

Why Lovelace Must Die

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My divine Clarissa has puzzled me, and beat me out of my play.

I

Samuel Richardson designed, composed and published *Clarissa* in the shadow of the failed 1745 Jacobite uprising; the fate of his villain, Lovelace, is intricately connected to the fortunes of the Jacobite prince. Charles Edward Stuart does not haunt the margins of *Clarissa* as he does *Tom Jones*, but the novel, like Fielding's, is designed to rout the Young Pretender. *Clarissa* works more allusively than *Tom Jones*, casting the struggle between Stuart pretensions and the Georgian establishment in terms of rival cultural productions rather than rivals: Richardson pits the theater against the novel, Lovelace versus Clarissa. Rather than focusing narrowly on gender, I argue that *Clarissa's* crisis can be best expressed in terms of genre, as the mid-eighteenth century found the Georgian novel struggling for legitimacy, demanding the cultural respect and ideological power the Restoration had accorded to the theater. This generic tension means that "play" becomes an immensely overfreighted term in Richardson's text: it denotes Lovelace's amorous intentions, his "sexual play"; gambling, or "deep play"; and his plot against the entire Harlowe family, which he styles the "playing out" of his revenge. "Play" also and primarily means drama. The novel's biggest "play" is the Restoration drama Lovelace has been composing since his character's introduction, for Lovelace embodies an ideologically and aesthetically corrupt genre; he is a product of the heroic mode that Stuart apologists like John Dryden used to celebrate absolutism and Stuart Restoration. The surprising early successes of the recent Jacobite rebellion, coupled with the personal charisma of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," who was still at large, demonstrated the continued appeal of the Stuart aesthetic and ideology.¹ The Georgian establishment reacted to the events of 1745-46 by systematically extirpating every last vestige of Jacobitism. *Clarissa* is part of that reaction.

Richardson's novels, like his conduct manuals, are overtly concerned with the improvement of morals and manners. But unlike the Society for the Reformation of Manners and other, similar, eighteenth-century reform movements, Richardson directs his attention to words rather than deeds. The *Familiar Letters* teach his possibly unlettered, definitely uneloquent readers how best to express themselves in a variety of social situations. Richardson believes that the right words will inspire correct conduct. His novels, like the *Familiar Letters*, provide

¹ Charles Edward Stuart was finally arrested just two days after the last three volumes of *Clarissa* were published.

readers with the right language for Georgian London and thereby model how one should behave in the mid-eighteenth century. They also demonstrate the performative power of language, from Pamela's journal's surprising effect on Mr. B.'s character to the power of Sir Charles Grandison's admonitory letters to correct congenital character flaws. The novelist's rejection of the theater and the heroic mode therefore becomes the cornerstone of his reformation project, for Richardson believed that the unnatural language of the theater's heroic mode produced unnatural actions, both onstage and off. Hyperbole and rant, double entendre and bawdy songs inflamed the senses and encouraged (Jacobite) rebellion. Even beyond its incendiary nature, stage language celebrated an aesthetic and ideology at odds with mid-eighteenth-century social reality.

While the Hanoverian Succession had erased the last vestiges of the culture of Stuart rule, the Georgian stage was still reenacting the Restoration, even though the recent rebellion had made the idea of a second Stuart Restoration an immediate and real threat. Dryden's heroic celebrations of the Stuart monarchy were still in the standard repertory, although they were somewhat counterbalanced by the slough of farces and parodies of the Jacobite myth produced during the 1740s.² By exposing the aesthetic and ideological inadequacies of Restoration heroic drama, Richardson brings the genre, its characters, and the king and culture it supported, into question.

Because Richardson, as both novelist and moralist, wanted to destroy the Restoration stage and his contemporaries' taste for its productions, Lovelace could not be rehabilitated—à la *Pamela's* Mr. B.—but must be made to pay for his crimes with his life.³ Lovelace the dramatist functions as the novelist's scapegoat for all the excesses and evils of the stage, particularly those of the heroic, as delineated by the Whig and anti-Jacobite propagandists of the preceding sixty years. Having created this effigy, the novelist then ritually sacrifices his rival author, clearing the stage for Clarissa's sublime tragedy and novel heroism. Thus, *Clarissa* enacts the succession from Stuart theatrics to the Georgian novel. The elevated language of heroic drama and dramatic novels like Congreve's *Incognita* (1691) promoted and upheld a courtly Restoration ethos; conversely, the natural and idiomatic language of Richardson's novels places them squarely in Georgian London. Richardson combats the mythic sweep of Dryden's heroic spectacles with the minutia of reported speech and dress: his is the epic of the everyday.

Lovelace does not belong in Richardson's everyday world. He is the embodiment of the Restoration's heroic ideology; his heroism stems from the culture and aesthetic rejected in the Glorious Revolution and represented by the charismatic and Cavalier Charles Edward. Richardson self-consciously made his arch-villain

² Revivals of Dryden and other Restoration dramas were especially frequent after the 1737 Licensing Act was passed. For example, Dryden's Jacobite semi-opera *King Arthur* enjoyed a sustained revival at this time. Farces like *King Pepin* (1744) and *Henry VII* (1745) were hurriedly composed in response to current events and the sustained popularity of an aesthetic and ideology associated with the Pretender.

³ It is important to note that unlike Lovelace, Mr. B. has no dramatic pretensions and is not an "author" himself; he is never a threat to Pamela's—or *Pamela's*—story.

a composite of the leading male roles of Restoration stage, using characters and attributes of tragedy, comedy, and heroic drama. I want to stress that while comedic rakes, tragic tyrants, and the super-heroes of heroic drama are all discrete character types, they are remarkably similar in their portrayal of a “heroic” masculinity: they are all “Pretenders” who act out a Stuart code of conduct, who violate the Georgian social contract. All three are anti- or asocial, considering themselves above the law and social bonds; all three employ overblown, huffing rhetoric intended to awe or silence others; and all three are (tyrannically) absolutist, demanding political or sexual dominion not just over the bodies of others, but extending that dominion to include their subjects’ (or objects’) wills as well. Richardson exploits these similarities to make Lovelace an amalgam of all three heroic types, using him to condemn Restoration drama and the heroic ideology as a whole, not just the rake-hero, as has been argued heretofore.

While Margaret Doody, for instance, side-steps the complexity of Restoration heroics by insisting upon a simple binary of tragic “tyrant-hero” and comic rake-hero, these categorical distinctions are not found in either Restoration drama or *Clarissa*. Indeed, Restoration drama took great pains to distinguish between (bad) tyrants and (good) absolutist kings: the tyrant in Restoration drama is usually shown to be a usurper and always bested by a sentimental lover or super-hero. For instance, while Almanzor in Dryden’s *Conquest of Granada* may resemble King Boabdelin, the play’s tyrant, in most particulars, Almanzor’s behavior is never represented as tyrannical: he is absolute, but just. At the end of the play, Boabdelin is dead and Almanzor is shown to be the legitimate ruler through both birth and worth. Richardson rejects any distinction, equating tyrants and absolute rulers by foregrounding the similarities of their characters: for him, absolutism is always tyranny.⁴ And, contrary to Doody’s claim, the rake is not always “treated with approval [in the comedies]” (113). Far from being unequivocally positive, the rake is at best an ambivalent figure. Even in the most affectionate representations, he must be reformed and reclaimed by society and domesticity by play’s end. Nathaniel Lee’s *Princess of Cleves* (1681), with its disapproving characterization of the Rochestarian Nemours, is an excellent example of the Restoration’s mixed feelings for the rake-hero. Etherege’s *Man of Mode* (1676) is another example of unease about the rake’s heroic status. While Dorimant is unquestionably meant to be our hero, the play centers on anxieties about the close relationship between heroic rake and comic fop. Even the play’s full title—*Man of Mode; or, Sir Foppling Flutter*—exploits this uncertainty and implies a conflation of the comic and heroic. These examples suggest that rakes and tyrants, heroic posturing and comic relief, were less clearly delineated than Doody suggests. Moreover, the predominance of tragicomedy on the Restoration stage complicates Doody’s neat comedy/tragedy binary. In *Natural Passion*, she argues that “[c]orrupt egotism and the lust for power displayed in the sex relationship are dealt with in two distinct and antithetical ways in Restoration drama” and that

⁴ Richardson’s obsession with the lyrics to Handel’s popular oratorio *Alexander’s Feast* illustrates this discomfort with “good” martial heroics. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, he has Grandison pointedly alter the soldiers’ refrain from “none but the brave deserve the fair” to “none but the GOOD deserve the fair” (4:345).

"[e]ach type had been kept insulated from the other" (113). But both tyrant and rake coexist in tragicomedy, as they do in *Clarissa*.⁵

As we have seen, Richardson follows the Whig propagandistic practice of conflating tyranny and absolutism. Lovelace's character is best defined by what Susan Owen calls "the Whig definition of tyranny." In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, she argues that "[t]yranny is portrayed [by Whigs] not only as the concomitant of depraved lusts ... but also as a political mentality which leads to the alienation of essential human capacities, which destroys the family, and which damages perpetrator as well as victim" (129). The political, sexual, and familial are all intertwined in tyrannical and rakish heroics, just as they are in Lovelace's play. My reading of Lovelace as a composite but consistent character—a Restoration hero—differs markedly from other analyses of his dramatic tendencies. My Lovelace is not Protean, for while he may don new costumes on occasion, his character remains constant.⁶ Lovelace's character is "fixed," and Richardson, a purist about such matters, ensures that his villain does not, cannot re-create himself. Lovelace cannot transform himself into a husband for he has committed to the part of a tyrant and must suffer a tyrant's fate: Lovelace must die.

II

In the seminal essay "Discourse in the Novel," Mikhail Bakhtin introduces the concept of heteroglossia as a way of ordering the linguistic play and confusion of the English comic novel. He writes, "the primary source of language usage in the comic novel is a highly specific treatment of 'common language.' This 'common language'—usually the average norm of spoken and written language for a given social group—is taken by the author precisely as the *common view*, as the verbal approach to people and things normal for a given sphere of society, as the *going point of view* and the *going value*" (176). For instance, Fielding presents the "common language" of honour and greatness in *Jonathan Wild* (1743) in order to expose it as "bombast greatness" or heroic excess. Bakhtin's analysis addresses comic novels, but his model can be applied to tragedies like *Clarissa* with only slight alteration. Bakhtin argues that only "direct authorial word" can present the "semantic and axiological intentions of the author," that is, the author must enter the text and speak for himself, as Fielding so often does (176). These authorial intrusions create an interpretive norm against which the novel's "common language" should be read: Fielding's satiric asides teach readers how much the "going value" is worth. But Richardson, aside from his "editorial" direction, seeks to be mostly invisible to readers. He denies his own authority and masquerades as the text's editor, a mere compiler of his characters' "authentic" productions. While in revisions of the novel Richardson enters the text more often and more directly in order to dictate his semantic and didactic meaning, these

⁵ See, for example, *Marriage à la Mode* (1670), *Venice Preserv'd* (1682), and *The Fair Penitent* (1703).

⁶ For arguments about Lovelace's Protean or "unfixed" character, see, among others, Doody and Brown.

footnotes, asterisks, and italics are meant to draw attention to the value judgments already imbedded in the “languages” of his two protagonists.⁷ Lovelace, Richardson’s rakish villain, speaks the novel’s “common language”—here, the familiar tropes of the heroic mode. Clarissa’s “novel” language establishes the interpretive norm against which Lovelace’s language should be evaluated, for she is Richardson’s representative in the text: the purity of her language exposes the hypocrisy, artificiality, and immorality of the hero’s language and concomitant deeds.

Unlike his other two epistolary novels, *Clarissa* does not have an authoritative narrative voice like Pamela’s in *Pamela* or Harriet Byron’s in *Sir Charles Grandison* to provide the “normative” lens through which readers are to interpret events.⁸ Instead, the plot is fractured and refracted through both Clarissa’s and Lovelace’s perspectives as they explain and interpret the novel’s events. *Clarissa*’s double discourse—these separate and competing correspondences—can and has been read dialectically.⁹ Following this model, I argue that it is only through the interplay of these antithetical styles that *Clarissa* can achieve its sublime tragic voice; only in their violation can the novel discover its boundaries. However, it may be less anachronistic to think of the novel’s doubled construction as a response to split-plot tragicomedy: Lovelace’s letters tell the “low” plot and Clarissa’s the “high.” Of course, unlike tragicomedies, which squeeze two different stories onto one stage, in *Clarissa*, both series of letters are about the same events, told in competing, and ultimately incompatible, voices. Instead of confirming one another and establishing harmony—the goal of tragicomedy—the two languages in *Clarissa* engender discord and death; Richardson uses the alternating structure of tragicomedy to prove the fundamental unsoundness of “mixed” plots and characters. The complete incompatibility of Clarissa’s and Lovelace’s languages ensures a to-the-death struggle. It is not enough for Lovelace to possess Clarissa, he must silence her, too: he wants the novel to be as monologic as heroic drama. But silencing Clarissa proves impossible. Instead of destroying her, Lovelace’s perpetrated villainies ironically give Clarissa’s voice strength and authority—she even continues to “speak” long after her death. Lovelace, on the other hand, begins to lose control of both his narrative and voice once he is “beaten out of his play.” While his final words—LET THIS EXPIATE!—reverberate through the novel’s conclusion, they are transcribed for us by Lovelace’s French valet, debasing Lovelace’s would-be sublimity of sentiment by emphasizing the foreignness

⁷ In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson writes: “I thought I had made [Lovelace] too wicked, too intriguing, too revengeful, (and that in his very first letters) for him to obtain the favour and good wishes of any worthy heart of either sex. I tried his character as it was first drawn, and his last exit, on a young lady of seventeen. She shewed me by her tears at the latter, that he was not very odious to her for his vagaries and inventions. I was surprised; and for fear such a wretch should induce pity, I threw into his character some deeper shades” (4:234). All correspondence quoted from Barbauld:

⁸ In *SCG*, Harriet Byron controls even the “Italian” plotline, of which she has no personal knowledge, by enclosing Dr. Bartlett’s letters inside her own and offering her “reading” of the events.

⁹ See, for instance, Bellamy 73-81.

and artificiality of his language. Richardson makes a point of stripping the heroic of its nobility of subject and sentiment; he represents the Restoration's aesthetic as both base and foreign.

Lovelace never fits comfortably or well in the domestic novel. Readers spend roughly one hundred and fifty pages at the beginning of the novel at home with Clarissa, imbibing her natural, conversational, familiar epistolary voice. Even in Clarissa's straightforward description of the strange man who has put Harlowe Place into such an uproar, Lovelace acts like a character straight off the stage. He blusters, intrigues, fights, and will even speak in rhyme if the situation seems to warrant. His first letter—the novel's thirty-first—cements our opinion of Lovelace's theatricality and anachronism.¹⁰ Lovelace does not write familiar letters. His correspondence is in an affected "Roman style" with stilted and archaized diction; his narrative letters, even reported speech, are full of archaisms like "thee," "varlet," and "durst." Unlike Clarissa's "to the moment" literal transcriptions, Lovelace's letters advertise their artificiality, their literariness. In other words, Clarissa's language mirrors the novel's verisimilitude, while Lovelace's repeats the figures of fiction's past. But even beyond the forced diction, and beyond Lovelace's many admissions that he invents both sides of reported speeches and considers dialogue a dramatic exercise, the sheer number of quotations and allusions Lovelace drops into his correspondence suggests the staged quality of his writing.

His "Roman style" is really just a composite of tags, texts, and sentiments plagiarized from Restoration drama. In his first letter alone, which Richardson tells us is meant to characterize his villain, Lovelace references six different plays and one poem (Abraham Cowley's "Beauty"). Of the plays, four—Robert Howard's *Vestal Virgin* (1664), Otway's *History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680), and Dryden's *Don Sebastian* (1690) and *Tyrannick Love* (1670)—are Restoration tragedies. Lovelace is especially fond of Dryden, the Restoration's poet laureate, and cites *Tyrannick Love*, appropriately enough his favorite text, twice in this letter alone. The other two plays are ostensibly by Shakespeare—*The Tempest* and *Othello*. However, while Lovelace invokes "the bard" frequently, most of his so-called Shakespeare quotations actually come from Restoration adaptations by Dryden, Nick Rowe, Nahum Tate, or Nathaniel Lee. Lovelace makes no distinction between the adulterated and usually tragicomic texts he cites and the original tragic plays. Some critics like to emphasize Richardson's inadequate education and would point to these misattributions as proof of the printer-cum-novelist's ignorance. However, the fact that Richardson uses *Clarissa's* postscript to publish his disgust that Tate's happy-ending *Lear* is acted in preference to the original is an indication that he was familiar with both texts.¹¹ The reference to Tate in the

¹⁰ Richardson writes to Lady Bradshaigh: "And did you not perceive that in the very first letter of Lovelace, all those seeds of wickedness were thick sown, which sprouted up into action afterwards in his character?" (4:187). The "seeds of wickedness" are the many quotations from Restoration drama validating "[p]ride, revenge, a love of intrigue, plot, contrivance" (4:187).

¹¹ "Yet so different seems to be the modern taste from that of the ancients, that the altered *King Lear* of Mr. Tate is constantly acted on the English stage, in preference to the original, though written by Shakespeare himself! Whether this *strange* preference be owing to the false delicacy

postscript suggests that Lovelace's misattributions are intentional: they highlight the villain's inadequacies, not the author's.

Richardson chooses the plays his villain cites in this first letter carefully; they are Lovelace's foundational texts, his "seeds of wickedness." Lovelace adopts Restoration tragedy to express his feelings; he quotes it as precedent for his plans; he uses its definitions of love and honor to excuse his intention of ruining Clarissa and revenging himself on her family. Lovelace's quotations and imitations of dramatic language present the Bakhtinian "common view" of literary language against which the novelist is writing; by giving the words and sentiments of Restoration heroes to Lovelace's pen, Richardson recasts them and inverts their moral authority. Dryden's super-heroes are shown to be anti-social, anti-Christian, and decidedly un-heroic when Lovelace uses their grand speeches to justify rape and revenge.

Significantly, Lovelace's foundational texts are not the Restoration marriage comedies to which literary critics have compared his plot, or which his much vaunted "rake's creed" would seem to suggest. But, while comedy is not Richardson's target, Restoration comedies display many of the same problematic characteristics as Restoration tragedy, even beyond the heroic similarities between rake and tyrant. The comedies, like the heroic spectaculars Richardson does take aim at, rely on a last-minute revolution in character or circumstance to achieve their happy endings. Besides being the underlying premises of bawdy Restoration comedies, the adages that comprise the "rake's creed"—like "once subdued, always subdued," "a wife at any time," and the much inveighed-against "a reformed rake makes the best husband"—create both an untenable and illogical philosophy.¹² They enable happy endings at the expense of character consistency and narrative logic. With these premises undergirding the plot, Restoration rake-heroes can spend four acts committing every imaginable offense and still be rewarded with the virtuous heroine and her marriage portion before the curtain closes. Richardson views the rake's creed as a violation of both moral and aesthetic law. It forces heroes and heroines to act out of character and rewards vice with virtue (and money). Even within the world of Restoration comedy, playwrights had to admit that, despite countless "happy endings," reformed rakes probably did not make very good husbands: Vanbrugh's 1697 *The Relapse* makes comedic hay by dramatizing just such a marriage.¹³

The rake's creed is problematic for Richardson because it relies on "mixed" characters to succeed and creates a mixed genre; Restoration comedies are no more generically pure than are their tragic counterparts. And although within

or affected tenderness of the players, or to that of the audience, has not for many years been tried" (Postscript, note a).

¹² In another letter to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson writes: "There cannot be a more pernicious notion, than that which is so commonly received, that a reformed rake makes the best husband.... Indeed, indeed, Madam, reformation is not, cannot, be an easy, a sudden thing, in a man long immersed in vice" (4:190). For an extended analysis of Richardson's coupling of the moral and aesthetic, see McKeon 412-19.

¹³ Compare Loveless and Amanda's "trials" in this play to Richardson's treatment of the same material in *Pamela II*.

the novel *Lovelace* seems to have completely bought into the rake's creed, and certainly expects to be able to resolve his villainies with marriage, he is so deeply comprised of Restoration tragedy that he cannot write his way into comedy, nor would it matter if he could. The excruciatingly painful and detailed deaths of "comedic" rakes in Richardson's novels—like the clownish Belton's—highlight what Richardson sees as the inherent tragedy of that role.¹⁴ Richardson, offended by the aesthetic and ethical horrors of the rake's creed, refuses to acknowledge the genre as comic; the complete absence of Restoration comedy in *Lovelace's* lexicon is a refusal to acknowledge its existence, let alone the miraculous redemption it celebrates. Doody grants *Lovelace* the tragicomic status his plot demands, arguing that *Lovelace* "thinks of tragedy and comedy as two equal and open alternatives, between which he is continually free to choose," but that "although his conscious allegiance is to the comic, he is more truly at home with the tyrant-lovers in their moments of absolute will and heroic glory" (114, 117). I would counter that Richardson uses such generic slippage to foreground the continuity between comic (and attractive) heroes and the villains of tragedy. He wants to emphasize their shared tyranny and expose the folly, indeed, even danger, of expecting either to behave contrary to their established patterns.¹⁵ Thus, while *Lovelace* may imagine a last-act reformation and tragicomic resolution to be entirely in character, Richardson will force his villain to act consistently through to the end; *Lovelace's* heroic language and allusions foretell the tragedy that awaits him.

I want to suggest a new literary genealogy for Richardson's *Lovelace*. Modern readers, noting the friendship between the poet laureate and novelist, tend to draw a straight line from the questionably reformed rake *Loveless* in Colley Cibber's immensely popular 1696 comedy *Love's Last Shift* to *Clarissa's Lovelace*. But I believe that *Lovelace's* literary parentage is murkier, or at least more numerous. "Loveless" is a common name in Restoration drama, especially in comedies, which rely on trait-naming more than exotically or historically set tragedies. Behn's *The Roundheads* (1682) has another *Loveless* as its hero, who mounts a campaign for his sequestered lands by commandeering Lady Lambert's body. This pointed political comedy reminds us that Restoration and eighteenth-century audiences had a wider range of allusions for the name, including the Cavalier poet Richard Lovelace, with whom Richardson's *Lovelace* shares the spelling of his name. While the many *Lovelaces* vary in particulars, they are all versions of the Cavalier, the name given to the young men who fought for Charles I and went into exile with Charles II. At the Restoration, "cavalier" took on additional meaning, becoming shorthand for the attitude and behavior of these "gay blades" (*OED*). Aside from their royalist politics, Cavaliers' defining characteristics are their rakish behavior and financial distress; Cavaliers, like

¹⁴ The pathetic deaths of the Restoration's most (in)famous rakes, Rochester and Buckingham, were frequently cited as proof that the rake's creed was a recipe for tragedy.

¹⁵ Significantly, this was a major trope of anti-Jacobite propaganda, which was quick to reject Charles Edward's promises to respect liberty of conscience by pointing to the behavior of his father and his father before him (James II). See Fielding, *A Serious Address to the People of Great Britain*, September 1745.

their young King, were sexually promiscuous and fiscally insolvent. As Behn's play makes clear, in the Restoration's cultural lexicon, Loveless, heroic, and Cavalier were all synonyms and all fraught with political—royalist, Tory—overtones.¹⁶ Richardson's Lovelace, like the character's forebears, is a Cavalier. He represents Stuart court culture and stands for social misrule, aristocratic privilege, and royal prerogative. He stands in opposition to the "cits" of Richardson's class and the Whig ascendancy, an opposition played out in both Lovelace's "real" and literary pedigrees. For not only is Lovelace the last in a long line of literary Cavaliers, but, within the novel, he is also the last male in a dying aristocratic family. If he fails to produce a legitimate heir, his name will die out, and his text—and the ideology it represents—will be lost. With this genealogy and its contemporary political ramifications in mind, it becomes clear that Richardson's arch-villain was not designed as a comic figure.

Lovelace comes—quite literally—straight out of tragedy. Of the fifty-three identified literary allusions Lovelace makes in the novel, thirty-one are from tragedies, either Restoration or Restoration revisions of Shakespeare. Although it is not possible to prove Lovelace only quotes adulterated "happy-ending" Shakespeare tragedies, it is quite likely, as all of the plays he favors were "improved" on the Restoration stage, a fact Richardson reminds his readers of in *Clarissa's* Postscript. The remaining twenty-two quotations are taken from non-dramatic sources, most often the poetry of Restoration icons such as Cowley, Prior, Waller, and, of course, Dryden. A prolific and seemingly indiscriminate quoter, Lovelace cites no comedies. And even though the bombastic couplets and heroic rants with which he fills his letters may seem excessive enough to be parodic, Richardson's increasingly urgent editorial intrusions, as well as his letters on the subject, prove that he was perfectly serious about the threat Lovelace embodies.¹⁷ It is only after he has neutralized the heroic and the Restoration stage by killing Lovelace that the novelist felt he could exploit the overblown rake-tyrant's comedic potential.¹⁸ *Sir Charles Grandison's* Sir Hargrave Pollexfen is such a figure. While Pollexfen's rakish excesses also lead, inexorably, to his death, he dies repentant in his own bed and only after a series of ludicrous and degrading accidents, from disfigurement by carriage wheel to a narrow escape from a mob of torch-wielding peasants. In Lovelace, Richardson wants to emphasize the serious nature and present danger of Restoration heroics. He is not hyper-inflating the already bombastic, as Buckingham did in *The Rehearsal*;

¹⁶ Gilliflower. *Heav'ns, Madam, I'll warrant they were Heroicks.*

Lady Lambert. Heroicks!

Gilliflower. Cavaliers, Madam, of the Royal Party.

(Behn, *Roundheads*, I.i.200-02)

¹⁷ His *Clarissa* correspondence with Lady Bradshaigh includes no less than four letters detailing his surprise that "such a wretch should induce pity" in "the worthy heart[s] of either sex." Compare this language to Belford's ejaculation that Clarissa's tragedy "must *worthily* affect every heart" (L413, emphasis in original).

¹⁸ And, of course, the waning threat of militant Jacobitism after Charles Edward's arrest in December 1748 allowed Richardson to laugh at rather than warn against rakish pretensions.

Lovelace is a composite, not a magnification.¹⁹ Richardson does not have Lovelace reciting Orrery or Davenant's often wooden and frequently satirized language. He avoids their mixed metaphors and ridiculous sentiments and instead makes the respected tragedians and poets laureate Dryden and Rowe Lovelace's favorite authors. Lovelace's seriousness can best be seen by contrasting Richardson's villain with the stage's farcical "pretenders" from the same time. Unlike the priest-ridden Perkin Warbeck, the amorous Pepin or the crazed Mahomet, Lovelace was not written with the broad strokes guaranteed to elicit laughter; that so many of *Clarissa's* readers fell in love with Lovelace is further proof that contemporary audiences did not find him funny.²⁰

Lovelace is constrained by the dictates of his chosen genre, and since even the questionably tragic plays of the Restoration end with bodies strewn about the stage, his over-reliance on tragedy makes death a textual necessity from his very first letter. Lovelace's death (and Clarissa's) is pre-determined by the generic identity his language expresses; it is not merely a result of his actions, which, of course, also follow the conventions of Restoration tragedy. In other words, while Lovelace may believe in the comic aphorisms that make up his "rake's creed," his actions are doomed to follow the logic and language of heroic rant. This is perhaps best seen in the debt Lovelace's last words owe to one of his favorite plays. Calista, the eponymous fair penitent of Nick Rowe's 1703 tragedy, sets these terms: "Nothing but Blood can make the Expiation, / And cleanse the Soul from inbred, deep Pollution" (238). Lovelace agrees. His repentance leads not to prayerful meditation but to violence, to bloodshed. As he lay dying, Lovelace is reported to have thumped his chest and cried out: "LET THIS EXPIATE!" The ambiguous pronoun, coupled with Lovelace's theatrical gesture toward his heart, conflates Lovelace's action—the duel—with its necessary outcome—his heart's blood. Despite this plangent cry, Belford's moralizing conclusion and Richardson's postscript make it abundantly clear that not even Lovelace's blood could cleanse his soul—or the genre he represents—of its "inbred, deep pollution." I want to stress that it is *Clarissa* the novel that requires Lovelace's death, not Clarissa the character: the Christian heroine absolves her betrayer and even pleads with her cousin Morden to avoid bloodshed. Richardson is less forgiving. Despite, or, more properly, because of readerly sympathy for the dashing literary bad boy, a reformed-rake plot—a tragicomedy—can never be an option for *Clarissa*: Richardson cannot, will not transform Lovelace from tyrant to husband. Indeed, in his revisions of the text, Richardson magnifies Lovelace's wickedness and adds pointed editorial notes to highlight it.

¹⁹ While there is no direct evidence that Richardson knew *The Rehearsal*, his friendships with both Cibber and Garrick, who made their careers out of playing Bayes, make it likely that he was familiar with the text. Fielding's *Tragedy of Tragedies*, which Richardson almost definitely knew, also pokes fun at many of Orrery and Davenant's less felicitous couplets.

²⁰ Once again, Lady Bradshaigh is Lovelace's best apologist: "I have all this time pleaded only in behalf of Clarissa; but you must know, (though I shall blush again,) that if I was to die for it, I cannot help being fond of Lovelace. A sad dog! why would you make him so wicked, and yet so agreeable?" (4:180).

Lovelace's popularity with otherwise astute readers like Lady Bradshaigh was a continuous and vexing problem for Richardson. In order to make his anti-hero a convincing foil for Clarissa, Richardson consciously made Lovelace appealing to the eyes and seductive to the ears.²¹ Lady Bradshaigh reminds us that readers were expected to admire Lovelace, to be as seduced by his élan as was Clarissa. In her appeal for a novel about a good man with sex appeal, she writes:

Would it hurt a man's morals, to have the appearance of even Lovelace as Miss Howe describes him.... "So little the fop, yet so elegant and rich in his dress! His person so specious, his air so intrepid! So much meaning and penetration in his face! So much gaiety, yet so little of the monkey! Though a travelled gentleman, yet no affectation! No mere toupée-man, but all manly! And his courage and wit—the one so known, the other so dreaded!" Now, Sir, I suppose this was designed to be thought an amiable appearance, do you not think it was? (6:91)

Lovelace is both an attractive man and an appealing text; the plays he spouts represent the popular taste. And this attractiveness constitutes the danger Richardson sees in the heroic, not just to young maids, but to the state. The sustained popularity of Restoration drama had made the reformable rake and the miraculously converted tyrant familiar and acceptable, if not wholly "natural," characters by the 1740s. The social, even partisan connotations of these character types must not be neglected. In the 1740s, Bonnie Prince Charlie was actively cultivating a Cavalier persona, and his followers used these tales of pacified tyrants and peaceful restorations as Jacobite propaganda. So while Richardson could grant Mr. B. a Damascene conversion in 1741, such a resolution was impossible after the '45. However, while Lovelace himself is irredeemable, Richardson's didactic goal is ultimately reformatory; through his editorializing and his hero's bloody end, he teaches readers to find true sublimity in the domestic novel instead of Restoration drama, to prefer the Georgian to the Stuart cultural production. Clarissa's quiet apotheosis is offered as an alternative to histrionic theatrics. She represents true tragedy, hers is a story which ought to "*worthily affect every heart,*" and hers the genre through which to disseminate it. As Clarissa's reward is not to be found in this world, so *Clarissa's* lesson takes place outside the text: its readers, not its heroes, need reformation. London must learn to embrace a new aesthetic, one that is in concert with the social and political reality of the mid-eighteenth century.

Lovelace uses his letters to Belford to write *Clarissa* the play. As a would-be lover, Lovelace is frustrated at every turn, but as a playwright, he can make Clarissa act and speak as he wishes. He will write his own *Clarissa* or die trying. While several critics have already made convincing arguments for the power of the pen in the novel, for Lovelace's desire to "inscribe" Clarissa, I want to step back from the psychosexual conclusions usually drawn from this line of inquiry. Instead of imposing a strict reading of pen as phallus, we should remember that pens, especially in epistolary novels, have significance even without their

²¹ Nor should it be forgotten that the "Young Pretender" was "Bonnie Prince Charlie," who was celebrated as much for his charisma and personal beauty as for his lineage.

symbolic power. Clarissa and Lovelace's struggle over authority, for the right to write, is Richardson's fight for generic legitimacy. While Clarissa's epistolary voice reigns supreme and unchallenged for the novel's first thirty letters, once Lovelace's letters begin, his witty, urbane, and salacious voice insinuates itself into the text and displaces our heroine's authority. As Clarissa tries to decipher Lovelace's actions and intent, it is left to Lovelace to narrate the plot—his play. He decides what to confess and what withhold from both Clarissa and readers; indeed, between the novel's two main actions—the abduction/elopement and Clarissa's final escape (LL102-295)—Lovelace exerts almost absolute narrative control: Lovelace writes 111 of these letters and another twelve are written to him. The Clarissa–Anna Howe correspondence only accounts for fifty-seven letters, and all but two of these are written before Lovelace determines to rape Clarissa.

But despite the narrative control Lovelace possesses during the novel's crisis, he is still "beaten out of his play." Indeed, the moment Lovelace achieves near monologic control of the text is also the moment in which he admits defeat. Having to resort to rape is a radical revision of Lovelace's script; it is a mark of his assumed character's defeat. Lovelace's loss of power is best seen in what, following the narrative conventions of "his play," should have firmly established his ascendancy. His final trial of Clarissa's virtue is meant to prove the maxim "once subdued, always subdued," to make Lovelace's fiction intersect with and become reality. Yet even though Lovelace controls all of the scene's elements and representation, Clarissa triumphs. In his own letter, Lovelace is rendered speechless ("my voice was utterly broken" [L281]), and Clarissa takes up the pen. Her triumph lends the novel, the genre she embodies, moral and generic authority. Lovelace's failure demonstrates the unnaturalness and illogic of Restoration tragedy, whereas the novel's plot is consistent with both religious and aesthetic principles, for not only are the novel's characters unmixed, but its denouement follows logically from its crises. The novel does what plays cannot; *Clarissa* is a tragic exemplar.

Looking at the post-rape confrontation scene more closely discovers just how integral genre is to Lovelace and Clarissa's struggle. Whereas Richardson makes a point of offering multiple perspectives and interpretations of most of the novel's pivotal moments, like the abduction/elopement and Clarissa's escape, readers only ever get Lovelace's version of this trial. Here, as elsewhere, his "Roman style" extends beyond semantic "familiarities" to dialogue: he not only stylizes his own diction, but makes Clarissa speak in his voice, with words of his choosing. Clarissa's self-reported speech is modern and natural, but when Lovelace writes for her, he transforms her from novelistic heroine into a "truly heroic lady" and has her rant, Lucretia-like: "Approach me, Lovelace, with resentment, if thou wilt. I dare die. It is in defence of my honour. God will be merciful to my poor soul!—I expect no mercy from thee! I have gained this distance, and two steps nearer me and thou shalt see what I dare do!" (L281).²²

²² The bloody specter of Lucretia hovers over the novel's center. In contemplating the rape and describing its effects, Lovelace makes several allusions to the story. Belford warns that Clarissa

Beyond the fact that the saintly Clarissa would never commit suicide—a mortal sin—she simply would not, does not, speak in this vein. Her “seductive eloquence” is the language of sentiment and piety, not *thous and shalt*s. Not only does this scene demand that Clarissa act and speak completely contrary to her established character, but Lovelace’s recital of “the history of the Lady and the Penknife!!!” is also so carefully staged, so admittedly “pre-determined, and of necessity pre-determined” (L281), that readers must suspect him of indulging in the same “freedoms” as in his other dramatic fantasies, like his imagined rape of Anna Howe.²³ Indeed, in an earlier letter, Clarissa rejected this sort of heroic posturing as “the most hyperbolic, unnatural stuff that can be conceived” (L161).

Significantly, Clarissa’s post-traumatic disorder manifests itself in generic confusion. She cannot write in her “familiar” style; her text becomes fragmented, disordered, dislocated. Paper X, the most fragmented of her essays on the rape, is a collage of tags taken from Restoration authors like Nat Lee, Dryden, and Otway—Lovelace’s favorites. The “delirium” she experiences after the rape is the only time in which she falls into Lovelacian quotation, threading together lines from Restoration dramas in a vain attempt to express herself and explain her situation. She “comes to herself” shortly before her “trial,” ensuring that she does not act as Lovelace would have her—her returning spirits signal a retreat from the tropes of she-tragedy. Curiously, Doody, who notes the rhetorical parallels between the penknife scene and one in Rochester’s *Valentinian*, among other Restoration tragedies, does not question either the sentiments or speeches attributed to Clarissa. She merely argues that “Lovelace’s use of the dramatic rhetoric highlights Clarissa’s heroic situation.... [The scene] is Richardson’s version of a scene often enacted upon the stage” (118-19). Since Clarissa is not allowed to speak in her own voice, the scene belongs entirely to the playwright Lovelace who has so painstakingly stage-managed every particular of it.

Fantastic in every sense of the word, Lovelace’s correspondence is unilateral and monologic. As he tells Belford, “And have I not, as I went along, made thee to say all that was necessary for thee to say?” (L223). More sinisterly, he promises to tell his friend “her [Clarissa’s] thoughts, either what they are, or what I’d have them to be” (L321). But despite all of Lovelace’s “pre-determination,” despite his best efforts to commandeer her text and rewrite her story, Lovelace is “beaten out of his play.” Even though he has possessed her body and controls her speech, he cannot make her act as he wants. Just as Lovelace’s character doesn’t belong in a domestic novel, Clarissa’s character is too pure for Restoration tragedy. This is *Clarissa’s* triumph. Lovelace can place a penknife at her bosom and Lucretia’s words in her mouth, but he cannot make her act in his play. Lovelace confesses:

By her taking out her key, when she came out of her chamber to us, she no doubt suspected my design: which was to have carried her away in my arms thither, if she made such force necessary, after I had intimidated her, and to have been her

may become “like another Lucretia” if Lovelace rapes her. And Clarissa, while she never casts herself as the suicidal pagan, does compare Lovelace to Tarquin in her post-rape delirium.

²³ Like Clarissa’s rape, this elaborate rape fantasy is “omitted” in the text. See headnote to L208.

companion for that night.... [B]ut, from the moment she entered the dining-room with so much intrepidity, it was absolutely impossible to think of prosecuting my villainous designs against her. (L281)

Although effectively rendered speechless by Lovelace's generic manipulations (since the words she speaks are not her own), Clarissa still imposes her voice on the text. By raping Clarissa, Lovelace thought he could force his play into reality, but in this letter, he is forced to admit that his play has failed, that he cannot graft a "happy ending" onto the tragedy he has spawned.²⁴ The failure of his plot causes Lovelace's letters to degenerate into incoherent raving, but Clarissa's post-rape reflective and meditative letters are less flippant and less naïve than her early correspondence with Anna Howe; Clarissa comes into her mature voice and the novel perfects its tone as a result of Lovelace's villainies. The rape makes Clarissa meditative; her frequent recourse to bible verses throughout the novel's second half matches and challenges Lovelace's dramatic tags.

As the novel's second half progresses, Lovelace is not only beaten out of his play, but he also loses his pen, his name, and his life. Clarissa's purity usurps his pen and forces Lovelace to write his wrongs as macabre fantasy in a rambling letter to Belford. After having casuistically rationalized raping Clarissa as self-robbery (since by marrying her afterwards, he makes the damaged property his own: a tragicomic formula), Lovelace loses control of his narrative: "While I was meditating a simple robbery," he writes to Belford, "here have I (in my own defence indeed) been guilty of murder! A bloody murder!" (L246). "Murder" is Clarissa's understanding of the anticipated rape. Lovelace realizes that he has entered into "his charmer's" perspective, that he has unwittingly—unwillingly—ventriloquized her voice. Horrified, he can only explain the slip thus: "She had stolen my pen. While I was sullenly meditating, doubting as to my future measures, she stole it; and thus she wrote with it, in a hand exactly like my own; and would have faced me down, that it was really my own handwriting" (L246). Instead of scratching out—doing violence to—the foreign sentiments, Lovelace disowns what he has written. Incapable of acknowledging such a radical departure from his wonted voice, Lovelace, a consummate forger in his own right, accuses Clarissa of forging sentiments so antithetical to his character. Pity for Clarissa momentarily beats Lovelace out of his reason and character, which is otherwise unassailable. Only anxiety about her impending death can rouse Lovelace from his "Roman style": "But now, to be serious once more, let me tell you, Belford, that if the lady be really so ill as you write she is, it will become you (*no Roman style here!*) in a case so very affecting, to be a little less pointed and sarcastic in your reflections" (L449, emphasis in original). But when Lovelace is forced to abandon his style, he loses his very identity. He cannot sign his name to either this letter or the next (L470) he writes from his heart and out of character. Lovelace leaves a blank—a cipher—instead of writing his name, even calling attention to this omission in the latter letter, which he concludes only with the

²⁴ Lovelace's fantasies that he has impregnated Clarissa are an extension of this desire to make his play "real."

valediction "Thine."²⁵ Lovelace cannot own his textual productions without the language of bad tragedy for he has no identity without it. By making Lovelace a cipher, Richardson, like other Whig critics of the heroic, exposes the inherent emptiness of heroic plot and character: it is all empty bombast.

When Lovelace is frustrated out of his play, Clarissa finds her medium. Her death frees her tongue; her legacy is her story, and by co-opting Belford to compile it, she ensures that Lovelace will have no one to speak through or to. Even when she is not a letter's author, Clarissa's language rings through the novel's last section, as can be seen in Belford's description of Clarissa's death. His first instinct is to imitate Lovelace, to acknowledge the event with the kind of indirectness Lovelace used in admitting to the rape, writing, "I have only to say at present—Thou wilt do well to take a tour to Paris; or wherever else thy destiny shall lead thee!!!—John Belford" (L479). Lovelace, now on the receiving end, refuses to be satisfied with such circumlocution. Although fellow-rake Mowbray tells us that he "won't bear the word *dead* on any account," Lovelace still thirsts for the "particulars of her *departure*" (L480). So Belford rejects his Lovelacian "Roman style" and writes a minute and earnest account of Clarissa's death. This death-bed narrative is a study in contrast from his earlier, almost gothic, detail-oriented description of the rake Belton's horrible death (L424), a contrast Belford makes explicit when he recognizes part of Clarissa's dying speech as "the words I remember to have heard in the Burial Service read over my uncle and poor Belton." Clarissa's final speech comprises her own funeral sermon. Curiously, Richardson does not employ the tactics of sentimentality for the novel's most pathetic moment. Tears, broken speech, and mutely expressive glances are the hallmarks of Belton's emphatically physical death, which is anything but composed. Belford writes: "He has given me some hints of what he wanted to say; but all incoherent, interrupted by dying hiccoughs and convulsions" (L424). Clarissa's final moments find her short of breath, forced to speak in "elevated strains but broken accents" (L481). But the dashes sprinkled through her speech add emphases to her sermon, drawing out its message rather than breaking it up. It is all of a piece. Belford tells us "she *looked* what she said": her mind at rest, her soul at peace, and her text composed. In this letter, Belford ventriloquizes Clarissa's voice perfectly. But he closes his account of Clarissa's death with a modest denial of his authorial ability and a nod to Lovelace's:

A better pen than mine may do her fuller justice—Thine, I mean, oh Lovelace! For well dost thou know how much she excelled in the graces both of mind and person, natural and acquired, all that is woman. And thou also canst best account for the causes of her immature death, through those calamities which in so short a space of time from the highest pitch of felicity (every one in a manner adoring her) brought her to an exit so happy for herself, but that it was so early, so much to be deplored by all who had the honour of her acquaintance.

²⁵ Compare to Lovelace's next letter, written in his wonted character and "Roman style," where he is once again "Thy LOVELACE" (L472).

This task, then, I leave to thee: but now I can write no more.... (L481)

But it is Belford, not Lovelace, who will write more. Clarissa asks him to record and publish her story, to create the literary equivalent of her tombstone, even calling the text her "monument." As able as Lovelace's pen may be, his wickedness has excluded him from the edifying scene of Clarissa's apotheosis; raping her forced him into exile and reliance on Belford's narration of events. Lovelace complains, "Forbidden to attend the dear creature, yet longing to see her, I would give the world to be admitted once more to her beloved presence" (L463). But he cannot approach and must become a reader rather than the author of Clarissa's story. Like the novel's readers, Lovelace awaits the inevitable news of Clarissa's death; like readers, he is desperate but powerless to avert it. Indeed, Lovelace's mad imaginings could almost have been taken from Lady Bradshaigh's first letter to Richardson. As Clarissa's death approaches, Lovelace begs Belford, "Whether it be true or not, let me be told so, and I will go abroad rejoicing and believing it, and my wishes and imagination shall make out all the rest" (L472). Likewise, anticipating the publication of *Clarissa's* fifth volume and the unfolding of the tragedy, Lady Bradshaigh writes, "after you have brought the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destruction, let me intreat (may I say, insist upon) a turn, that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy" (4:179).

III

Richardson's lesson is not just written on Lovelace's body; Belford undergoes the reformation denied his friend. He models the appropriate reader response. Richardson wants readers to learn from Clarissa's sentiments, but to imitate Belford's actions. He suggests that they can learn to be good by learning how, and what, to read. As a transparent stand-in for Richardson's readers, then, Belford enters Clarissa's story steeped in Lovelace's style and predisposed in his favor. Belford spends the novel's first half surrounded by and learning from negative examples, from Lovelace's letters to the gruesome deaths of his uncle and rake-hell friend Belton. Attesting to the power of negative didacticism, these deaths, especially Belton's protracted and painful one, shock Belford into a receptive frame of mind, giving him the perspective necessary to be able to appreciate Clarissa's peaceful apotheosis.

Belford can be Clarissa's advocate and executor because he has already renounced the rake's creed. By the time he befriends Clarissa, his "reformation" has already occurred. Watching over the dying Belton, Belford vows "I hope I shall make a proper use of this lesson. Laugh at me if thou wilt, but never, never more will I take the liberties I have taken; but whenever I am tempted, will think of Belton's dying agonies, and what my own may be" (L424). Clarissa merely encourages him, and her friendship and example keep him from relapsing. Having learned from the hasty and unconvincing moral about-face of Mr. B., Richardson allows Belford a more gradual and plausible transformation, one shown to be in character, not a sudden reversal of it. For Belford, always a rake

by proxy, never actively evil, has been Lovelace's conscience, his voice of reason, throughout the novel. He urged Lovelace to marry Clarissa from the beginning; he reacted with unmixed horror to Lovelace's plan to rape Anna Howe; and he gently chastises Lovelace for his more excessive flights of rakish fancy. Readers have also learned to trust him and respect his opinions. More worldly and less partial than Anna Howe, Belford has proven that he is the novel's best reader. After all, he alone correctly predicted Clarissa's response to rape, warning Lovelace that she could not outlive the "perpetrated outrage," and that "wasting grief [would] put a period to her days" (L222). He also offers the most digressive commentary, from his moralizing on Belton's death to his analysis of popular plays. In a letter to Lovelace describing the dying Clarissa's perfect penitence—true tragedy—Belford pauses to offer this lengthy critique of Lovelace's model play, Rowe's immensely popular "she-tragedy" *The Fair Penitent*:

The whole story of the other [The Fair Penitent] is a pack of damned stuff. Lothario, 'tis true, seems such another wicked ungenerous varlet as thou knowest who: the author knew how to draw a rake; but not to paint a penitent. Calista is a desiring luscious wench, and her penitence is nothing else but rage, insolence, and scorn. Her passions are all storm and tumult; nothing of the finer passions of the sex, which if naturally drawn will distinguish themselves from the masculine passions by a softness that will even shine through rage and despair. Her character is made up of deceit and disguise. She has no virtue; is all pride; and her devil is as much within her as without her.

How then can the fall of such a one create a proper distress, when all the circumstances of it are considered? For does she not brazen out her crime even after detection? Knowing her own guilt, she calls for Altamont's vengeance on his best friend, as if he had traduced her; yields to marry Altamont, though criminal with another; and actually beds that whining puppy, when she had given herself up body and soul to Lothario; who, nevertheless, refused to marry her.

Her penitence, when begun, she justly styles the frenzy of her soul; and as I said, after having as long as she could most audaciously brazened out her crime, and done all the mischief she could do (occasioning the death of Lothario, of her father, and others), she stabs herself. (L413)

Belford follows up this examen with a plot summary of *Clarissa*, concluding that, unlike "our poets who hardly know how to create a distress," "[t]his is penitence! This is piety! And hence a distress naturally arises that must *worthily* affect every heart" (L413). Unlike the popular stage productions, *Clarissa* does the work of tragedy, as Richardson understands it: "to raise commiseration and terror in the minds of the audience" (Postscript). Belford's rejection of *The Fair Penitent* and the rest of Lovelace's foundational texts demonstrates his reformation: his "improved" aesthetic sense mirrors his improved morals. Conversely, Lovelace is too deeply enmeshed in the genre to re-evaluate it. Instead of being reclaimed

and rehabilitated by Clarissa's virtue, he remains trapped in his Restoration texts, unable to decipher Clarissa, incapable of turning her story into either she-tragedy or marriage comedy.

Richardson indulges in some ironic "poetical justice" for Lovelace. He transforms his villain from a "wicked, ungenerous varlet" into a fair penitent in his own right. After "having as long as he could most audaciously brazened out his crime, and done all the mischief he could do (occasioning Clarissa's death), he seeks his own death in a duel. Despite the complaint with which I began, it could be argued that Lovelace is not beaten out of "his play." He is just forced to take the role he had envisioned for Clarissa. In a way, Lovelace does succeed. While Clarissa, even in death, retains control of her novel, Lovelace becomes the title character in a Restoration tragedy.

Lovelace's fate can be read as an analogue of the Young Pretender's. Charles Edward's escape (and protection by the Scots and then French) meant that he had to be figuratively executed, with the result that the people, ideas, and culture associated with the Jacobite prince were outlawed and destroyed in his stead. By killing Lovelace, Richardson gives the cultural representation of the Stuart/Jacobite myth its *coup de grace*, for not only is Lovelace a throwback to Stuart tragedy and heroic drama, but his Cavalier persona is the same as that adopted by "Bonnie Prince Charlie." By the novel's close, Richardson has systematically stripped Lovelace of his authority, his voice, and his supporters; even his own family has turned against him. The thoroughness of this destruction echoes the severity of the reprisals against the Jacobites involved in the '45. Richardson, like General Cumberland and George II's advisors, believed that all rival claimants to authority, be they political (Jacobites) or cultural (the Restoration stage), had to be eliminated in order to protect the Georgian establishment and its ideals.

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