Approaches to Teaching World Literature

Joseph Gibaldi, series editor

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Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Samuel Richardson

Edited by

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PREFACE TO THE VOLUME

“Students of Richardson have all been fortunate in their instruction,” writes Carol Houlihan Flynn (xiii–xiv), reflecting on Richardson's ability to enthral and exasperate anew each generation of literary scholars and on the richness of the teaching tradition engendered by critical readings of his work. The goal of this volume is to capture the best of this tradition and to reintroduce Richardson into the undergraduate curriculum as one of the most exciting and pedagogically rewarding of English writers.

The steadily growing critical engagement with his “troubling fables” (Rivero, Preface vii) confirms that Richardson warrants such a reintroduction. Writing in 1989, Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor pointed out that since the late 1960s, Richardson had moved to the foreground of literary criticism, becoming a subject of “some thirty full-length studies, together with hundreds of articles, chapters in books, doctoral dissertations, and master’s theses” (Introduction 4). Today, scholarly interest in his work is far from abating. The period 1990 through 2000 saw publication of more than forty monographs that either focus exclusively on Richardson or consider his novels at length, bearing out Pat Rogers’s assertion that “however we look at the matter, Richardson is at the centre of eighteenth-century writing” (222).

Recent critical trends have proved beneficial for Richardson. Albert J. Rivero notes that because of the

apparent duplicities of his fictional representations, Richardson has appealed to deconstructionists and reader-response critics, and because of his concerns with issues of class and gender, he has attracted Marxist and feminist critics. Indeed, feminist criticism . . . has transformed Richardson into the preeminent eighteenth-century British novelist, whose “feminism” has been hotly debated.

(Preface vii)

As Siobhan Kilfeather points out, many critics, including William B. Warner, Terry Castle, and Terry Eagleton, have found “that writing about Richardson is such a gripping and partisan activity that one is provoked into battle with other critics” (254). Richardson might well have delighted in having caused such battles, since he confessed that he wrote precisely to provoke his readers into passionate debates about his characters’ behavior, debates in which he could participate, draw his friends out, and instruct them in “correct” readings of his novels. That Richardson continues to vex and polarize his readers today provides the best testimony to his literary and cultural vitality.

Despite the thriving state of Richardson studies, a discrepancy exists between the wealth of scholarly inquiry into his work and the scarcity of publications about
ample, in state schools and in private colleges) as well as in different calendar systems (for example, the quarter, the semester, and the year-long system); and the use of Internet resources.

The "Materials" part of the volume lists currently available editions of Pamela, Clarissa, and Grandison; discusses background publications, such as responses to Richardson's novels by his contemporaries; and enumerates critical works figuring prominently in the survey of scholars carried out before the publication of this volume. This part also tackles issues raised by the survey and provides a short catalog of online resources.

The "Approaches" part is divided into five sections. The introductory section explains how the essays in this volume can help the instructor deal with issues that, as the survey shows, recur in a Richardsonian classroom. Such issues include both the challenges (e.g., the difficulties posed by the length of Richardson's novels, the problem of students' skepticism, the subject of Clarissa's and Pamela's intense religiosity) and the topics that remain at the forefront of Richardson criticism and lend themselves to productive classroom discussions (e.g., Richardson's feminism and the aesthetic value of his revisions). The second section, "Backgrounds," features three essays that address such overarching themes as the textual instability of Pamela and Clarissa, the significance of Richardson's printing career for the study of his fiction, and the pedagogical uses and current availability of his private correspondence. The remaining three parts focus on Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison, a division primarily of convenience and one that should not prevent an instructor from cross-applying approaches from sections dedicated to different novels.

Essays in this volume, unless otherwise noted, quote from Thomas Keimer and Alice Wakesy's edition of Pamela; Angus Ross's edition of Clarissa; and Jocelyn Harris's edition of Sir Charles Grandison; citing Harris's part numbers, not Richardson's volume numbers.

The editors are deeply grateful to the participants of the survey, whose names appear at the end of the volume, for their generous and detailed responses; to Sonia Kan, MLA acquisitions editor, for her careful guidance of this project from its inception; to Angela Gibson, MLA assistant editor, for her thorough copyediting of the manuscript; and to the anonymous reviewers of the volume for their helpful and positive feedback.

LZ
MATERIALS
Primary Works

Editions of *Pamela* currently available to instructors are those prepared by Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely; by Peter Sabor; by William M. Sale, Jr.; by T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel; as well as by S. Field, who has brought together under one cover *Pamela* and *Shamela*. For a comparative analysis of different editions of *Pamela*, see Keymer's essay in this volume. Essays by Janet Aikins Yount and Patricia Brückmann in this volume touch briefly on the topic.

Currently available editions of *Clarissa* are Angus Ross's *Clarissa; or The History of a Young Lady*, based on Richardson's first edition of the novel (1747–48), and George Sherburn's abridged *Clarissa*. A facsimile copy of Richardson's third, revised edition (1751), prepared by Florian Stuber for The *Clarissa* Project, is now out of print, although survey participants report using excerpts from privately owned or library copies to supplement the more regularly assigned Ross and Sherburn editions. For example, survey participants often add to Ross's edition Lovelace's letter about his plot to kidnap Anna and Mrs. Howe, from Richardson's third, revised edition. The surveyed instructors were unanimous in considering Sherburn's edition inferior to the point of being detrimental to students' appreciation of Richardson, although some of them pointed out that unless one has the time and energy to put together one's own abridgment, Sherburn remains the only feasible choice for those not ready to teach the unabridged book. A new abridgment of the novel, based on Richardson's third, revised edition, is being prepared for Broadview Press by Toni Bowers and John Richetti.

Ross's edition works well in the classroom, with two minor caveats. First, the surveyed instructors find less than helpful the absence of any volume breaks in it. They observe that students feel intimidated by what appears to be a continuous 1,500-page block of text. This problem can be solved, however, by asking them to mark the original volume boundaries, as Jayne Lewis suggests in her essay for this book. Second, survey participants regretted that the plot is given away on the back cover, though they also observed that students often do not even notice that tell-tale blurb. If they do, their dismay can be redirected into a discussion of what it means not to read *Clarissa* for the plot. Moreover, in response to these concerns, Penguin has recently come up with a new cover for Ross's edition. It features Allan Ramsay's *Sir Edmund and Lady Turner* on the front (instead of Joseph Hignmore's *The Harlowe Family*) and different back cover copy. Whereas the Hignmore cover informs its readers outright that Clarissa "falls prey to Lovelace, is raped and dies," the more circumspect Ramsay cover tells us that Lovelace "proves himself to be an untrustworthy rake whose vague promises of marriage are accompanied by unwelcome and increasingly brutal sexual advances."
The History of Sir Charles Grandison, edited by Jocelyn Harris for Oxford University Press and first published in 1972, has been reproduced under license from Oxford and may be ordered from Otago University Print: contact Steve Williams at steve.williams@stonebow.otago.ac.nz. This valuable edition had been out of print for more than twenty years. Whether it will stay in print and regain its place in the curriculum as one of the most influential books of the eighteenth century is now up to instructors. We certainly hope that this approach volume’s essays on teaching Grandison will inspire more Richardsonians to introduce their students to this entertaining and many-layered novel.

Other works by Richardson, such as The Apprentice’s Vade Mecum; or, Young Man’s Pocket Companion (1734), The Familiar Letters on Important Occasions (1741), and Pamela II (1741; see Pamela’s Conduct in High Life), are currently out of print and available only through libraries and online used-book retailers. The full text of Richardson’s fourth, revised edition of The Familiar Letters (1750) is, however, accessible through Chadwyck’s Literature Online database (LION), as are Richardson’s first and third, revised editions of Clarissa; his first and sixth, revised editions of Pamela; and the first edition of Grandison. New and fully annotated editions of the complete works and all the correspondence are currently being prepared as The Cambridge Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, in twenty-five volumes. The general editors are Keymer and Sabor, the textual editor is Alex Pettit, and the volume editors make up a large international team. The first volumes should appear in about 2009.

Background Materials

Richardson’s letters appear in a wide variety of sources, ranging from the six volumes of The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, edited by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, to Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson, edited by John Carroll (see Sabor in this volume).

Instructors will find invaluable two ambitious collections of background materials for Clarissa and Pamela: the three volumes of Samuel Richardson’s Published Commentary on Clarissa, 1747–1765 and the six volumes of The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson’s Pamela, 1740–1750 (Keymer and Sabor). The Published Commentary includes all that Richardson himself published on Clarissa and material by such eighteenth-century authors as William Warburton, Albrecht von Haller, and Aaron Hill, together with the wealth of Richardson’s prefaces and responses to his critics. It also includes Letters and Passages Restored from the Original Manuscripts of the History of Clarissa (1751) and A Collection of Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions and Reflections Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison (1755).

The Pamela Controversy features prefatory and closing essays from different editions of Pamela as well as numerous parodies, spin-offs, and unauthorized revisions of the original novel, such as Henry Fielding’s Sharama (1741); Josiah Relph’s “Wrote after Reading Pamela” (1747); notorious anonymous publications such as “Pamela the Second” (1742) and Pamela Censured (1741); J. W. S’s Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor (1743); Charles Povey’s The Virgin in Eden (1741); Eliza Haywood’s Anti-Pamela (1741); and John Kelly’s Pamela’s Conduct in High Life (1741). Included are dramatic and operatic versions of Richardson’s bestseller, such as Henry Giffard’s Pamela: A Comedy (1741); Joseph Dorman’s Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded, An Opera (1742); and Carlo Goldoni’s Pamela, A Comedy (1750). Also collected are visual representations, such as John Carwitham’s engravings from The Life of Pamela (1741), Hubert François Gravelot and Francis Hayman’s engravings from the octavo edition (1742), Hayman’s “Pamela Fleeing from Lady Daven” (c. 1741–42), Gravelot’s “Pamela and the Fortune-Teller” (c. 1740), and Joseph Highmore’s engravings of scenes from Pamela (1745). Both collections are accompanied by introductory and explanatory notes by prominent of the eighteenth century scholar.

Richardson Criticism

The following biographies of Richardson have been published to date: Brian W. Downs’s Richardson (1928); Alan D. McKillop’s Samuel Richardson, Printer and Novelist (1936); William Merritt Sale, Jr’s Samuel Richardson: Master Printer (1950); and T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel’s Samuel Richardson: A Biography (1971). Tom Keymer is writing a new biography for Blackwell.

Richardson is a subject of seven wide-ranging collections of essays: Carroll’s Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essay; Valerie Grosvenor Myer’s Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence; Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor’s Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays; Albert J. Rivero’s New Essays on Samuel Richardson; Carol Houlihan Flynn and Edward Copeland’s edited volume, Clarissa and Her Readers: New Essays for the Clarissa Project; David Blewett’s Passion and Virtue: Essays on the Novels of Samuel Richardson and the special issue of Studies in the Literary Imagination, edited by Murray L. Brown and entitled Refiguring Richardson’s Clarissa.

Given the burgeoning state of Richardson scholarship, it is impossible to list here all pertinent monographs and uncollected essays. For that, instructors should turn to individual essays in this volume that discuss critical materials
relevant to their methodology. In compiling the following list, the editors have relied primarily on the materials of the survey.

Important book-length studies of Richardson include Cynthia Griffin Wolff's *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character*; Mark Kinkead-Weekes's *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist*; Doody's *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*; William B. Warner's *Reading Clarissa: The Struggles of Interpretation and its polemical rejoinders, Terry Castle's Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's Clarissa and Terry Eagleton's *The Rape of Clarissa*; Flynn's *Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters*; Christina Marsden Gillis's *The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in Clarissa*; Sylvia Kasey Mark's *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book*; Jocelyn Harris's *Samuel Richardson*; Thomas Beebee's *Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction*; Tassie Gwilliam's *Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender*; Keymer's *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*; Lois E. Bueter's *Clarissa's Plots*; Donna Lee Frega's *Speaking in Hunger: Gender, Discourse, and Consumption in Clarissa*; Janine Barchas's *The Annotations in Lady Bradshaigh's Copy of Clarissa*; Ewha Chung's *Samuel Richardson's New Nation: Paragons of the Domestic Sphere and "Native" Virtue*; and Keith Maslen's *Samuel Richardson of London, Printer: A Study of His Printing Based on Ornament Use and Business Accounts*. The books by Kinkead-Weekes, Doody (*Natural Passion*), and Harris (*Samuel Richardson*) were recommended by several survey participants as particularly valuable for instructors teaching Richardson for the first time.


Survey Issues

Richardson's novels, because of their popularity and their influential role in the rise of the novel of subjectivity, sit comfortably in a wide variety of courses,
whether novel courses; period courses; cultural studies courses; or theme courses on gender, sexuality, and narrative innovation. Both Clarissa and Pamela are regularly taught in eighteenth-century novel courses, in eighteenth-century survey courses, and in upper-division and graduate special-topic seminars, such as Historicism in Gender and Sexuality in English Literature, 1660–1750; Women’s Narratives; Eighteenth-Century England and the Colonies; Biography and Autobiography; Richardson’s Clarissa and the Theory of the Novel; Sensibility, Enlightenment, and Literary History; and Richardson and Fielding. Instructors typically allot two weeks for teaching Pamela and from two to three weeks for the abridged Clarissa. The unabridged Clarissa takes anywhere from four weeks, in a particularly cooperative graduate seminar, to half a term, the whole term, or even the whole year for both undergraduate and graduate courses.

Grandison is taught in courses on the eighteenth-century novel and in special-topics courses, such as Sentimentalism, The Poetics of Space, The Comedy of Manners, and Richardson’s Sir Charles Grandison. The time allotted ranges from one week (when only excerpts from the novel are taught) to two weeks (when only part 1 from Harris’s tripartite edition is taught), six weeks, or the whole semester (when the entire novel is on the syllabus). Several survey participants have taught courses combining Pamela and Clarissa, and two of them have taught all three novels in graduate courses focusing on Richardson.

Pamela II is taught predominantly in excerpts and in conjunction with Pamela. For example, one survey participant made a group of students responsible for reading passages from Pamela II and contemporary responses to it, then for presenting their findings to their classmates. The ensuing discussion focused on such issues as critical and popular reception of the text; Richardson’s response to the text’s reception; the concept of the sequel, particularly as considered in the context of the early modern novel; and the effects of sequels on original texts in the eighteenth century and today.

The Apprentice’s Vade Mecum and Familiar Letters serve as background materials in a broad variety of courses featuring any of the three main novels. For example, one instructor begins her discussion of Richardson with a short selection from Familiar Letters containing the preface and a few businesslike form letters (two letters of recommendation [letters 31 and 32] and a series of letters requesting a balance of accounts [letters 42–44]). When teaching Pamela, this instructor ends the unit with letters that gave rise to Pamela (138 and 139); when teaching Clarissa, she focuses on the letter describing a young woman’s close call in a brothel (letter 62).

To keep students up to date in their weekly readings of the longer novels, many instructors require them to compose journal entries after each reading installment. One instructor alerts her undergraduates early on to Warner’s argument that Clarissa is a compilation of warring viewpoints and ideological agendas and that Clarissa’s letters to Anna can be read as part of a project of glorious self-vindication ultimately embodied in the book Clarissa regards as her (Reading Clarissa). The instructor therefore tells her students to entitle their journals “Clarissa’s True Diary,” asking them to react to each of their reading assignments with a first-person entry. By taking this point of view, students can presumably express Clarissa’s “true” feelings, unmarred by her need to “perform” herself—ostensibly for Anna, but, in the long run, for a general reader. This journal writing has both advantages and liabilities. It allows the instructor to monitor students’ progress because they can neither rewrite nor respond to the character’s sentiments in a meaningful way unless they have done the required reading and thought through it. Students also use the ideas developed in their journals as starting points both for their classroom discussions and longer papers. What makes this journal exercise challenging is the sheer emotional difficulty of sustaining a “suspicious” reading of Clarissa’s letters to Anna. Inevitably, students begin to elaborate on Clarissa’s feelings in her “true” diary rather than reveal the events purportedly glossed over in her official accounts of what is going on. At the same time, however, although it seems easier to resist Lovelace’s version of events than Clarissa’s, the challenge of resisting both versions can lead the class into productive conversations about emotional identification with the protagonist as a constitutive feature of any novel and about the development of the literary tradition of the unreliable narrator.

Another helpful strategy for keeping up with Clarissa is self-timed reading. Although this method was suggested by a survey participant who has taught the abridged version, it can also work for the unabridged novel. As the instructor reported, Clarissa was scheduled toward the end of the course, between Alexander Pope’s Eloisa to Abelard and The Rape of the Lock and Samuel Johnson’s Rasselas. Students were expected to have read the book before they began discussing it in class. To encourage prompt reading, the instructor asked students during the first week of class to time themselves reading the first ten pages of the novel. As part of an in-class exercise, she then had each student multiply the number of minutes by fifty (10 multiplied by 50 equals, roughly, 500 pages). They divided that number by ten to get to the approximate number of minutes they would have to schedule each week during the ten weeks before they began discussing Clarissa. Reading notes were required for all texts assigned in the course, and, as the semester progressed, the instructor periodically checked progress on the Clarissa notes.

On the whole, the survey participants observed that although students can be initially intimidated by the length of Richardson’s novels, especially Sir Charles Grandison and the unabridged Clarissa, some time into the semester their anxiety often gives way to a feeling of accomplishment. Instructors speak of students’ brandishing Ross’s tome (the 1985 edition) in front of their incredulous and impressed peers, proud about having read and understood a 1,500-page-long eighteenth-century novel. Similarly, in the case of Grandison, David Hensley tells about a student writing in the course evaluation: “I do feel somewhat proud to have completed the most infamously boring novel in English letters (of course, all of us who have read it know this judgment to be false).”
Other pedagogical challenges in teaching Richardson include students' skepticism about his "perfect" heroines, their difficulty in grasping the significance of religion for Pamela and Clarissa (both issues are addressed in the introduction to the "Approaches" part), their resistance to the slow development of the plot or what they perceive as a downright lack of plot, and the trouble they have keeping up with the opposing narrative perspectives in Clarissa.

Not surprisingly, many of these challenges turn out to be ultimately rewarding. For instance, survey participants report that encouraging students to articulate their skepticism about the perfection of Pamela and Clarissa can lead to stirring debates about Richardson's "feminism." Similarly, conversations may begin by trying to understand why modern readers, despite their living in a culture permeated by electronic letter writing and cinematic experimentation with narrative point of view, still feel alienated by epistolary narrative in general and Clarissa's multiple perspectives in particular. Such conversations offer effective pathways into a discussion of the novel as genre: its much debated cultural history, its special status among other representational forms, and its construction of a responsive reader.

One survey participant suggests responding to students' complaints about the passivity of Richardson's most wronged heroine by introducing them early to Warner's Reading Clarissa, which forestalls such responses. She reports that one of her graduate students, who initially disliked Clarissa for "doing nothing" except writing and complaining, began to appreciate Clarissa as an active shaper of her own story after she read Warner's chapter "Building a Book into an Empire of Meaning." Assigning Warner alongside the first volumes of Clarissa thus encourages students to pay more attention to the style of narrative, and especially to textual details enhancing Clarissa's authorial agency—even if doing so gives away parts of the plot.

The assignments characterized as effective by survey participants explored the meaning of eighteenth-century concepts like duty, obedience to parents and masters, improvement, gentleman, lady, virtue, prudence, fortitude, industry, civility, decorum, and punctilio. Another successful assignment focused students' attention on specific details, asking them, for example, to figure out how long it takes after the death of Mr. B's mother before Mr. B. makes his first pass and why the amount of time goes so easily unnoticed. Yet another called for students to map the movements of Pamela and Clarissa in order to emphasize Richardson's use of symbolic geography, an endeavor that can draw on such studies as Edward Copeland's "Remapping London: Clarissa and the Woman in the Window" and on Franco Moretti's Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900 (a book that does not deal with Richardson, but whose analysis of the patterns of mapping the urban space in novels can be profitably applied to Clarissa).

Some instructors reported that writing letters in the voices of Richardson's characters works well for diverse populations of students. Grandison is particularly rewarding in this respect because of its easy, engaging style and the appealing spunk of both Harriet (especially in the early volumes) and Charlotte. Pamela's complexities are also fruitful. By asking students to write a letter in Pamela's voice after they have finished reading the novel, instructors make them poignantly aware of her shift of tone once her virtue is "rewarded." Students acknowledge the challenge faced by Richardson at that narrative juncture; they realize that, in order to write convincing letters, either they have to invent more struggles and afflictions for Pamela, for example, showing her jealousy of her husband's attentions to another woman at a party (a useful prefiguration of Pamela II), or they have to effusively comment on her ever-increasing happiness expressed in a style that slides into self-congratulatory smugness. A discussion-provoking variation on the letter-writing assignment in a course featuring several eighteenth-century novels is to ask students to write a letter from Moll Flanders to Clarissa or from Emma to Pamela. This task throws into stark relief the importance of class affiliations for the eighteenth-century narrative voice.

Survey participants strongly recommended introducing students to the works of William Hogarth and Highmore to give them a sense of the material world of eighteenth-century England. They differed, however, about the role that the BBC Clarissa should play in the classroom. Whereas most agreed that it helped students visualize everyday eighteenth-century life, several instructors were concerned about its hint of incestuous attraction between James Harlowe and Arabella Harlowe, which is introduced to provide a motivation for James's violent and seemingly inexplicable hostility to Clarissa. At the same time, survey respondents admit that the contrast between the simplified adaptation and Richardson's complex original prompts lively discussions, especially if students watch the movie after they have read the book and some critical accounts of it, having become, so to speak, experts on Clarissa. Chabert's essay, "A 'Fatal Attraction'? The BBC and Clarissa," provides a helpful framework for such discussions.

One survey participant felt strongly that Stephen Frear's Dangerous Liaisons represents a better alternative to the BBC Clarissa because it captures more of the spirit of Richardson's novel. Another suggested having students watch the BBC Tom Jones along with reading Clarissa to make them aware of the delicate line between the comic and tragic potential of the eighteenth-century plot about a young woman who runs away from her family to avoid marrying a man whom she finds repulsive.

All survey participants sounded enthusiastic about their experience teaching Richardson. Many commented on their surprise in discovering, on first undertaking Clarissa or Sir Charles Grandison, how effective these novels can be in drawing students into heated and even personally revealing debates about the "perfect" heroes and heroines, the relationship between parents and children, standards of honesty in men and women, the relationship between the individual and society, as well as about the permutations of literary taste both in the eighteenth century and today.
Online Resources

For a full version of Pamela, Clarissa, Sir Charles Grandison, and Familiar Letters, see the section entitled Eighteenth-Century Fiction (1700-1780) at the Literature Online site (http://lion.chadwyck.com).

For an extensive collection of eighteenth-century resources, with links to Richardson sites that include John A. Dusinger's "Selected Bibliography: Samuel Richardson," see Eighteenth Century Resources, maintained by Jack Lynch (http://www.c18.rutgers.edu/biblio/richardson/html).

For a description of the BBC version of Clarissa, with Saskia Wickham as Clarissa and Sean Bean as Lovelace, see www.compleatseanbean.com/clar.html. A videocassette or DVD of the movie is available through online shopping sites.

For sites that complement selected essays that appear in this volume, see

www.unh.edu/english/faculty/yount/pamela_illustrations.html. This site, Janet Aikins Yount's home page, features twenty-nine original illustrations to the sixth edition of Pamela, with facing pages of text.
www.radcliffe.edu/gcws/courses/syllabi/NG555.html. This site provides the syllabus for the course Narratives of Kinship in Industrializing Societies: Literary and Ethnographic Approaches, described in Ruth Perry's essay.
www.jimandellen.org/showclarydates.html. This site contains Ellen Moody's record of the 1995 online discussion "Reading Clarissa in Real Time" discussed in Judith Moore's essay.
Introduction

Here we provide not so much an overview of each essay in the volume as a navigational grid for answers to questions that crop up frequently in the Richardsonian classroom. Our grouping of the essays reflects their engagement with such questions, even though their methodologies and approaches differ widely.

Dealing with the Problem of Length

An important trend in teaching the unabridged Clarissa is to spread it over the whole semester or a large part of the semester, so that students read an average of 150 pages a week. Some instructors opt for heavier reading loads in the beginning of the term to speed their students toward the arguably more exciting central part of the novel. They may then assign other readings, either interrupting the students’ work on Clarissa for one or several class meetings or adding to it; see, for instance, Judith Moore’s strategy of reading Clarissa and Cecilia simultaneously. Reading Clarissa over the whole term instead of trying to fit it into two or three weeks resolves concern about the prohibitive length of Richardson’s novel. As Ruth Perry observes, “to fully appreciate Richardson’s masterpiece, one has to live with Clarissa for a long time.”

Clarissa is, in fact, suitable for a term-long reading project. A layering strategy of assigning other primary texts along with it not only approximates the real conditions in which it was first read, when other novels, plays, poems, letters, and pamphlets competed for its audience’s attention, but also adds an important structural element to the learning environment. Commenting on her class’s weekly practice of analyzing randomly selected passages from Clarissa, Janine Barchas notes that she was “surprised to find that many of the issues that [she] had tagged for that week, whether narrative reliability, heroism, or conduct literature, might still be reached by means of a passage chosen at random.” It seems that no matter which text students are reading or which sociocultural or literary-historical feature of eighteenth-century life they are discussing, using Clarissa as an ever-present backdrop means that they can always turn to it to reground and nuance their arguments. Because of what Jayne Lewis calls its intricate engagement with an “array of cultural institutions, literary practices, and socioeconomic arrangements,” Clarissa may constitute the best primary as well as the best secondary reading for an undergraduate course in eighteenth-century literature.

Lewis’s experience of devoting a ten-week senior seminar to Clarissa has demonstrated that, given enough time, undergraduates do succeed in making Richardson’s novel their own in ways that often surprise the instructor. Her essay is helpful for teachers wishing to undertake for the first time a term-long
exploration of *Clarissa*, because she describes in detail each class meeting dedicated to the novel—its pedagogical goals, specific classroom activities, and the background and critical readings assigned for it.

A creative variation on the strategy of living with *Clarissa* is discussed in Bar-cha's essay. In a course that also featured *Pamela*, her graduate students read *Clarissa* for the whole academic year, which in New Zealand begins in February and runs to November—roughly approximating the "calendar year that organizes the novel." Such an experiment is possible because of the particularities of the academic year in the Southern Hemisphere, but it could be adapted to the Northern Hemisphere.

Teaching *Clarissa* in a thirteen-week semester, Jocelyn Harris structures her course so that the students also have time to read "re-visionings" of the novel. They choose from a list that ranges from Lady Echlin's alternative ending to *Clarissa* and Choderlos de Laclos's *Les liaisons dangereuses* to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. One remarkable pedagogical bonus of orienting the course "post-Clarissa" is that, to understand why and how other writers disagreed with Richardson's original text and its tragic ending in particular, students have to look back to ancient, medieval, and Renaissance literary traditions, all of which provided crucial grounding for Richardson's conceptualization of his themes and characters.

The strategy of making one novel a focal point for the whole course also works for *Pamela*. As Florian Stuber demonstrates, turning *Pamela* into a "semester project" fosters unprecedented emotional engagement with the main heroine and heightened attention to textual detail (11). Similarly, several contributors to this volume have successfully taught undergraduate and graduate courses focusing on *Grandison*. In Cynthia Wall's graduate seminar, which used works by Alexander Pope, Mary Leapor, John Bunyan, Eliza Haywood, Walter Scott, and others to explore the eighteenth-century poetics of space, *Grandison* became the central text, exemplifying the mid-century shift from treating physical spaces as paratexts to bringing them "visibly inside the house, inside the novel," and inside the characters' gendered subjectivity. In Teri Ann Doerksen's undergraduate seminar, students discussed *Grandison* "almost daily," making it a "lens" through which they examined eighteenth-century texts ranging from Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* to Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. Her class even evolved its own spatial metaphor when students referred to their classroom as "the cedar-parlor," described in *Grandison* as the room in Harriet's childhood home, a place where they "felt comfortable analyzing and extending the conversations that they had read in Richardson's text." David Hensley has taught several graduate seminars focusing on *Grandison*, in which at least half of the meetings were spent almost entirely on the novel, with the other half "leading up" to it through a series of extensive readings in its philosophical and literary contexts. The novel was "always on the table, and participants constantly [referred to it from the start] of the semester, seeking to bring out the "often underestimated dialogism of [Grandison's] conceptual and affective alternatives."

**Dealing with Student Skepticism**

Survey participants commented on the challenge of making *Pamela* and *Clarissa* real for undergraduates and of sustaining students' interest in the slow unfolding adventures of Richardson's perfect and seemingly passive heroines. Robert Markley's essay discusses his students' persistent disagreement with Richardson's identification of "female psychological interiority—a woman's 'integrity'—with masculinist notions of chastity, virtue, and daughterly obedience." He suggests turning the resistance to Richardson's ideology into a teaching tool by encouraging students to see the novels at their most dynamic precisely where they fail the author's "didactic aims" of teaching "good [girls]" how to "repress [themselves]." Felicity Nussbaum offers a literary-historical background for what Markley characterizes as Richardson's didactic endeavor to "excite and then repress the ghosts of female desire" when she situates *Pamela* in the context of two seemingly disparate discourses of its time: on the one hand, eighteenth-century conduct books and sermons prescribing how young women should behave in compromising situations and, on the other, pornographic romances, such as *Fanny Hill*. When students consider Richardson's *Pamela* in relation to both these discourses, they begin to understand how his ambition simultaneously to instruct (moralize) and delight (utilize) fueled the numerous eighteenth-century parodies of *Pamela*.

Acknowledging the force of students' skeptical reaction to the explicit pedagogical agenda of *Pamela* as well as to the overall "sincerity of Richardson's ethical purpose," Michael McKeon proposes a framework that situates *Pamela*'s ambitious challenge to the period's socioethical status quo in the history of the English domestic novel. In McKeon's course, undergraduates who read *Pamela* after Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* begin to uncover the complex political meaning as well as the formal generic consequences of Behn's strategy of luring her readers "into reading a private plot as a mere romance only to insinuate its actual status as a signifying stand-in for public affairs of great importance." They then compare her strategy with Richardson's insistence on valorizing *Pamela*'s "private" experience on its own terms. Students re-examine *Pamela*'s didacticism, which they might have initially perceived as self-congratulatory, when they see it in the context of Richardson's innovative attention to processes by which "common people" internalize "the social ethics that obtain, for those of elevated social and political status, in the premodern world."

Kristina Straub responds to student frustration over *Pamela*'s seemingly self-imposed immobility—Why does she keep writing instead of leaving at once?!—by drawing on eighteenth-century debates over the "servant problem." She
reminds her students that the “morally uncompromising right of a domestic worker to sell her labor to her own best advantage is not a universal or ahistorical assumption.” As Pamela struggles to maintain her integrity under cultural conditions that pointedly conflate the domestic servant-woman’s economic agency with her sexual agency, she turns to letters writing as the only respectable form “her moral agency can take.” Complementing Straub’s historical perspective on Pamela’s seemingly puzzling loyalty to the “good job gone bad” is Nicky Didicher’s strategy of making Pamela’s situation seem more real to the average North American undergraduate. Didicher’s students consider the behavior of Pamela’s employer and her response to his advances in the light of various discourses of sexual harassment in Western society today. The assumption underlying this approach to Pamela is that although “the term sexual harassment and its current legal boundaries are a product of our culture, not Richardson’s,” the behavior described by the term as well as psychological reactions of the harasser and his or her victim are to a certain extent universal. While cognizant of the sensitivity of this potentially “very personal or emotionally stressful subject,” Didicher makes a case for using it to engage the students who find Richardson’s first novel “romantic and therefore unbelievable.”

The “Intense Religiosity” of Richardson’s Novels and the Classroom

Instructors wishing to initiate discussion about the meaning of religion for Richardson’s protagonists will find useful Elizabeth Kraft’s essay on Pamela. Kraft draws on Luce Irigaray’s definition of erotic desire as a relationship based on the recognition by both parties of their “essential alterity.” She encourages her students to see how Pamela’s Christian beliefs allow her to express her right to be loved as a complex, autonomous human being rather than simply appropriated by another, as Mr. B. attempts to do in the beginning of the story. Pamela’s deep faith thus signals the possibility of a personal and even public social reform, because through faith the heroine evolves an ethically compelling alternative to the view that by seducing “his Mother’s Waiting-Maid,” Mr. B. commits no crime, since he “hurts no Family by it” (134).

Jocelyn Harris’s essay explores the possibility that Clarissa’s somber rearticulation of the biblical stories of Job and Christ precipitated something close to a religious crisis in many of its first readers. As Harris puts it, “when these pious Christians begged that [Clarissa] should live, they denied a basic tenet of their faith, the existence of an afterlife superior to this one. Under the sway of Richardson’s persuasive and affective realism, they essentially declared themselves unbelievers.” Kraft’s and Harris’s arguments chart a productive space for considering Pamela and Clarissa as deeply implicated in their period’s “intense religiosity” (Kraft) and at the same time as relentlessly testing the interpretive boundaries of the religious idiom.

Grandison, with what Doerksen calls its “delicate negotiations between the Protestant and the Catholic,” accomplishes yet something different in its discussion of religion. By exploring the relation between national and religious identities, Richardson’s last novel anticipates gothic narratives. It also offers students a useful perspective on the engagement of eighteenth-century belles lettres with categories of public and private. As Doerksen’s experience of teaching Grandison to undergraduates suggests, “any student who understands the intricacies of Sir Charles’s and Clementina’s varied rationales for marrying or not marrying will understand cultural expectations of gender, political ramifications of religious identity, and eighteenth-century moral impulses.”

The daunting goodness of Sir Charles, which prompted one of Hensley’s students to speak of the novel’s protagonist as “the good man we love to hate,” can be profitably considered in the context of Richardson’s reaction to the Miltonic worldview, in which evil can be dangerously attractive. Hensley encourages his students to contrast Richardson’s “good man” to such would-be rakes as John Greville, Sir Hargrave Pollenf, and Sir Thomas Grandison, who could have strutted proudly on the Restoration stage but who by Richardson’s time are diminished both in “power and authority.” Hensley’s discussion connects with Jeremy Webster’s rethinking of the figure of the Restoration rake in Pamela as well as with Harris’s analysis of Lovelace as a tragic successor to both the legendary Earl of Rochester and Milton’s Satan. Students who have had some previous exposure to Milton may find thought provoking the exploration of what Hensley calls the “intellectual vulnerability” of Richardson’s “secular sentimental rewriting of Milton’s Christian epic.”

Debating Richardson’s Feminism

Although the question of whether or not Richardson was a feminist may remain, as Lewis puts it, “truly unanswerable,” debates about Richardson’s feminism or his patriarchal ideology continue to constitute a rewarding pedagogical strategy. This volume offers several ways of initiating and developing such debates, ranging from the exploration of Pamela and Clarissa as “paternal fantas[ies]” (Markley) and noting Grandison’s “preoccupation with [women’s] excesses” (Hensley) to considering Richardson as having an identification with women that was “unusually strong” (Perry). Markley’s essay reminds us that in our position as parents and mentors it may come more naturally to us than to our students to espouse Richardson’s perspective on what makes a “good girl” (an approach further nuanced by Moore’s observation that as “exemplary” as Clarissa is, her “merits are insufficient to ensure [her] triumph”). Lisa Zunshine’s essay on teaching Grandison considers its creed that, left alone and unpressured by her family, a good girl will choose the right man. This potentially empowering sentiment is compromised by the realization that Harriet is never really alone, since she is expected to report her every move in a big city in long, grammatically
impeccable letters to "her Lucy" (Grandison 69). Students, many of whom have themselves just left home for the first time to go to college, find this detail particularly pertinent.

Thus lovingly but surely circumscribed, Harriet at least seems to be safe from the novel's tireless exposé of women who think, feel, and travel too much. As Hensley points out, whether "excessively rational ... or excessively emotional ... or even more dangerously transgressive ..., all the women except Harriet typically lack balance, measure, and harmony." To help students contextualize the novel's somewhat embarrassed reading of acceptable female behavior, Hensley introduces them to a series of protofeminist publications "contemporary with the writing and publication of Grandison."

Complicating further Richardson's position on female agency and sexuality are suggestive readings of Mrs. Jewkes offered by Jeremy Webster and Patricia Brückmann. Webster uses Alexander Smith's 1716 story "Madam Clark, Mistress to the Earl of Rochester," featuring the grandmother–turned–procress whose conniving irrevocably ruins her innocent granddaughter, to introduce Mrs. Jewkes as a throwback to the dark figure of the Restoration bawd. Brückmann, by contrast, focuses on the "richly obscene" vegetative allusions of Pamela to offer a surprisingly "lively and humane" interpretation of Richardson's "bawdy nurse." Spurred by Brückmann's close attention to textual details, her students begin to recognize how Mrs. Jewkes and "the landscape in which she functions" reorient both the narrative and the heroine toward the issues of "production and reproduction"—a crucial reorientation if Mr. B. and Pamela are ever to come to a mutually satisfying agreement.

Moore's essay considers questions reported by survey participants as coming up repeatedly in students' discussions of Richardson: What are the ideological and aesthetic implications of a "male novelist telling a woman's story from multiple points of view, including her own?" What cultural conditions make such cross-gendered ventriloquism particularly appealing or particularly problematic? Moore discusses her experience of teaching Clarissa alongside Frances Burney's Cecilia in a course on women's narratives that encouraged students to explore the complex assumptions behind their belief "that women's stories can be told only by women or that only women will find them compelling."

Perry, who taught with an anthropologist an interdisciplinary graduate seminar where texts from nineteenth-century Tonga and twentieth-century Africa were juxtaposed with Clarissa, demonstrates that reading a 250-year-old novel written by a man can affect one's understanding of the socioeconomic challenges faced by women in modern industrializing economies. She reports that her anthropological exploration of the politics of kinship and property in Clarissa inspired a South African member of the seminar to develop a set of "policy recommendations for distributing land among rural women" in her own country. Clarissa's focus on distortions of the traditional "cognatic, bilateral kinship system such as had always been practiced in English society" and the negative effects of those distortions on the situation of women helped the students "understand how existing land redistribution policies might not protect rural African women in the new economy."

Richardson as a Printer: New Pedagogical Approaches

In the 1990s, the renewal of critical interest in Richardson's career as a printer represented a salubrious break with the earlier tendency to "wonder," as Keith Maslen puts it, "that a London tradesman could escape the 'sordid views' of his class to write with art and passion of the workings of the female heart, setting his realistic narratives in a social domain from which he was by birth and occupation excluded." An effective way to convince students of the surprising resilience of that old sentiment is to direct them to the back cover of the Ross's Clarissa (the one featuring Highmore's The Harlowe Family), which informs them that in Clarissa, "one of the greatest European novels and its author's triumph, Samuel Richardson had luck or predestination to hit upon the story that became a myth to his own age, and remains so now" (emphasis mine), and ask them to substitute "Richardson" with "Shakespeare." The condescending nature of the back cover's compliment becomes apparent once students realize that they are not often encouraged to think of Shakespeare as having luckily hit on the story of Hamlet or King Lear. Harris's "Richardson: Original or Learned Genius?" furnishes rich material to challenge the myth of Richardson's middle-class benightedness occasionally pierced by strokes of creative luck.

The essays by Maslen and Barchas vigorously reengage the meaning of what Barchas describes as Richardson's unique position as "printer, author, and publisher." Maslen has uncovered the real extent of Richardson's printing output, which radically challenges the traditional concept of Richardson's political and aesthetic horizons and destabilizes the comfortable division between Richardson as "a poetic writer and a prosaic tradesman." Maslen's essay encourages teachers to direct students first to compare Richardson's practice of "printing to the moment" with his famous "writing to the moment" and then to inquire into the use of printer's ornaments in Clarissa. Responding, as it were, to Maslen's concluding question, "Why did Richardson use so many printer's ornaments?" Barchas shows that such ornaments bear directly on the meaning of each episode in which they were used. The author of Clarissa deployed "graphic design and layout" not only "to augment the passing of time in the letters as well as among them" but also to "mark hesitations imposed by the letter writer that reflect unease." It is crucial, therefore, that students are exposed to the original physical appearance of Clarissa, and Barchas's essay discusses resources and strategies available to the instructor committed to exploring Richardson's peculiar identity as a printer-writer.
Teaching Richardson's Revisions

An instructor choosing between existing editions of Pamela and Clarissa may wish to consider more than just technical aspects such as price, font size, and accompanying scholarly commentary. Richardson's project of revising his novels started before publication, continued until his death, and was then taken up by his daughters. This resulted, as Tom Keymer argues, in there being no unquestionably authoritative version of Pamela and Clarissa, for "no criteria can establish that any Richardson novel survives in its definitive or perfect state." But because different editions of Pamela and Clarissa produce somewhat different versions of these novels, such textual instability presents the teacher with a valuable pedagogical opportunity to explore both "the pressures of conservative tastes on innovative texts"—for Richardson revised most heavily in response to his contemporaries' complaints about the propriety of his novels—and the "conditions of literary production in the eighteenth-century marketplace for print" (Keymer).

Keymer's overview of the different editions and his analysis of the vexed concepts of original and final texts provide an excellent starting point for the broad range of classroom approaches explored by this volume. First, his argument links suggestively with Brückmann's close reading of "wicked" gardening references in Pamela, since the 1801 edition, prepared by Richardson's daughters, eliminated unbecoming jests involving cucumbers and beans. Second, it dovetails with Markley's story of drawing students' attention to the failures of Richardson's didactic project. For example, Keymer notes that a "swarm of detailed adjustments" often pulls the text away from its main ideological drift, opening up suggestive fissures in the novel's intended moral message. Third, the overview Keymer provides works well with Barchas's observation that Richardson used printer's ornaments to mark the passing of time in Clarissa: as she demonstrates, the 1751 edition of the novel "allows for a sustained association between graphic symbol and letter writer."

Peter Sabor's essay highlights the feedback mechanism behind Richardson's "compulsive rewriting," specifically in the writer's correspondence with readers whose advice he eagerly sought and whose "often conservative and conventional tastes" he tried, at significant emotional expense, to accommodate. Richardson's remarkable epistolary oeuvre of some 1,650 letters will become available in full as part of the Cambridge University Press twenty-five volume edition of his work and correspondence. In the meantime Sabor's essay provides a detailed overview of the currently available sources for Richardson's correspondence and discusses its pedagogical applications. For example, teachers faced with students' incredulity at the sheer volume of letter writing, letter copying, and letter forwarding in his novels will find helpful Sabor's analysis of Richardson's own epistolary practices.

The "unstable nature of [Richardson's] novelistic imagining" is rich with opportunities for close reading, as John Richetti demonstrates in his comparative analysis of the first and third editions' versions of a scene between Lovelace and Clarissa in St. Albans. One sentence in the first edition is transformed into a lengthy dramatic dialogue in the third, a revision that can lead to a productive classroom discussion of the complex generic affiliations of Richardson's novel and of the aesthetic value of his obsessive corrections. Online editions of Clarissa make possible a variety of classroom exercises based on comparing the same letter in different versions of the novel.

The illustrations that Richardson commissioned for his books complicate further his "continual dialogue first with readers of his manuscript and then with the wider audiences for his printed texts" (Richetti). Janet Aikins Yount even suggests that Richardson might have undertaken yet another series of textual revisions because he was inspired by illustrations prepared by Francis Hayman and Hubert François Gravelot for the sixth edition of his Pamela (1742). The collection of twenty-nine illustrations, available for the first time at Yount's home page, is an important pedagogical tool. Her essay in this volume discusses strategies for using these images (four of which are reproduced with the essay) to help students fully grasp the interactive mode of Richardson's narrative.

For instructors whose students want to create their own interactive versions of Richardson's novels, Mark James Morreale describes the project of making a "collaborative academic Web site that annotates and illuminates a small portion of Clarissa." With what Morreale calls its "frequent use of cross-referencing, its allusive character, and its weblike structure," Clarissa represents an inviting text for such a project. Given the growing availability of Richardson resources on the World Wide Web, the collaboration described by Morreale could also be profitably undertaken by students wishing to annotate parts of Pamela and Grandison. Although the technology available for creating a collaborative Web site will inevitably change in the coming years, the pedagogical value of such an enterprise will endure.