which Richardson obtained the official contract of 1733—it was "by the interest of the late Nicholas Hardinge," according to the rival printer William Bowyer—Eaves and Kimpel made little substantial change to Sale's overall picture.[6] As they summarize the case, "in the 1730s a new branch of Richardson's business was increasingly important, a branch which he had begun early in 1733, the printing of bills, orders, and occasional reports for the House of Commons." They then identify the first such bill Richardson printed as a highway bill of February 1733.[7]

At first Richardson was directly paid for this work (Walpole's

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4 William Merritt Sale, *Samuel Richardson: Master Printer* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 76–85.

5 Richardson to Aaron Hill, 10 May 1749, Forster MSS 13-3, fol. 115, Victoria and Albert Museum. "Out-doors" is inserted; "at Westminster" is deleted after "Attendance."

6 Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, 57n, citing Bowyer as reported by John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols. (London, 1812–15), 2:354. The influence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, Arthur Onslow, was doubtless an additional factor.

7 Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, 56.

signature is on Treasury warrants to Richardson from the mid-1730s), but in 1739 Hardinge (1699–1758), who held the key office of Clerk of the House of Commons from 1732 to 1748, succeeded in having the payments channelled through himself.[8] The same applied to the printing of the *Journals*, with Richardson working in effect as Hardinge's subcontractor. Tensions were the predictable result. "Though well and promptly paid himself for the printing of twenty-three volumes of the *Journals*," historian of Parliament O.C. Williams writes, Hardinge "was extremely dilatory in paying his debts to Samuel Richardson, the printer and novelist, putting him off with repeated promises to pay and, on the last occasion, only brought to discharge his debt by the firm intervention of Arthur Onslow, the Speaker."[9] The sums at stake were large (£1,500 on two occasions), but relations remained sound enough for Richardson to bequeath
a mourning ring to Hardinge—who actually predeceased Richardson—as he did to Hardinge's successor Jeremiah Dyson (1722–76) and to several assistant clerks with whom he must have worked closely over the years in preparing the *Journals*, including John Read (1721–60), the author of an intelligent surviving letter on *Clarissa*'s resistance to neoclassical criteria of judgment.[10] The motivation for at least some of these bequests must have run deeper than mere professional courtesy. Though no stranger to bereavement, Richardson was badly thrown in 1749 by the premature death of John Grover, Clerk of Engrossments and Elections (and source of the stupendous word-count for the *Journals*), for whose dependent sister he organized a subscription.[11]

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8 In the Treasury "Money Book," Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), T53/37, fols. 218, 338: Walpole, Dodington, and Oxenden authorize payment for several bills or reports in each case, including the 1733 *Report, with the Appendix, from the Committee … to Whom the Petition of the Proprietors of the Charitable Corporation Was Referred* (fol. 218) and the 1734 *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Examine, State, and Report, Who of the Sufferers in the Charitable Corporation Are Objects of Compassion* (fol. 338).

9 O.C. Williams, *The Clerical Organization of the House of Commons, 1661–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 64–65. In 1748, Hardinge became the member of Parliament for Eye in Suffolk, and his activities and career, with those of Richardson's other associates in the clerical administration, are usefully written up by Williams, 59–75. See also, on Richardson's financial arrangements with Hardinge, Williams, 199–201, 320–23, which Eaves and Kimpel seem not to have known; see also Sale, 82–83.

10 John Read to Samuel Richardson, 5 December 1748, Forster MSS 15-2, fol. 28, Victoria and Albert Museum.

11 *The Correspondence of Edward Young*, ed. Henry Pettit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 326; (Richardson to Young, 9 September 1749).

All these administrators are securely identified in the meticulous account of Richardson's will that Eaves and Kimpel (building on earlier reports by A.L. Reade) published in advance of their biography. Eaves and Kimpel were unaware, however, of the significance of two similar bequests, and of simultaneous work by historian Sheila Lambert on the legatees involved, namely Robert Harper (ca. 1697 to 1772) and his brother Samuel (ca. 1700 to 1775).[12] Neither of these brothers held any official post in the clerical administration, and for that reason their identities eluded Reade and Eaves and Kimpel—though Reade comes close by conjecturally nominating Samuel Harper's son (1732–1803), a clergyman who spent most of his career as librarian of the British Museum. Yet both Robert and Samuel Harper were intimately involved in House of Commons business, in their capacities as attorneys and parliamentary agents, who specialized in representing landowners and communities in securing the passage of private and local bills through the legislature. The more active partner was (in the words of his obituary in the *Leeds Intelligencer* for 10 November 1772) "Robert Harper, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, Counsellor at law, who is deservedly supposed to have been one of the most able conveyancers in England for more than half this present century."[13] Even as Eaves and Kimpel's biography was published, the unique record of privately instigated legislation provided by Harper's manuscripts and annotated collection of parliamentary papers became the key source for Lambert's revisionist account of the mechanisms of the eighteenth-century Commons in *Bills and Acts* (1971).

Before Williams and Lambert, historians assumed that the work of soliciting private parliamentary bills before the late eighteenth century was an exclusive privilege undertaken for payment by official clerks of the House. As Williams demonstrated from the surviving accounts of private solicitors, however, what came to be called parliamentary agency was regularly undertaken by freelance attorneys in

12 Richardson's bequests are first reported by A.L. Reade, "Samuel Richardson and His Family Circle V–VI," *Notes and Queries* 12th series 11 (28 October and 11 November 1922), 342–44, 383–86; see also the amplifications and corrections in Eaves and Kimpel, "Samuel Richardson and His Family Circle III: Richardson's Will," *Notes and Queries* new series 11 (August 1964), 300–4. Sheila Lambert completes the identifications in the opening chapters of *Bills and Acts: Legislative Procedure in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), see esp. 12, 12n.

13 Cited by Lambert, *Bills and Acts*, 1.

the course of their overall practice. He points, by way of example, to a bill of "Expenses of James Blew, Solicitor in Parliament for the Dagenham Breach Bill," in which Blew, an otherwise unknown figure with no official role in the clerical administration, charges fees plus expenses of fifty guineas for attending and soliciting during the parliamentary session of 1714.[14] On behalf of their clients, attorneys such as Blew would manage all aspects of a private bill's progress through Parliament, from initial drafting to final amendment; and from 1705, when the printing of private bills at the expense of the parties was required by standing order, they would also be responsible for commissioning printers. As Lambert established from the Harper papers, moreover, Williams was wrong to assume that solicitors' firms in the period could not have operated as pure specialists in parliamentary agency, the available business being too small. Harper was just such a specialist, and indeed the leading conveyancer and draftsman operating at the time, particularly in the field of estate and enclosure bills. "During the thirty-one years of his prime, 1732 to 1762, altogether 1,238 private acts received the royal assent and of these 458 or 37% were drawn by Harper," as Lambert calculates; there were also bills that failed, and cases in which Harper acted for the opponents of bills (especially enclosure bills). Throughout this period, Harper never dropped below ten bills per session, often prosecuting many more, and "an attorney responsible for as many as twenty such bills each session, who had the selection of the printer, was a far more valuable client even than the House itself, which never at this time ordered anything like that number of public bills to be printed."[15]

Lambert more clearly spells out the implications for Richardson in an article devoted to printing, in which (having applied Sale's methodology of ornament-identification to Harper's collection) she reports that "Richardson, as well as printing for the House, conducted an extensive business in the printing of private bills." Throughout his career, and by a large margin, he was Harper's printer of choice.[16] Lambert is silent about Blew, but the more recent discovery of

14 Williams, 187.

15 Lambert, *Bills and Acts,* 11, 13.

16 Lambert, "Printing for the House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century," *Library* 5th series 23 (1968), 25–46, esp. 35. See also, for Lambert's itemization of Richardson's official printing to 1750, *List of House of Commons Sessional Papers, 1701–1750,* List and Index Society Special Series No. 1 (London: Swift, 1968).

Richardson's accounts rendered to Blew for works printed between 29 December 1720 and 14 April 1730, including thirty-two private bills, indicates that until his death in 1730 Blew was a major operator in the field that Harper then dominated.[17] Richardson's association with Harper in the production of private bills was merely the continuation, then, of a similar association with Blew, for whom he printed not only bills but also lobbying documents of the kind typically generated on both sides ("Cases," "Observations," "Reasons," and the like) as private legislation went through. No doubt Harper, Blew, and the further client identified below were not alone in employing Richardson for such work.[18]

In this light, Richardson's talk of improving a branch of business independent of booksellers seems to refer back not just to 1733 but to the very outset of his career (roughly February 1720, when he set up for himself following his employer John Leake's death). Right from the start, he was carving out a line of business that freed him from the vagaries of the book trade and in time led on, as he cultivated his new parliamentary contacts and demonstrated the reliability of his work, to security and prestige as the printer of the public bills and eventually of the Commons *Journals*. As the most active and conspicuous unofficial printer of private bills, he made himself—whether or not as part of a long-term plan—the natural candidate to become the first official printer when, seven years after the ad hoc printing of public bills had begun in 1726, the system was regularized. As it proved, he was a stronger candidate even than William Bowyer, who, as established printer of a separate Commons publication, the *Votes and Proceedings*, must have thought himself in a prime position to win the new contract. Decades later, Bowyer wrote sourly of Richardson having defeated him "as well from his superior merit, as his superior knowledge of mankind"—the implication being, faintly but just discernibly, that this "superior knowledge" had been

17 The notebook (PRO, C105/5) was discovered by Michael Harris and independently investigated by Keith Maslen and the late Michael Treadwell. Participants in the Richardson Tercentenary Celebration held at Stationers' Hall, London, 11 July 1989, will remember Treadwell's fine paper, "Samuel Richardson, Citizen and Stationer," which he left unpublished; see also Keith Maslen, "Samuel Richardson's Private Acts," *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 19:1 (1995), 3–13.

18 It is worth noting that a further intended recipient of a mourning ring, Zachary Hamlyn of Lincoln's Inn (1678–1759), was also a parliamentary agent, who combined this work with a semi-official post among the clerks.

put to work in treatying with the mercenary Hardinge.[19]

Anyone with an interest in Richardson is now indebted to Keith Maslen, whose invaluable *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer* (2001) is the definitive source on Richardson's printing output and the most up-to-date account of his professional career. Building on Sale, Lambert, and his own research, Maslen authoritatively revises our prior sense of the scale and shape of Richardson's production, greatly expanding Sale's list of books and pamphlets, paying new attention to newspapers, and itemizing well over 1,000 public and private bills, beginning with four dated 1720. One is an enclosure bill, another relates to the rebuilding of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and the remaining two arise from a disputed will and the forfeiture of an estate. Altogether, Maslen calculates that Richardson printed at least 1,050 private bills, "the lion's share of the market"; that, by the time of his 1733 appointment, he had "already printed over 260 private bills, usually in multiple impressions or editions"; and that of more than 600 private bills for which Harper was the agent, Richardson printed almost 500.[20] This is where our knowledge of the parliamentary printing now stands, and it is hard not to sense a connection between Richardson's scope as a novelist and the insights offered by the private bills into domestic conflicts and property transactions among the landed classes. Christopher Hill long ago called attention to the socio-economic specificities of *Clarissa*, and to the accuracy with which the novel, in tracing the sources of the Harlowes' wealth, their negotiations with Solmes, and their goal of "raising a family," registers the trends and channels of social advancement in the Walpole years.[21] Yet at first hand Richardson knew little of everyday life in the great houses, and only when writing *Sir Charles Grandison* (by which time he moved among elite friends such as Lady Bradshaigh) could he fully eliminate solecisms of title and mode of address. As he asked Anne Dewes while composing this last novel, "how should I, a man, a very ordinary man, unlearned, all my early years employed to get a mechanic business for a livelihood, and not a little sedulous in that, touch those subjects as they require, the scenes, most of them, in high

19 Nichols, 2:354.

20 Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2001), 18–20.

21 Christopher Hill, "Clarissa Harlowe and Her Times," *Essays in Criticism* 5 (1955), 315–40.

life?"[22] We can now see how this "mechanic business" must also have helped him, for if he continued to know little about the social surface of high life, he also had extensive experience of the bottom line of money and land. Maslen points to divorce bills, as well as those dealing with disputed bills and marriage settlements, as peculiarly revealing in their detail, and directs us—not quite at random—to Richardson's printing of the 1729 *Act for Settling the Estates of John Earl of Grandison in the Kingdom of Ireland*.[23]

Neither Robert Harper nor James Blew, of course, can have been the devious attorney whom Richardson regarded as the prototype of Eusebius Silvester. More than one plausible candidate emerges, however, from Chancery proceedings launched by Richardson in 1731 involving William Martin of Lincoln's Inn, an attorney and parliamentary agent for whom he had begun to print in 1725, and James McCulloh and John Gordon, two London-based Irishmen who were engaged in business dealings with Martin (Gordon as McCulloh's solicitor, though both appear to have been practising lawyers).[24] McCulloh was in Richardson's eyes the true villain of the piece, but Martin is of greatest interest for the light he sheds, as a previously unnoticed figure in the same line of business as Harper and Blew, on the origins of Richardson's career as a parliamentary printer. Unless otherwise indicated, the following account of the case is based on Richardson's original bill of complaint of 4 December 1731 with amendments dated 23 October 1732; James McCulloh's answer of

22 Samuel Richardson to Anne Dewes, 21 June 1752, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 218; see also Samuel Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, 5 October 1753, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 245.

23 Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 19. Among other bills involving suggestive names, one might equally note *An Act for Settling the Estates of William Lord Byron* (1747) and *An Act for Vesting the Estate of Garton Orme ... in Fee-simple* (1747).

24 Little is otherwise retrievable about Gordon and McCulloh. Gordon (listed as "John Gordon of Whitehall Gent.") was admitted to practise as a solicitor in the common laws on 25 November 1730, and spent much of 1733 confined to the Fleet for debt (PRO, C216/22; PRO, PRIS1/5, fol. 41). McCulloh succeeded in becoming a minor Hanoverian courtier, and took a house in Marsham Street, Westminster, in late 1731 or early 1732, being "at present honoured by His Majesty with an employment at Court" (PRO, C11/1785/50). A directory of 1735 lists him among the Gentlemen of the Privy-Chamber: John Chamberlayne, *Magniae Britanniae Notitia*, 31st ed. (London, 1735), appendix, 57.

January 1731/32 and his further answer (responding to the amendments) dated 30 January 1732/33; and John Gordon's answer dated 9 February 1731/32.[25]

Originally of Evesham in Worcestershire, William Martin was a younger brother of Thomas Martin (ca. 1679 to 1765), a prosperous banker at the sign of "the Grasshopper" in Lombard Street and founder of a banking dynasty that lasted into the twentieth century. He never matched the success of Thomas, who sat in the Commons as a Whig from 1727 to 1734, and was a prominent enough figure to have been recognized by the highwayman who mugged him on Clapham Common in 1731. ("It is remarkable that the person called him by his name," commented the *Daily Journal*.)[26] Two other brothers, James (ca. 1694 to 1744) and John (1692–1767), also took leading roles in the Lombard Street bank, which James controlled following Thomas's retirement in or after 1731. Both James and John entered Parliament in 1741, where they followed Thomas's pragmatic lead by "voting with the Administration in all recorded divisions," as the *History of Parliament* laconically puts it.[27] Unlike these three exponents of the art of thriving, William was never given a position in the bank, perhaps because too unreliable, and his own attempt to become a member of Parliament ended in abject failure at the Boston by-election of 1730, when he finished a distant fourth in a Tory landslide.[28] Instead he followed the law, but in undisciplined style. The records of Lincoln's Inn list the admission on 11 November 1719 of a William Martin, who had previously entered the Inner Temple, and this same William Martin, "who was admitted to the Inner

25 PRO, C11/1785/50 (bundle containing Richardson's complaint and McCulloh's answers); C11/1496/16 (Gordon's answer). I owe the discovery and much of the interpretation of this intricate case to the expertise of my parents, William Keymer and Faith Keymer, in eighteenth-century Chancery records.

26 *Grub-Street Journal*, no. 71 (13 May 1731), summarizing reports of the incident from the *Craftsman* and *Daily Journal* (the latter of which Richardson was printing at the time: see Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 28–29).

27 *The House of Commons 1715–1754*, ed. Romney Sedgwick, 2 vols. (London: HMSO, 1970), 2:243–44; see also, for biographies of Thomas, James, and John but no mention of William, John Biddulph Martin, *"The Grasshopper" in Lombard Street* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1892), 43–47, 86–90. This work states that Thomas retired from banking sometime between 1725 and 1731; that he was still active in 1731 is evident not only from Richardson's dealings with him but also from the *Craftsman* report of the robbery, which describes him still as "Banker, at the Grasshopper in Lombard-street."

28 *The House of Commons 1715–1754*, 1:277.

Temple above seven years since," was called to the Bar on 6 November 1722. He was expelled from the Society on 16 November 1727 after refusing to restore to its original condition a building he had altered in New Square, and his removal from his chamber was ordered. He then seems to have forced his way back in, and on 1 February 1728 was reported to the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench for breaking open a padlocked chamber.[29]

The course of Martin's later career is unknown (unless he rehabilitated himself sufficiently to be the William Martin "in the Commission of the Peace for Middlesex and Ealing" who died at Hackney on 15 April 1765), but in the 1720s he seems to have been active in parliamentary agency while also pursuing an ambitious series of property deals in Ireland.[30] As Richardson attested in 1731, Martin had commissioned him in or about 1726–27 to print "several cases in Parliament" as well as indentures, contracts, and other matter relating to his property transactions with Walter Bagenal and others, for which Martin became indebted to him for £57.12s.6d. Booksellers would normally have been expected to settle printing bills within six months, but conventions may have differed for parliamentary agents (Blew enjoyed credit from Richardson for up to two years, perhaps because clients did not settle his own bill until proceedings ended),[31] and Richardson seems not to have been alarmed when Martin was slow to pay. In 1729 he undertook a larger quantity of work of the same kind from Martin, amounting to £121.12s., so that the total debt climbed to £179.4s.6d. In the same year, Martin paid £36.4s.6d., and after frequent applications promised to pay the remaining £143 with interest within a year.

The Bagenal transaction, involving the manors of Drimnagh and Bremore in County Dublin and other nearby land, seems to have been Martin's undoing. Originally, he was merely acting for Bagenal in negotiating the sale of his partly encumbered estate to a wealthy Whig parliamentarian, Henry Petty, Earl of Shelburne (1671–1751), who agreed to buy it in November 1727. But the transaction later evolved into a complex "Sale Quinquepartite" in which "one *James*

29 See entries for these dates in *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn: Admissions from 1420* (London, 1896) and *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn: The Black Books, 1660–1775* (London, 1899).

30 *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (April 1765), 199.

31 I thank Keith Maslen for generously sharing with me his analysis of the Blew notebook, including this point.

Mac Culloh of the City of Westminster, Esquire, was jointly concerned with the said Earl," with Martin himself featuring among the five purchasers involved.[32] He had evidently been tempted to overreach himself, and his room for subsequent manoeuvre was limited by prior indentures and covenants on the Bagenal estate. In summer 1731, he was in the process of selling much or all of the estate directly to McCulloh (or perhaps to McCulloh and Shelburne jointly), who as part of the deal was obliged to discharge Martin's debts, and who used the estate in a botched attempt to raise a large mortgage. Matters remained unresolved as late as 1735, by which time Shelburne was threatening to sue both Martin and McCulloh and oust them from their moieties of the estate, and Martin was forced to put to Parliament a private bill "for the Enabling *William Martin*, Esquire, in Performance of Articles by him entered into with the Right Honourable *Henry* Earl of *Shelburne*, to complete the Sale and Conveyance unto the said Earl of divers Estates in the Counties of *Dublin* and *Meath* in Ireland, formerly belonging to Mrs. *Eleanor Bagenal*, otherwise *Barnewall*, deceased."

Alongside Shelburne, Richardson must have seemed the least of Martin's worries. The debt, however, was substantial (£143 would be a reasonable annual income for an ordinary attorney),[33] and extensive work by Richardson's compositors and pressmen must have been involved. Four relevant items, including *State of Mr. Bagenal's Title to, and the Conveyances and Securities from Him of the Irish Estates, to Mr. Martin and Trustees* (1725), appear in Maslen's checklist on the basis of ornament usage, and there must have been more.[34] For comparison, Richardson printed nine separate titles for James Blew in 1726–27, most of them in multiple printings and at a rate of £2.2s. per sheet for print-runs of 300–450 copies, and the total charge to Blew in this period (£58.16s.) is extremely close to the figure charged to Martin.[35] Richardson was a tenacious man, moreover, most of all when he felt affronted. Several things compounded his indignation in the months before he started proceedings, including the

32 *A Bill for the Enabling William Martin, Esquire … To Complete the Sale and Conveyance … of Divers Estates in the Counties of Dublin and Meath in Ireland* (London, 1735), 8, 3.

33 Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin, 1990), 71.

34 Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 86, 111, 142, 149 (entries 296, 517, 797, 858); the earliest items seem to date from November 1725.

35 I am indebted again to Keith Maslen for his advice on this point; see also, on the charges to Blew, Maslen's *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 21.

knowledge that a fellow printer, Thomas Gibbs of Blackfriars, had been paid in full for a debt of £20.2s.6d.—or rather that assignees had been paid, Gibbs having gone bankrupt in the meantime.[36] Most of all, Richardson was incensed by the shifty conduct of McCulloh and Gordon, and concluded that he had been the victim of a concerted sting to which Shelburne was also party.

Discrepancies between Richardson's complaint and the separate defences of McCulloh and Gordon make it difficult to recover events with clarity. As well as accusing Richardson of "Manifold Errors Incertainties and Insufficiencys" in his account, McCulloh and Gordon recriminate with one another, and both were clearly expert in the lawyerly art of obfuscation—of "throwing dust in the eyes of ... judges"—that Belford attributes to Lovelace in *Clarissa*.[37] All three accounts agree, however, that McCulloh first contacted Richardson in late summer 1731, requesting clarification of the sum due and assuring him that the debt would soon be paid. McCulloh and/or Shelburne were in treaty with Martin for purchase of a property in Ireland, Richardson was told, and McCulloh had undertaken to settle all Martin's outstanding debts from the proceeds of the sale. Another approach was made in September by Gordon, acting for McCulloh but giving Richardson to understand that he was acting for Shelburne, with the same view of establishing and clearing Martin's debts as a condition of the property transaction. A series of meetings followed on neutral ground, and Gordon's testimony gives colourful glimpses of Richardson negotiating hard—"a good deal of Conversation relateing to the said debt"—in the Temple Exchange Coffee House in Fleet Street, an unspecified tavern in Chancery Lane, and the King's Arms Tavern at Temple Bar. McCulloh believed, or affected to believe, that Richardson had overcharged Martin "in severall particulars and Items" of his account, and speaks in his first deposition of an "extravagant and unreasonable" bill, which was "a great Imposition." Gordon proposed reducing the payment to 13s.4d. in the pound, adding that most of Martin's creditors had agreed to

36 Gibbs seems to have recovered later, and he was still professionally active in 1737. See *Stationers' Company Apprentices 1701–1800*, ed. D.F. McKenzie (Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1978), 139.

37 "But what must the conscience of a partial whitener of his *own* cause, or blackener of *another*'s, tell him while he is throwing dust in the eyes of his judges, and all the time he knows his own guilt?" Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*, ed. Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985), 1295.

abatement of their debts at this rate or even lower. Richardson at first refused, but he weakened when presented with a gloomy picture of Martin's circumstances "and of his Squandring away great sumes of money upon unaccountable projects and schemes," one of which was the ruinous fantasy of winning the Boston election. Martin was now on the point of arrest for debt, McCulloh and Gordon insinuated ("the said William Martin did not often appear abroad"), and Richardson would need to compound quickly if he was to get anything at all.

The haggling then began, with McCulloh and Gordon exerting pressure by warning of Martin's imminent bankruptcy and announcing themselves on the point of leaving town for Ireland and Bath respectively. On Thursday 16 September, Richardson rejected McCulloh's first offer of £80, holding out for £90; but, at a meeting with Gordon two days later, he agreed to a compromise figure of £86, wearying of the negotiations and fearful of losing the entire debt. By Gordon's account, Richardson was even exuberant in his relief at this point: "he expressed himself in a very Obligeing Manner and Acknowledged himselfe to be very much Obliged to this Defendant for procureing him the said debt in so Disinterested and Genteel a manner and also said that upon this Defendants returne from Bath he would waite upon this Defendant at the Temple Exchange Coffee house and treat him with a Bottle of Wine."

The offer of £86, however, was not quite a bird in the hand, and here "the superior knowledge of mankind," on which Bowyer was later to compliment Richardson, deserted him disastrously. Expecting payment "in ready money or some security immediately convertible," such as government stock (Richardson was not quite the uncritical enthusiast for negotiable paper and speculative finance described by Catherine Ingrassia), he gave Gordon a receipt in settlement of the debt, taking in return a note from Gordon to draw on McCulloh for £86 the following Monday.[38] On that day (20 September), McCulloh showed up instead with a Charitable Corporation bond for £100, which he claimed to have received for the purpose from Thomas Martin, William Martin's brother and banker. The bond could be redeemed at any time, McCulloh insisted,

38 See Catherine Ingrassia's clever but strained reading of *Pamela* as a novel "merging the characteristics of a stock-jobber with the notion of virtue." Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 164.

and Thomas Martin himself would give ready money. Richardson felt forced to accept it; but after instructing "his principal workman," James Purser, to return with £14 in change for McCulloh (Purser was then prevailed upon to provide a further receipt in Richardson's name), he saw that the bond carried lower interest than McCulloh had claimed and was not due for payment until 27 July 1732. Even so, "he did not then discover the fraud practised on him or that the Charitable Corporation was in declining circumstances," he alleges in his complaint, adding that McCulloh and Gordon knew the situation all too well, "being employed to pass away the Bond." It was only on applying for redemption of the bond to Thomas Martin, whose teller refused to cash it, that he realized the extent to which he had been duped: William's circumstances were good, according to his banker brother, and he had never intended Richardson to accept anything less than full payment.

Richardson was now in a weak position. McCulloh and Gordon had his receipts, as well as a further £14 of his money, and on application from Richardson's solicitor (Mr Morgan) they refused to relinquish the receipts or take back the bond.[39] At this point, Richardson concluded that McCulloh and Gordon had made false representations to him for their own gain, having been fully paid by Martin and instructed to discharge the whole debt, and moreover that throughout the transaction they had been "combining & confederating together" with Shelburne to defraud him of the whole sum, i.e. £143 plus £14 and the interest due. (Here he was probably too hard on Shelburne, who seems to have been a red herring introduced by Gordon, and too soft on Martin, who had washed his hands of his debts by charging them to the Irish estate and leaving McCulloh to negotiate for his own profit whatever abatements he could.) Recognizing that his incautious provision of receipts would make it hard to win a case in a court of law, Richardson insisted that he had a case in equity nonetheless, and requested a "*ne exeat regnum*" writ to be issued preventing McCulloh from leaving for Ireland, with another requiring him to pay the full debts due in return for the bond. He also requested further writs requiring McCulloh, Gordon, Martin, and Shelburne to appear before the court.

39 Possibly the H. Morgan from whom a letter about *Clarissa* survives among Richardson's papers. H. Morgan to Samuel Richardson, 9 August 1748, Forster MSS, 15-2, fols. 15–16, Victoria and Albert Museum.

The timing is critical here. Gordon and McCulloh maintained that, when passing Richardson the bond on 18–20 September, they did not then "know or believe that the said Corporation was in a declining Condition or that the Creditt of the said Corporation was Sinking or that the said bonds were of little or no value." In early October 1731, however, just two or three weeks later, two senior officials of the Charitable Corporation absconded to France with large assets, precipitating a crash in the price of Corporation securities when the news became public, as it shortly did. As the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported for 19 October (two days after the sudden postponement of a dividend), "a committee of the *Charitable Corporation* was held at their office in *Spring-Garden*, when it appear'd that their cashier, Mr *Thompson*, was gone off with money and goods belonging to the corporation to a great value ... *George Robinson*, Esq; their Banker, went off with him."[40] Within barely a month, and predictably for anyone in the know, Richardson's bond plummeted to a fraction of its surface value.

Histories of commerce and corruption in the Walpole era are dominated by the South Sea Bubble of 1720, in which Richardson played a minor role by printing pamphlets on the scandal by Archibald Hutcheson and other opposition writers.[41] But ten years later a rash of corporate frauds involving four major public trusts— the South Sea Company (again), the York Buildings Company, the Derwentwater Trust, and the Charitable Corporation—posed a comparably severe challenge to the financial system. As the identities of the culprits emerged, moreover, all four cases developed damaging political aspects. The frauds were intertwined in complex ways, but the Charitable Corporation affair, of the four, was probably the most serious, not only because of the enormous sums embezzled and the number of victims involved, but also because several prominent government supporters, whom Walpole at first attempted to protect,

40 *Gentleman's Magazine* 1 (October 1731), 448. John Thomson was in fact the warehouse keeper; Robinson, a Lombard Street broker and member of Parliament for Great Marlow, was the cashier.

41 I am grateful to John Dussinger for pointing out to me the relevance of Hutcheson's writings to the subject of this essay; Maslen lists nineteen relevant items printed by Richardson 1720–23 (*Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 95–98).

were caught with their fingers in the till. As well as Robinson, three of the directors implicated (Denis Bond, Sir Archibald Grant, and Sir Robert Sutton) were sitting members of Parliament, and only Grant was in opposition. Robinson, Grant, and Sutton were all expelled from the Commons in May 1732, as Bond and another member of Parliament had been in March for their role in the Derwentwater fraud. In Smollett's judgment decades later, it was "a sure sign of national degeneracy and dishonour" that within a single session "five members of parliament were expelled for the most sordid acts of knavery"; and indeed this extreme measure was not taken again until the expulsion of John Wilkes in 1764.[42]

The "Charitable Corporation for the Relief of Industrious Poor, by assisting them with small Sums upon Pledges at legal Interest" was really—its sanctimonious full name notwithstanding—a grand pawnbroking concern. Chartered in 1707, by the later 1720s it had fallen into the hands of a syndicate of unscrupulous stockjobbers who took unsecured loans from Corporation assets while engineering a share-price bubble in order to sell on the rise. Bond earned special notoriety for the alleged remark, "Damn the poor, let's go into the City, and get Money for ourselves" (Alexander Pope plays on this remark in the *Epistle to Bathurst*),[43] but the floodgates were originally opened by Sir Robert Sutton, a privy councillor and former diplomat at whose behest the Corporation's authorized capital of £100,000 was raised to £300,000 in 1728 and £600,000 in 1730. Multiple loans were made on the basis of single pledges; insider dealing enabled directors to stag share issues at huge profit; and the Corporation declined into something like a vast Ponzi scheme, with dividends paid and bonds redeemed not from profits but from capital and the sale of new issues—new issues such as Richardson's bond of 27 July 1731. Early murmurings against the Corporation focused on its extortionate lending terms—two newspapers carried "the Case of the Borrowers of

42 Tobias Smollett, *A Complete History of England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1759), 10:392. For twentieth-century accounts of the Charitable Corporation affair, to which I am indebted here, see the biographies of Bond, Grant, Robinson, and Sutton in *The House of Commons 1715–1754*; see also J.M. Bulloch, "The Charitable Corporation," *Notes and Queries* 160:14 (4 April 1931), 236–41; Eveline Cruickshanks, "The Political Management of Sir Robert Walpole, 1720–42," in *Britain in the Age of Walpole*, ed. Jeremy Black (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 36–38; Paul Langford, *The Excise Crisis: Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 20–21, 90–91; I.J. Simpson, "Sir Archibald Grant and the Charitable Corporation," *Scottish Historical Review* 44 (1965), 52–62.

43 *Gentleman's Magazine* 2 (May 1732), 767.

the *Charitable Corporation*, falsly so call'd" in March 1731—but rumours of insolvency seem to have circulated before Thomson and Robinson decamped.[44] When the bubble burst, Walpole's opponents were quick to exploit the situation. Election by secret ballot ensured that the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the Corporation took on an opposition cast, and the charge was led in the Commons by John Barnard, the City Whig for whom Richardson normally voted, and the Jacobite William Shippen, who spoke of "a dark and execrable Scene of Villany."[45] Walpole blurred the issue in his habitual way by exploiting an apparent intimacy between Thomson, who ended up in Rome, and the Stuart Pretender, and there may indeed have been something in this charge. Even the exiled Francis Atterbury was reported to have died "with this *publick Declaration*, That *Robinson* and *Thomson* had *plunder'd* the *Charitable Corporation* for the *Benefit* of the *Jacobites*; and tho' he wished his Party Success, yet he could not but abhor so *infamous* a Practice *to promote their Interest*."[46] Whatever the ultimate destination of the plundered money, however, the sums remain the same. No less than £570,000 was lost, with only £30,000 of assets remaining.

The importance of the Charitable Corporation debacle can also be assessed from contemporary comedy and satire. Recent accounts of satirical responses to the financial revolution are predictably dominated by the South Sea Bubble, and only Pope's use of the scandal in the *Epistle to Bathurst* (1732) has attracted comment. In the poem's world of "Blest paper-credit" (line 69), as Earl Wasserman has written, the Corporation's collapse expresses the decadence of a culture where "value has at last been abstracted from things of value, including specie, and made available as an independent commodity having reference to nothing outside itself." In the value-free world that results, Pope's mockery of one leading miscreant— "Bond damns the Poor, and hates them from his heart" (line 102)— finds in Denis Bond's notorious repudiation of the Corporation's original pretensions a scandalous perversion of scripture (in which the poor

44 *Grub-Street Journal*, no. 63 (18 March 1731); see also the *Daily Journal* for 17 March.

45 William Shippen, *Four Speeches against Continuing the Army, &c.* (London, 1732), 55.

46 *Free-Briton*, no. 131 (1 June 1732), cited in *Gentleman's Magazine* 2 (1732), 783.

are blessed, and to be loved).[47]

No other satirist nailed the Corporation with quite the finesse of Pope, but the affair became an almost obligatory point of reference for anyone writing at the time. In Fielding's farce *The Lottery* (1732), the financier Stocks warns a naive heiress that the denizens of Exchange Alley "are not the honestest Men in the Kingdom," but then absurdly advises her to trust to the Corporation as "a Method invented, by some very wise Men, by which the Rich may be charitable to the Poor, and be Money in Pocket by it." Swift proposes "the Confinement of many of its *Directors*" in his *Serious and Useful Scheme, To Make an Hospital for Incurables* (1733); and, in the 1734 revision of *The Author's Farce*, Fielding adds one such director to his underworld scene.[48] "Cheats were never more plentiful than now," declares an heiress in the comedy *The Coquet's Surrender* (1732): "we have ... Free-Thinkers that cheat us of our Religion; we have Villains that cheat us of our Honour, and we have a *Charitable Corporation* to cheat us of our Estates." A similar allusion is made in Edward Phillips's ballad-opera *The Livery Rake, and Country Lass* (1733), and in *The Married Philosopher* (1732) by John Kelly (the writer who was later to enrage Richardson by turning out a spurious continuation of *Pamela*) an irate father declares that he would do anything to spite his prospective daughter-in-law, even "settle my Estate on the *Charitable Corporation*."[49]

So ubiquitous were such allusions that one publication of 1732 could wryly boast that it did not relate "to any Politics, Hard Drinking,

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47 Earl R. Wasserman, *Pope's Epistle to Bathurst: A Critical Reading with an Edition of the Manuscripts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960), 25; see also 27. A note in authorized editions of the poem from 1735 specifies "that 'God hates the poor,' and, 'That every man in want is knave or fool,' &c. were the genuine apothegms of some of the persons here mentioned." Pope, *Epistles to Several Persons*, ed. F.W. Bateson, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 98n. See also, on this part of the poem, Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example and the Poetic Response* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 255, 261; Silke Stratmann, *Myths of Speculation: The South Sea Bubble and Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2000), 204; Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 143.

48 Henry Fielding, *The Lottery* (London, 1732), 11; Jonathan Swift, *A Serious and Useful Scheme, To Make an Hospital for Incurables* (Dublin, 1733), 10; Fielding, *The Author's Farce*, ed. Charles B. Woods (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), 95–96.

49 John Kelly, *The Coquet's Surrender* (London, 1732), 8; Edward Phillips, *The Livery Rake, and Country Lass* (London, 1733), 7; John Kelly, *The Married Philosopher* (London, 1732), 67.

Swearing, Lying, Cursing, Fighting, or any Charitable Corporation."[50] Nor were these allusions restricted to the scandal's immediate years. In fiction of the mid-century by Eliza Haywood, Susan Smythies, and others, the Corporation became a routine plot device for reducing heroines to penury, and the author of *A Trip through Town* (ca. 1735) could find no more eloquent denunciation of coquetry than to allege that it had "ruined more young Ladies than either the Charitable Corporation, or *Beau* Fielding."[51]

How far the fictional stereotype of the penniless heroine reflects real consequences is hard to assess. As the crypto-Jacobite *Fog's Weekly Journal* complained in 1734, "the numerous Sufferers in this Corporation may look upon it as a Kind of Insult upon their Miseries, to see the People who have embezzled their whole Fortunes riding about every Day in sumptuous Equipages, while some of them want shoes."[52] By this time, however, measures were in place to mitigate such extreme distress. A lottery was held for the relief of sufferers in 1734, raising a sum of £80,000, which was then distributed among holders of shares and bonds who owned less than £5,000 estate. In the published list of sufferers officially deemed to be "Objects of Compassion," which includes "Samuel Richardson intitled to a Bond of 100 l.," many heavier losses are recorded, among them £1,000 lost by Rachel Bradshaigh, the unmarried sister-in-law of Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson's future friend. All were recompensed from lottery proceeds at slightly less than ten shillings in the pound, so that Richardson received £48.15s. and Rachel Bradshaigh £487.10s.[53] Richardson also benefited at this stage of the proceedings in that the parliamentary report listing him among the deserving sufferers, as well as a related report the previous year, were printed in a large impression by his own press, at a total charge of £137.10s.[54] This was

50 Anonymous, *The Delightful Adventures of Honest John Cole* (London, 1732), 5.

51 Anonymous, *A Trip through Town* (London, ca. 1735), 46; the allusion is not to Henry but to Robert "Beau" Fielding (ca. 1651–1712), a notorious rake. See also the collected edition of the *Universal Spectator*, 4 vols. (1747), 3:9; Eliza Haywood, *The Wife* (London, 1755), 232; Susan Smythies, *The Brothers*, 2 vols. (London, 1758), 1:114.

52 *Fog's Weekly Journal*, no. 301 (10 August 1734), cited in *London Magazine* 3 (1734), 427.

53 *The Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Examine, State, and Report, Who of the Sufferers in the Charitable Corporation Are Objects of Compassion* (London, 1734), 62, 34, respectively; *Gentleman's Magazine* 4 (May 1734), 235–36.

54 Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 267 (entries 2050, 2054); for the charges, see PRO, T53/37, fols. 218, 338.

not all profit, of course, and Richardson must have remained personally out of pocket. But it may be because of these two different kinds of compensation that he eventually allowed proceedings against Gordon and McCulloh to fade. At any rate, no final decree or order on Richardson's bill of complaint can now be traced. Expecting to summon a grandee such as Shelburne to court had always been optimistic of Richardson, and no record of Martin's testimony seems to survive. He did succeed, however, in entangling McCulloh and Gordon in further proceedings following their initial court appearances of January–February 1732. On 23 January 1733, he obtained an attachment order preventing McCulloh from leaving for Ireland, thereby eliciting McCulloh's second court appearance of 30 January, and on 26 June he obtained an order for the arrest of Gordon, who by this time was in a debtor's jail for other reasons.[55] Then the trail goes cold.

Whether Richardson had been right to suspect that McCulloh and Gordon were "employed to pass away the Bond by the Corporation or ... other persons" is in the end hard to assess. What is clear from other sources, if not from the nimble ducking and weaving of their own testimonies, is that both men had closer links to the inner circle of Corporation fraudsters than they disclosed to the court. Detailed inventories of the estates of various directors, with related accounts, were compiled and printed as part of the Commons inquiry, and these show sizeable transactions in 1730–31 between John Thomson, the fugitive warehouse keeper, and both Gordon and McCulloh.[56] Gordon also owed £100 to Sir Archibald Grant; when he failed to pay this sum to the Treasury (Grant now being officially the King's debtor), he was committed to the Fleet on 23 May 1733, where he remained while other unspecified writs accumulated against him. He was not discharged until October of that year.[57] Most significant of all is the link to Denis Bond. In his second answer to Richardson's complaint, McCulloh reveals in passing that he had mortgaged Martin's share of the Irish estate to a Mr Bond. That this was the disgraced Corporation director is clear from the same group of printed inventories and accounts. Here Denis Bond states that on about 1

55 PRO, C33/360, fols. 133, 312.

56 *The Report, with the Appendix, from the Committee of the House of Commons, to Whom the Petition of the Proprietors of the Charitable Corporation ... Was Referred* (London, 1733), 102, 113, 116.

57 PRO, PRIS1/5, fol. 41.

September 1731, following an agreement made the previous May, McCulloh mortgaged the Bagenal estate to him for £7,000, of which £1,000 was due to Martin; he adds that he paid £3,400 of this sum to McCulloh in the form of Corporation bonds, "since which I received of him again 1000 *l.* of such Bonds, and paid him the Contents of such Bonds in Money: And I have since agreed to accept again 2000 *l.* more of such Bonds (remaining in his Hands undisposed of) in Exoneration of so much of the said Mortgage."[58] All this raises the possibility that, rather than acting in concert with Bond or other leading players in the Corporation fraud, McCulloh may himself, prior to swindling Richardson, have been the victim of a much larger swindle. Either way, it is difficult not to conclude that McCulloh knew exactly what he was doing when passing Richardson the bond with such urgency in the short period available to him between receiving it on 1 September (evidently from Bond and not, as he claimed, from Thomas Martin) and the flight of Thomson and Robinson in early October.

In later years, Richardson seems to have been able to think of the Charitable Corporation with returning detachment. In *Æsop's Fables* (1739), a nest of snakes reminds him that "the South-Sea Project, the Bank-Contract, the Charitable Corporation Bubble, and twenty others might be named in this Age so fruitful of such Projects," and residual anger is evident in his 1742 revision of Defoe's *Tour*.[59] Here the Charitable Corporation is (with apt resort to Defoe's own characteristic imagery)

> A Society that set out with laudable Pretensions; but many Hundreds of People have found to their Cost, that the best Pretences are often made a Cloak for the worst Practices. *Fair and Softly* is now the Word with them: and 'tis fit a profound Stilness should succeed the boisterous Storm they occasioned, in which the Fortunes of Multitudes of innocent Subjects suffered a Wreck, which they will never recover.[60]

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58 *A True and Exact Particular and Inventory of … Denis Bond* (London, 1732), 32. McCulloh is listed as still holding twenty bonds of £100 in *The Report of the Commissioners for Taking, Stating, and Determining the Claims of the Creditors and Proprietors of the Charitable Corporation* (London, 1733), but was excluded from the 1734 register of sufferers deemed to be "Objects of Compassion."

59 Richardson, *Æsop's Fables* (New York: Garland, 1974), 118.

60 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, rev. Richardson, 4 vols., 3rd ed. (London, 1742), 2:106. This passage disappears in the 4th ed. of 1748.

Passages like this reveal a Richardson drawn momentarily to the idiom of "capital satire" (Colin Nicholson's term): satire by such writers as Pope, Gay, and Swift, who denounced the moral and civic effects of the new financial institutions and systems, even while participating in them in practice. Such moments were few, however, and the engagement of Richardson's novels with speculative investment and negotiable paper rarely exceeds the metaphorical sense described by Ingrassia, for whom Pamela "constructs a domestic speculative economy that allows her to produce, manipulate, and ultimately profit from her own paper credit."[61] Throughout the body of his fiction, he resists the urge to vent spleen. None of his many references to good works on behalf of the deserving poor elicits the kind of ironic play on the language of charity that distinguishes Pope's *Epistle to Bathurst*. Lovelace echoes an opposition journal, which Richardson had been involved with at the time of the Atterbury plot, when scornfully recalling "how many proud senators, in the year 1720 were induced by presents or subscriptions of South Sea stock to contribute to a scheme big with national ruin," but he fails to mention later scandals.[62] While the Harlowe uncles represent just the class of speculator who profited from the affair, their wealth seems largely untainted. Otherwise, corrupt attorneys rather than corrupt directors bear the brunt of Richardon's satire. Numerous references are made to the law as a profession "not made for a man of conscience," and several punitive representations, such as the "sly artful Fellow of a broken Attorney" whom Mr B. hires to impersonate a clergyman, feature in the novels.[63] None of these attorneys is given a name like McCulloh, Gordon, or Martin, although Martins appear in all three novels, and only by the time of *Grandison* is one of them good. Only in *Grandison* do we find the first honest attorney, with the distinctly unfortunate name of "Mr. Sylvester."

By the early 1750s, Richardson was even able to admit into his affectionate circle of honorary daughters the orphaned Isabella

61 Ingrassia, 138; see also Nicholson.

62 Richardson, *Clarissa*, 816, echoing Wharton's *True Briton* for 18 October 1723. On Richardson's involvement with the *True Briton*, see John Dussinger, "Samuel Richardson's 'Elegant Disquisitions': Anonymous Writing in the *True Briton* and Other Journals?," *Studies in Bibliography* 53 (2000), 195–226.

63 Richardson, *Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 1:372; Richardson, *Pamela*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 225.

Sutton, whose father Sir Robert is identified by Eaves and Kimpel simply as "a well-known diplomat" and as William Warburton's first patron, but who was, of course, the same Sir Robert disgraced in 1732 for his role in the Charitable Corporation.[64] Nor was Richardson too proud to accept from Harper a commission to print *An Act for Rectifying a Mistake in a Settlement Made by Sir Robert Sutton, Knight of the Bath* (1745), through which he may have felt that just a little more of the loss from his bond was finding its way back to his pocket.[65] The whole bruising experience was at last behind him—at least until Eusebius Silvester appeared on the scene, noting the jaundiced view of attorneys apparent in the novels, and professing to be something else.[66]

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64 Eaves and Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*, 350. By now Sutton's reputation was partly restored, following a legal judgment of 1742 that defined his offence as negligence rather than fraud; Pope had even been persuaded by Warburton to remove his name from the *Epistle to Bathurst*. See *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 4:492–96.

65 Maslen, *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer*, 202 (entry 1398).

66 I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust in funding the period of leave during which this article was researched and written.