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century London was a small city and the printing trade something like an extended family. When Abel Boyer ascribed sixteen anonymous tracts to Defoe, he did not, as he claimed, recognize Defoe's "loose style." He had his information from the inside. That some of that information was inaccurate is hardly surprising, but we should be more cautious than Furbank and Owens have been before deciding that contemporary knowledge is less reliable than a "plausible" reading of Defoe's character.

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ELIZABETH BERGEN BROPHY. *Samuel Richardson*. Boston: Twayne, 1987. Pp. xii, 134. \$18.95.

JOCELYN HARRIS. *Samuel Richardson*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. xii, 179. \$39.50; paper, \$11.95.

SYLVIA KASEY MARKS. "*Sir Charles Grandison*": *The Compleat Conduct Book*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1986. Pp. 173. \$27.50.

VALERIE GROSVENOR MEYER, ed. *Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1986. Pp. 184. \$28.50.

The relative merits of the four rather diverse books under review can be brought into partial focus by questions about their intended audience. At whom is each book aimed? Of how much value is it likely to be to its presumed readers?

Joyce Harris's book is proffered as a "concise introduction" to Richardson's novels, but she manages to keep her eye on seasoned students of the novelist as well as on readers new to him. This amounts to more than a show of rhetorical dexterity, for judging by my own experience with undergraduate newcomers to the novels, I would say that her book is likely to go a long way toward helping them overcome their not uncommon resistance to Richardson by tacitly conveying the assumption that they are mature enough to share the interests and enthusiasm of serious scholars.

In introducing her book Harris expresses a hope of reconciling traditional historical approaches to Richardson with contemporary theoretical approaches, but her only more or less direct subsequent comment on the issue occurs as a peevish bibliographic annotation on Terry Eagleton's *The Rape of Clarissa*. There she remarks that *Clarissa* was not "quite the virgin territory that . . . Eagleton thought it was . . . because sex, property and class had already been anatomised by Richardson himself" (p. 176). This strikes me less as a sensible critical point than as an indication that even

some very good traditionalist critics like Harris feel defensive about the recent upsurge of self-consciously theoretical approaches to eighteenth-century writers—for the logical implication of her slight would seem to be that virtually all criticism is redundant, since its function is to elucidate meanings already manifest in literary texts themselves. Fortunately, this apparent confusion in no way interferes with Harris's strong suit—her ability to show, in detailed and convincing fashion, how each of Richardson's novels is partially shaped by his deployment of allusions to a variety of important contexts, literary, historical, and above all, political. She argues that through his father and the work of Mary Astell and Locke, Richardson had access to the radical ideas (about power, hierarchy, and education) of seventeenth-century millenarianism, and that this influence, combined with an interest in women that derived in part from his own situation as an uneducated outsider, led him to write novels in which personal or social relationships are politically charged. When she gets down to particulars she relies mainly on Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, showing that Richardson uses Locke's ideas and language to define the nature of the main action in each of his novels. This use of Locke in relation to millennial thought unifies Harris's separate chapters on the novels and is by far the most valuable ingredient of her book, producing important general points that control her individual readings and subtle, specific observations on particular passages. Her most thorough Lockeian reading is of *Pamela*, which she explains as delineating a conflict between Mr. B. as monarch and Pamela as subject. Within this framework Mr. B. follows Filmer in his ideas about power and authority, while Pamela aligns herself with Locke by insisting that "she may legitimately resist tyranny to protect her only property, her person" (p. 18). By the end of the novel Mr. B.'s capitulation and Pamela's "free-willed return establish a contract between monarch and subject," Mr. B. having changed from "a domestic tyrant to a benevolent constitutional monarch," and the two of them having returned to a prelapsarian condition, "the Golden Age, the millennial state foreseen by Locke and Astell" (pp. 23, 30, 32). In certain key passages their initial difference in political orientation leads Pamela and Mr. B. to debate the meanings of basic Lockeian terms—for instance, "the free-born Englishwoman Pamela uses words like 'freedom' and 'liberty' in their full political sense, where Mr. B. restricts them merely to personal and sexual connotations" (p. 25). In brief, Harris situates the novels in a contemporary political context and thereby supplements recent work by Michael McKeon, Nancy Armstrong, and others. Like McKeon, her readings, in their oblique way, also complement theoretically self-conscious work like W. B. Warner's *Reading Clarissa* (1979) and Terry Castle's *Clarissa's Ciphers* (1982) by expounding the concrete historical basis of the interpretive struggles enacted in the novels, and it is no doubt in this implicit sense that she intends to effect a reconciliation between traditional and theoretical approaches to Richardson.

Along the way Harris also explicates other significant patterns of allusion in the novels—to *Hamlet* in *Clarissa* for example, or to the Song of Solomon in the depiction of Clementina della Porretta in *Grandison*. And drawing partly on earlier work of her own, Harris provides perhaps the best available discussion of the relationships between Richardson's novels, of how his obsession with his readers' responses to the stories resulted, on the negative side, in the extensive revisions of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* and in the betrayal of his surest creative instincts in *Pamela II* and *Grandison*, but on the positive side, in the writing of *Clarissa*. Some readers will object to Harris's handling of certain familiar cruxes in Richardson criticism. For example, she raises the important question of suicide in *Clarissa* but loads the dice in answering it: the whore Sally thinks Clarissa is starving herself to death, but "only Belford sees that death is her refuge from . . . agony" (p. 112). A more balanced approach to the question might suggest that it has divided modern readers because Richardson himself, or his text, equivocates. But on the whole Harris's accomplishment is to have written a spirited, highly readable book that grounds Richardson's novels in his culture and its traditions. It richly serves its purpose as an introduction to Richardson, but also has strong appeal for experienced readers of the novelist because it contains much that is fresh.

Elizabeth Bergen Brophy's book, another introduction to Richardson, has the bad luck to suffer by comparison, and the differences are reflected in the question of audience. She modestly presents her book as "a somewhat conventional overview of Richardson and his work," and addresses a single audience, "relative newcomers to Richardson's novels" (p. ix). Within these self-imposed boundaries her book can be recommended as unexceptionable. But next to Harris's it sometimes seems unintentionally condescending toward both its subject and its designated readers. For example, Brophy sums up the last part of *Clarissa* by writing that the heroine "accepts the mystery at the heart of her faith and renews her belief in the essential goodness of God" (p. 68). She notes that modern readers often find this section of the novel "dull and anticlimactic," but defends it as "necessary to prove Clarissa a true exemplar" (p. 68). This one-sided moralistic approach to an important crux not even mentioned by Brophy—is the heroine's death suicidal?—is unfair to new readers, whose resistance it seems likely to harden, and to Richardson's text, which itself raises the issue of suicide. Instead of flattening *Clarissa* out, wouldn't an introductory book best achieve its ends by getting newcomers to engage with the complexities in the last part of the novel? The heroine's grief and her desire to die (explicitly stated) could, for example, be discussed in connection with the trauma of rape or with her feeling of rejection by her family. If such complexities were acknowledged, as they have been by Richardson's modern critics, perhaps newcomers would decide that the last part of his masterpiece is not "dull and anticlimactic." To point out complications would not be to deny that Richardson intends

to depict Clarissa as an exemplar, but to suggest, at the very least, that in achieving sainthood she must struggle with very human weaknesses and that it is difficult for her unsaintly observers within the novel to fathom her behavior. In one of Brophy's liveliest passages she develops the point that Richardson "exploits the full ambiguity of the letter form in order to involve the reader in a continuous test of interpretation" (p. 50). This single nod in the direction of recent criticism could have been extended to the ending of *Clarissa*, which involves various characters—and the reader—in a debate over the motives of the dying heroine.

Brophy's tendency to oversimplify important questions is apparent elsewhere as well. Making in effect the dubious critical argument that *Pamela* ought to have been written in the manner of *Clarissa*, with multiple points of view represented, she disparages Richardson's first novel as an "apprentice work" on the ground that he presents the story almost exclusively through the eyes of his heroine. This, she claims, prevents readers from understanding Mr. B's "doubts, hesitations, or inner struggles" (p. 26), a phrase which suggests that her point partially contradicts itself in the making. Criticism has shown that the novel provides plenty of clues to Mr B's complexities, and that the novel obliges us to discriminate between Pamela's adolescent perceptions and what Richardson's implied author manages to convey between her lines. It can easily be argued that this complicity which Richardson establishes with his adult readers is one of the novel's most impressive strengths. It helps to make *Pamela* one of the great novels about adolescence, for Richardson manages both to keep his readers inside his heroine's youthful consciousness and yet, at the same time, to suggest where her perceptions are wrong or, from an adult vantage, funny. In other words, Richardson complicates the problem of interpretation in a different way from the use of several points of view. To give Richardson the benefit of the doubt here, to acknowledge this more generous way of looking at his first novel, would be to challenge new readers and to increase the likelihood of stimulating their interest.

Sylvia Kasey Marks demonstrates that she has done her homework, at least to the extent of having pored over a great number of conduct books from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and earlier, a tradition she views as coming to triumphant fruition in *Grandison*. Her bibliography contains a useful listing of conduct books, and she is precise in pointing out parallels and discrepancies between them and Richardson's novel on such issues as the relative duties of parents and children. But since a specialized study of this sort can hold interest only for experienced students of Richardson or the conduct book tradition, we have to ask whether it significantly advances understanding of either. To some extent Marks's book usefully contributes to the sympathetic view that in his last novel Richardson attempts to delineate his vision of an ideal society, of patriarchal power at its most benign and beneficent. Harris's last chapter, interpreting *Grandison* as a

"carefully worked out vision of millennial love, justice and reform" (p. 2), presents a much more substantial and succinct version of this argument; and Harris has the good sense in the preceding chapter, also on *Grandison*, to show how in writing it Richardson was traducing his best impulses as a novelist. Marks finds it much harder to acknowledge imperfection, strongly implying from the outset that if we learn to read the novel as the most "compleat" conduct book we will value it much more highly as a literary work. Another approach in Richardson criticism, dating back at least to Morris Golden's *Richardson's Characters* (1963), has been to go beyond the novelist's conscious intentions in writing *Grandison* in order to expose what today we would call its "political unconscious"—or at any rate the Richardsonian unconscious. Carol Flynn summarizes this view in *Samuel Richardson: Man of Letters* (1982) when she writes that Sir Charles Grandison "lives out Lovelace's fantasies of power and seduction in a morally and socially acceptable way" (p. 199). With this approach Marks has absolutely no truck, and consequently, at the time when feminist criticism and the new historicism are influencing eighteenth-century studies, she often sounds naive, as if she thought her task were to celebrate the ideology embodied by the hero of Richardson's novel. We thus find this remarkable comment at the end of a chapter on *Grandison* as Richardson's version of *The Ladies Calling*: "We may fairly conclude that Richardson does all of his twenty agreeable things 'for the distaff side and more' —" (p. 115). Other passages, odd in so specialized a book, announce the familiar as if it were new: "It might be said that the eighteenth century was an age of the letter, as well as of the diary and journal" (p. 27). In short, Marks's study would have benefited from longer gestation. Specifically, it could have profited from the example of earlier work by scholars—Patricia Spacks in *The Adolescent Idea* (1981), for instance—who have shown how to ask illuminating questions about conduct books in relation to the eighteenth-century novel and eighteenth-century culture.

The utterly arbitrary subtitle of the collection of essays edited by Valerie Grosvenor Meyer—not a single one of the ten deals in any direct way with either passion or prudence or the relationship between them—bespeaks an uncertainty of purpose that is also reflected in the book's unclear sense of audience. For at least half of the ten essays, going over familiar terrain without adding to our knowledge of its features, must be intended for "relative newcomers" and seem dramatically out of place next to very strong, original pieces by Rosemary Belcher, Pat Rogers, and Margaret Doody, the first two of which are likely to be of interest primarily to readers already conversant with Richardson and Richardson scholarship. Meyer's desultory introduction lapses into occasional banality (*Clarissa* "has a sexual rhythm embodying tension, explosion, and release"), and at moments even seems apologetic about Richardson ("Few who have persisted with *Clarissa* are unmoved by the spectacle of the Christian heroine. . ."). J. W. Fisher's essay on phys-

ical and psychological spaces in *Pamela* adds little to what Robert Folkenflik and others have already said. Keiko Iubbuchi on Anna Howe's role in *Clarissa* neither goes beyond nor acknowledges work by Ramona Denton and others, just as Lesley Berry on the relationship of *Clarissa* to the Christian tradition omits mention of the far more extensive work by such scholars as John Dussinger. But the collection as a whole is more than redeemed by the work of Belcher, Rogers, and Doody. Belcher's essay ("‘Triall by what is contrary’: Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic") breaks new ground in showing the influence on *Clarissa* of the enthusiast pietism of Richardson's friends George Cheyne, William Law, John Byrom, and others, a circle heavily indebted to the hermetic tradition of Jacob Boehme. Rogers's essay ("Richardson and the Bluestockings") is a short but dense and far-reaching account of how Richardson's novels affected eighteenth-century women intellectuals and writers, among them Fanny Burney and Hester Thrale; Rogers sees Richardson as an entirely positive force—in various subtle ways he "became an avenue of escape from the constrictions which surrounded every woman writer" (p. 154). Doody ("The Man-made World of *Clarissa* Harlowe and Robert Lovelace"), examining the attitude of *Clarissa* and other characters in her story to the "man-made"—"the production of the human mind and hands," including work and human history—argues that Richardson's novel gives "a clear and cumulative sense of what it is like to live in the eighteenth century" (pp. 52, 55). Doody uses the phrase "man-made" ironically, for one of her main points is that *Clarissa* believes in the value of the "woman-made" but is surrounded by people who deny it. This sparkling essay shows what a fine critical intelligence can still achieve through a traditional close reading and should find a welcome as one of the very best short studies of *Clarissa*.

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JAMES G. BASKER. *Tobias Smollett Critic and Journalist*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988. Pp. 358. \$39.50.

Smollett's extraordinary industriousness as a writer of essays, translations, history, travel literature, and novels has never quite retained the attention of the modern reader in the way that Johnson and the Big Four novelists have done. Questions are still put about the ratio between quantity and quality, and Smollett is one of those writers whose multifarious interests have been generally narrowed down to a focus on his novels alone. His productivity is acknowledged rather than known, his artistry is demonstrable rather than assumed, and his moral seriousness as a writer of fiction is both strenuously maintained by his partisans and denied by critics who are more at home with the formal design of Fielding or with the zany modernism of Sterne.