Playing Her Dead Hand: Clarissa’s Posthumous Letters

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For all her worldly desire to be reconciled to her family and friends, Clarissa declares that “God Almighty would not let me depend for comfort upon any but Himself” (4:339), and shortly thereafter Belford describes her death, a smile expressing “her eternal happiness already begun” (4:347). Clarissa’s story thus comes to a shattering end, but not for those friends who grieve for her death or for those who must now bitterly confront their culpability in precipitating it. For readers of Clarissa, the heroine’s exemplary demise also continues to be troubling as we struggle to comprehend the resolutions her death proposes to the complex social, ethical, and personal dilemmas examined in the novel. Although Richardson confidently asserts his book is “designed to recommend the highest and most important doctrines of Christianity” (Postscript 4:551), critical reactions reveal the perplexity that Clarissa and its conclusion engender.

Much of the perplexity surrounding what is resolved by Clarissa’s death concerns what her story is or whether story, as conventionally defined, can exist in the epistolary mode. As William Warner suggests, Clarissa’s story becomes particularly complicated by her decision “to produce the book” that will vindicate her life, a decision that requires readers to evaluate shrewdly not only her motives but the account of events she chooses to narrate. Equally compelling, does her story, or at least her particular, competing voice in an epistolary narrative of multivalent voices, cease to exist once she peacefully expires? Recent critical theory has effectively destabilized our notion of narrative beginnings and endings; Clarissa’s story, but especially her competing voice, transcends her death through eleven posthumous letters. They not only continue her story but imply a far wider context for what it reveals.

Clarissa’s posthumous letters juxtapose competing, contextualized utterances embedded in her discourse throughout the novel. An ironic, monologic voice first attempts to define and insist upon an ideologically Christian orientation; a second, discordant voice disrupts the first, and

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this second voice, emphatically persistent in Clarissa's posthumous letters, is startlingly devastating, revealing as it does the content of her continuing story. As discourse, these letters are fundamentally dialogic; they preclude "the possibility of closure. There is always some 'other' whose response maintains the open-endedness of the negotiation of the self and of language." Clarissa strategically calculates that response. She depends upon her recipients' understanding of the implicit, disruptive voice embodied in these letters, an understanding ultimately predicated upon their mutual recognition that they are willfully engaged in a life game called, "Now I've Got You" (which I will explore later in detail). Colonel Morden, describing Clarissa's posthumous letter to Mrs. Norton, accurately assesses its effect when Mrs. Norton reveals its content to the Harlowes: "It has new-pointed their grief, by making them reflect on their cruelty" (4:407). It is exactly Clarissa's decision to continue her story, to play her life game to its inexorable conclusion, that not only reveals her to be a seriously troubled heroine but requires a careful reassessment of her death.9

In the posthumous letter to her father, Clarissa "exults" in comforting him for providing her with her "happy end" and reminds him pointedly that "the Almighty has accepted my unfeigned repentance"—but she knows her father has not. She further wounds him, remarking that by this time "you will . . . have been the means of adding one to the number of the blessed" (4:360). To her mother she adroitly observes, "And be this your comfort . . . that the principal end of your pious care for me is attained, though not in the way so much hoped for" (4:361). Protesting that she is above "a spirit of recrimination," Clarissa nevertheless chastises James and tells him that she finally has a forum in which to address him: "And now is that time, and this the occasion." Effectively annihilating his willingness to "arrogate to [himself] God's province," she appropriates to herself the doctrine, "Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay it" (4:361). In writing to Arabella, Clarissa deftly exposes her sister's contemptible nature, and to her uncles she underscores how, if some are drawn to God through love, "others are driven by terrors" and must undergo "sore and terrible misfortunes," but do not "let it be a matter of concern that I am cut off in the bloom of youth" (4:365).

Contrasting conventional visions of a blessed and serene Clarissa as well as those that perceive a disenfranchised Clarissa denied the capacity to write and even to imagine a self,10 the caustic condemnations in the posthumous letters suggest a shrewd and manipulative Clarissa fully capable of playing her "dead hand." Although Margaret Doody especially argues that Clarissa’s "spiritual genius" is her "natural passion" and "a ground of [her] being,"11 the Clarissa of the posthumous letters is remarkably unwilling to rely only upon God for vindication. To the
bitter end, Clarissa is undaunted by attempts to stifle her expression of self. She has foreseen her "forum," calculated its effect, and poured every last ounce of her strength into completing these letters, an effort of will at which Belford and Mrs. Lovick marvel. So indeed does a reader because, as the posthumous letters continue Clarissa's story, they underscore how a particular "voice" in Clarissa's correspondence necessitates a reexamination of the heroine to whom Lovelace prays, "LET THIS EXPIATE" (4:530). In order to make sense of Clarissa's letters to her family and then to proceed to the more disturbing ones to Lovelace and Colonel Morden, it is useful to consider how the remarkable rhetoric of the posthumous letters surfaces from the beginning in Clarissa's correspondence and how that rhetoric functions.

Richardson claims that the first two volumes of Clarissa establish "the foundation of the whole" (Postscript, 4:564), and one strength of those volumes lies in Richardson's sustained control of a stable irony that discovers a flawed Clarissa who does indeed require "divine grace and a purified state" (Author's Preface, 1:xiv) to correct. In his own intriguing approach to irony, Wehrs suggests that it establishes a context that "adjudicates between the claims of competing voices" and that the ironic pattern in the novel relies critically on Clarissa meaning what she says. Wehrs's sense of irony in the novel thus depends on the premise that Richardson invests in Clarissa's comments a legitimate authority from which we judge her antagonists' refusal to believe her and from which we accordingly condemn their insidious attempts to impose upon her an aberrant vision of the world and her place in it. Given his premise, the juxtaposition of Clarissa's pronouncements with what other correspondents write becomes the "nonarbitrary benchmark" of an irony that devastatingly reveals the moral degeneracy of all those who torment her; irony justifies Clarissa's interpretation "of herself." It is indeed difficult not to believe that Clarissa means exactly what she asserts; she clings tenaciously to her point of view. But as Mark Kinkead-Weekes advises, readers should be wary of Clarissa's pronouncements, since Richardson continually probes "the implications of his heroine's values" and "tests his convictions about her." In fact, underlying Clarissa's words lurks an impious rationality, a belief in her superior reasoning powers through which she believes she can force the world to accommodate her. As she insists to Anna, "we may make the world allow for and respect us as we please, if we can but be sturdy in our wills" (1:22). Relying upon her rational judgment, she willfully judges people and events, makes only those "fitting concessions" (1:22) she determines justifiable, and articulates her judgment through a self-conscious, witty, and rapierlike mastery of language, which Arabella labels "witchcrafts" (1:35) and the entire family fears (1:305). Clarissa be-
lieves her discourse controls her situation, but we perceive how that discourse, though camouflaged in reason, actually violates her proclaimed spirituality and even contradicts what Richardson's monologic, ironic voice desires her (and a reader) to embrace. In short, Clarissa's statements dramatize how reason too frequently allies itself with spiritual error. It is difficult to believe, then, that Richardson portrays Clarissa straightforwardly, her comments a sure guide to the ethical center in the novel.

It is especially difficult when Richardson has declared, "Let us now see what extraordinary Things Human Reason has done for its Votaries . . . [who have relied upon] this blind and uncertain Guide, left to it self."15 Opposed to the impiously rational skepticism of his age (Postscript, 4:553), Richardson creates a story of an infamously persecuted heroine, but one also victimized by her delusion that reason can penetrate all schemes and webs that entangle her. Through a pattern of what Wayne Booth calls stable irony, we see revealed the disparity between Clarissa's literal words and the signified reality they actually expose.16 If we choose to respond to this stable irony, we do so in the sense that it represents a kind of monologism, "a centripetal language, a language of 'authority'" through which Richardson defines her actions "in an already-formulated ideological 'formula.'"17 That is, Richardson invites us to see Clarissa's discourse, her account of herself, as pronounced through a tone of voice that does not correspond to her true life situation. The irony, as Paul de Man suggests, enunciates "the notion of dédoublement as the characteristic that sets apart a reflective activity . . . from the activity of the ordinary self caught in everyday concerns."18 Clarissa's ordinary self is one that is fatally undiscerning and spiritually perilous.

For example, although Clarissa reveals a spirited resilience and dedicated resistance to tyranny, she articulates her scorn like an irrepressible Becky Sharp and can equally say, "I am no angel." Clarissa caricatures Bella's "plump high-fed face," defiantly refusing to be "such a reptile as not to turn when trampled upon" (1:30). In fact, she adeptly turns upon James, writing that her "whining vocatives" have been so scorned that to imitate him and Arabella she shall assert herself "in order to be thought less an alien, and nearer of kin to you both" (1:268). Uncle John Harlowe candidly admits that "we are all afraid to see you, because we know we shall be made as so many fools" (1:305). It is no wonder that throughout the first two volumes of the novel Bella raves, and James flings from Clarissa in passion, calling her a "fury" (1:406); Uncle Antony rages, her father boils in wrath, and her mother smart in indignation as Clarissa effectively routs her inveterate family.

The disparity between this verbally aggressive Clarissa and the hero-
ine as often otherwise interpreted leads us to suspect her reliability as an unerring guide to moral excellence. This ironic truth is eventually confirmed when we locate another beginning of Clarissa's story that only appears in Anna Howe's long account of her friend's daily and righteous pattern of living, a regimen of excellence closely allied to "The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living" that Jeremy Taylor outlines in *Holy Living and Dying*. Where the account appears, at the conclusion of the novel, Anna's narration appropriately supports a vision of a beatified Clarissa. In chronological time, however, it reveals that the Clarissa of holy living and the Clarissa as dramatized are considerably different people.

From this perspective, we are forced to reconsider Arabella's bad-tempered but certainly more understandable and potentially accurate analysis of a sister who comes into a room and appropriates the center of attention to her wise and witty self. James's accusations that she is actually angling for her uncles' property to supplement her grandfather's bequest also has (for him) a greater justification. Richardson, of course, could have placed Anna's account first, counterpointing that narrative with Clarissa's dramatic writing to the moment, thereby obtrusively highlighting the inconsistency between illusion and reality. But he was not writing either a simple moral tale of an all-suffering Griselda or an allegory of a virtuous if perhaps misguided paragon. The novel as an emerging art form is for Richardson an opportunity to explore the ambiguity of experience in greater complexity. It seems clear that he desires to attack indirectly, through irony, Clarissa's particular, rationalistic impiety and the kinds of intemperate rhetoric it tempts her to invent in order to allow our understanding of their impropriety to arise naturally from the narration itself. As a living and breathing woman, Clarissa may, through writing her story, come to recognize her intemperate nature, a point I shall address later; as developed through irony, Clarissa reveals to the reader the care required to understand the delusory nature of experience that Richardson perceives.

As with her taunts to her sister, her tirades against James and her saucy confrontations with Solmes (whom she obliterates) demonstrate Clarissa's provoked but reasoned assurance that she can effect a waver- ing in the family. The pattern of stable irony, however, subverts the surface text dramatizing Clarissa's verbalized conception of her rational self; it rejects her claim to vaunted "prescience" (1:188) for the superior message that reason and self-will can never sift experience sufficiently to provide a reliable guide to right action. Responding to the irony, readers anticipate that Clarissa is actually headed for disaster, and (unlike Anna Howe who reasons as desperately as her friend) are not shocked by Clarissa's letter from St. Albans, although Anna is thoroughly befuddled: "Lord have mercy upon me!—but can it be?" (1:472). Stable irony
guarantees Clarissa’s failure; sharing Richardson’s ironic perspective, we discover why she fails.

When Clarissa goes to the ivy-covered summer house, Aunt Hervey joins her and tells her [insofar as “air and manner often express more than accompanying words” (1:5), a principle of deduction Clarissa prides herself on being able to perceive] that the family has nearly capitulated. Heretofore, Clarissa’s attention has concentrated on discovering exactly such a wavering. Aunt Hervey tells her, “You don’t know my dear! Things may take a turn—things may not be so bad as you fear. . . . I hope, I earnestly hope . . . that nothing can be found that will impeach your discretion; and then—but I may say too much” (1:468). Clarissa, however, does not hear her and is equally blind to “air and manner”; she “can think of nothing” (1:468) but the impending interview with Lovelace. When the one point of time arrives that she has struggled to create and has confidently assumed could be created—that “point of time [upon which] one’s worldly happiness depend[s]” (1:475)—reason deserts Clarissa. The predicaments of human experience are as much an emotional crucible as a logical puzzle to be dispassionately solved. Left to itself, reason is vanquished, a knowledge the worldly Lovelace possesses and deviously appreciates: “Oh, these reasoning ladies! How I love these reasoning ladies!” (2:214).

Following her flight from Harlowe Place and continuing to her death, Richardson develops a dawning recognition in Clarissa of her self-deception, the text punctuated by glimpses of how she relies too fully upon her own strength, her presumptuous knowledge, her fallible self. Clarissa must consciously reject the surface layer of her earlier verbalized self and must affirm not her reason but true wisdom, the gift “From Thee derived, Eternal Source / Of intellectual Light!” (1:276), the truth she sends to Anna in the “Ode to Wisdom” in March but fails at the time to understand. Of special interest in this context is how the classical ode itself destabilizes its subject through its form (strophe, antistrophe, epode) and thereby accentuates the problematic nature of its subject. Clarissa certainly does not perceive the ode’s dynamic that ought to make her aware of the necessity to see competing values, but she fails precisely because she is playing a life game, and it demands that she, herself, be the source of intellectual light. If, of course, Clarissa could grasp and act upon true wisdom, then through her interiorization of that recognition her story would indeed seem to validate the superior meaning of the text’s stable irony.

Understandably, we look for such a confirmation in Clarissa that we discover in Elizabeth Bennet, who, suddenly ashamed of herself, exclaims, “How despicably have I acted! . . . I, who have prided myself on my discernment.” Subsequently, Elizabeth develops a control of herself,
and her "voice" begins to approximate Darcy's, assuring the reader that her shifted perspective is authentic. Similarly, the surly young Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* finds a totally new voice by the conclusion of the novel, justifying her awakened sense of a renewed world with Hareton. In contrast to these examples, although Richardson crafts a transformation in Clarissa, he neither consistently nor convincingly creates an appropriate language to reflect her spiritual regeneration. To do so, he would have had to eliminate the verbal pattern of Clarissa's voice that initially discovers her flaw and that thereby establishes the stable irony in the first place.

Clarissa's letters to Mrs. Norton and the series of meditations at the Smiths suggest that Richardson does interject a "noble simplicity, and natural ease and dignity of style" (4:6) of sacred writing into her "voice" in order to reinforce her transformation. Nevertheless, the spirited, "peevish" Clarissa continues to be guided by and to exercise her own judgment (4:103). In response to her Uncle Antony's continuing cruelty, she writes, "May Heaven give you always as much comfort in reflecting upon the reprobation I have met with, as you seem to have pleasure in mortifying a poor creature" (4:106); in relationships in the family, "may you all be happy in each other" (4:107). The tone of her early self flares out when she writes to her cousin Morden, "No, sir, let me say that your cousin Clary..." (4:250). And in her last letter to Anna Howe, Clarissa (rather slyly) relates how she has disposed of her grandfather's legacy ["knowing it to be my right," 4:273] because the family can never want it, a not so subtle, last condemnation of their greed that she knows Anna will appreciate appropriately. Clarissa also claims that she still desires worldly justice, and at a time when she is so faint that in the process of writing she several times has to put down her pen. But what most compromises the picture of a Clarissa purified of all resentment (although she repeatedly protests that she now has none) are the shocking posthumous letters written during the last stage of her life.

These last letters are remarkable not because they alter our perception of Clarissa but because they precisely and truthfully sustain her contextualized utterance dramatized throughout the novel and through which she reveals the emergent self underlying her story. Thus, when writing to her father and mother (supplicating, supposedly, on her knees), her discourse betrays a vindictive aggression devised to accuse: "blot from your remembrance, if possible" and recall I was "too easily satisfied with worldly felicity" (4:359–60); dear Madam, God has witnessed—and forgiven—my great "distresses," yet "may the grief of my fatal error be the only one that shall ever annoy you" (4:361). That "ever annoy you" is a master stroke of doubly oriented speech where, embedded in an ostensibly comforting utterance, the hidden agenda is clear—be ever an-
If Richardson employs a monologic irony through which he attempts to define Clarissa, the decision to use irony at all, as Booth points out, is always risky because "the rejected meaning is in some real sense a rival or threat."20 That is, as Richardson brilliantly and dramatically captures the dynamics of Clarissa's verbal assaults, the ironic utterance competes too successfully; it actually demands that we respond to it seriously. What I think happens in the novel is that the artist in Richardson does respond and consequently discovers a competing truth in Clarissa's dramatized, aggressive discourse. The discovery compels him to explore it.

In her posthumous letter to Lovelace, Clarissa refers to her earlier ruse of directing him to her father's house, although she has claimed that that deceit had given her uneasy moments. We recollect, however, her earlier delight in misleading Betty Barnes and in countering James and Arabella's intrigues. Shirley Van Marter thus accurately comments that although Richardson alters the text to reduce the impression that Clarissa employs artifice in her action, "in doing so he overlooked a more troubling flaw: it is not the degree of her artifice, but her willingness to use it at all, which detracts from her innocence."21 More significant than particular stratagems she employs, however, is the essential and premeditated effect of the artifice. She plays what transactional analysis identifies as a "life game,"22 and she is an adept third-degree game player. This individual plays for keeps, such games ending "in the surgery, the courtroom, or the morgue."23 In light of Lyotard's argument that all games are played out in and through language24 and of the current critical focus upon "the ontological status" of the letters in Clarissa,25 understanding how the correspondence represents psychological transactions in a game equally provides a base of assessing a particular letter writer's statements and motivations, for considering what Clarissa achieves by dying, and for gauging how the posthumous letters become an integral maneuver in her gamesmanship.

All interpersonal relationships and communication (verbal or nonverbal) represent kinds of transactions through which we receive necessary feedback (strokes), and these transactions "are determined by whether the strokes exchanged are complementary or crossed."26 Simple transactions, such as pastimes (distinct from games) regularly occur in daily routines and are complementary. Communication in such cases proceeds indefinitely and smoothly. The letters between Clarissa and Mrs. Norton, for example, exhibit such transactions, Clarissa assuming the child ego state to Mrs. Norton's parental one of nurturing sympathy or pious instruction. Clarissa's letters to her dear nurse and "mama" begin after the rape and during her apparent spiritualization, but the voice revealed has little to do with "grace" and cannot be used to justify a trans-
formation from Clarissa's earlier self. The voice in these letters is proscribed by a latent, discursive pattern well established in the relationship between these two characters; their correspondence is played by rules advantageous to both. No crossed transaction occurs to sabotage the communicated message or the other's explicit or implicit motivations.

Similarly, the discourse between Lovelace and Belford initially operates as a predetermined pastime, each accepting proscribed rules and rhetorical "freedoms" (1:144): Lovelace's description of Belford's rough and resolute face (1:151); his enjoiner not to be the "butcher" of his Rosebud "lambkin" (1:171); or his reminders that Belford, too, is a sad, "bad" fellow, more a "bear" than a man, "a paltry fellow" (2:20, 21, 30). Whether revealing this fellow rake's clumsiness and "leaden head" (2:63, 64) or noting Belford's first pleas on Clarissa's behalf and warning "evermore be sure of being in the right, when thou presumest to sit down to correct thy master" (2:185), the discourse resembles what Bakhtin identifies as a kind of carnival ritual: "During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom" and "the entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity." 27 Lovelace's correspondence to Belford, then, takes the form of laughing utterance where "they address each other informally, abusive words are used affectionately, and mutual mockery is permitted." 28 Lovelace's laughter frequently overwhelms him:

I believe—I believe—ha, ha, ha!—I believe, Jack, my dogs conclude me mad: for here has one of them popped in, as if to see what ailed me; or whom I had with me. The whoreson caught the laugh as he went out. Ha, ha, ha!—an impudent dog! O Jack, knowest thou my conceit, and were but thy laugh joined to mine, I believe it would hold me for an hour longer. 29

As an essential pastime, underscored by comic raillery, both men fully understand their respective roles. As such it is perhaps understandable why Belford tentatively and only reluctantly becomes a sincere advocate for Clarissa. For him to do so requires that he step aside from an amusingly comfortable ego state and adopt serious adult-to-adult discourse.

When crossed transactions do occur, however, communication quickly deteriorates, and a simple transactional sequence, like a proscribed pastime, is broken, often resulting in "a symbolic, verbal or legal cry of 'Foul.' " 30 At that point, we discover whether a person is a serious game player. Although in her relationships with her family Clarissa has apparently enjoyed essentially complementary transactions, the arrival of Lovelace suddenly complicates family affairs. Once James and Ara-
bella unite against her, simple transactions become increasingly and dangerously crossed. We observe, then, that Clarissa is indeed a game player engaging in a series of transactions comprised of “dishonest maneuvers and sequences”31 designed to assert control over others. Knowing she has been forbidden to meet Lovelace, Clarissa nonetheless accepts Anna Howe’s invitation to visit, fully aware that Lovelace will appear and that she can claim no authority to prohibit his presence. Reacting to James and Bella’s interference, which discredits her with her father, Clarissa writes to Anna, “Bless me, my dear! that they should choose to intimidate rather than invite a mind, till now, not thought either unpersuadable or ungenerous!” (1:35). And when hearing of James’s assurance that her reputation and principles will ultimately make her tractable, Clarissa warns, “Perhaps I shall have reason to wish I had not known this” (1:37). When crossed transactions occur, the healthy individual renegates, refusing to accept the tacit maneuver of the other. Game players, on the other hand, willingly take whatever role is necessary for the game being offered, relying upon long established scripts to obtain their end. Clarissa’s continuing response to her brother and sister is ominous: “And who besides can ever bear to be made the dupe of such low cunning, operating with such high and arrogant passions” (1:38).

Just as Clarissa writes that she is “held to a desperate game” (2:82), Lovelace establishes very early in the novel that his pursuit of Clarissa is the beginning of “a new game” (1:150), and he continues the metaphor: “But seest thou not now (as I think I do) the wind-outstripping fair one flying from her love to her love? Is there not such a game?” (1:513). He delights, especially, in “outwitting” his antagonist (1:515; 2:20, 100, 101) and discovering “glorious mischief” (1:151).32 The end of a game is to achieve a particular “payoff”: everything is sacrificed to that end; and in the most devastating games, this payoff becomes only another maneuver in the game that the players desperately desire to pursue. Clarissa, the whole Harlowe family, and Lovelace make intense efforts to continue their game playing, especially when someone recognizes a countermove. Their behavior illustrates what is known as the Karpm game triangle (Rescuer, Persecutor, Victim) where “any one player knows all the roles and may switch from role to role as the game progresses.”33 Clarissa thus jumps from persecutor when confronting Solmes—“I never was so bold in my life” (1:105)—to victim as she is confined to her room and her keys taken away—“and we shall see who is to submit, you to us, or every body to you” (1:107). Lovelace and Clarissa continually play off against one another. At St. Albans he offers alternatives for lodgings—with “all the tokens of a passionate and respectful tenderness”; she counters—with “indignation” and “peevish” affliction. He
remains "attentive" and offers money, only to become "inexpressibly grieved and surprised" by her accusation of his being artful. He kisses her, and she breaks away angrily (1:496–504). In very real terms, for a serious game player "the game's the thing," and winning is compulsory at all cost. Moreover, game players do not engage merely by chance; they seek out individuals (and find them particularly attractive) who tend to play the identical game.34

As Clarissa and Lovelace play their psychological game, it is not, as John Traugott suggests, only the "protean rake of comedy" who asserts his masculine will against the sincere female whose "role is to provoke and to suffer martydom."35 It is not a game that, when Clarissa recognizes her role, she then "quits," refusing at last Lovelace's empty game playing as she steadily moves to beatitude with "grandeur and dignity."36 Clarissa and Lovelace are mutually attracted to one another because both play "Now I've Got You" (hereafter cited as NIGY), a life game characterized by searching for injustices, delighting in discovering them, and pursuing such provocations vigorously; the game is fundamentally and shockingly vindictive;37 players are more interested in having an opponent at their mercy than in any more tangible, mundane reward. Underlying NIGY is a person's need for self-justification, and the dynamic of the game is expressed rage.

If Lovelace plays with particular relish and with a degree of comically ironic detachment, which Traugott convincingly demonstrates, Lovelace's "game" is not simply a kind of dramatic role, one which he might choose to abandon. A game in transactional analysis is not only a conscious mask but a complex of behaviors that determine actions and responses. Psychologically, Lovelace's antics reveal that he plays a second-degree game. He openly courts Arabella, visits the Harlowes, attends their church (to the family's dismay), creates and plays his Rosebud charade, becomes "the ready kneeler" in the woodhouse scene, and outlines Clarissa's alternatives for lodgings in London. The underlying motives for these actions are not, of course, socially acceptable, which is why they have to be hidden from public view in the private and privileged correspondence to Belford. At the same time, the second-degree game player does not perceive that such games effect permanent damage upon those engaged in such play. Lovelace's continual protestations to Belford that he can always rectify everything with a simple marriage proposal reveals the essential mind set of this kind of game player. It is what Warner identifies as the comic center of Lovelace's behavior, and it is consistent with the latter's desire to invent his and Clarissa's dilemma as a play of "The Quarrelsome Lovers" as well as with all his "witty schemes and manipulations of appearance so congenial to comic design."38 Understandably, readers have responded posi-
tively to Lovelace and enjoyed his impish delight in creative, fantastic invention; the latter is, after all, ostensibly harmless, child ego behavior.

Correspondingly, Clarissa’s attitude toward Lovelace throughout much of the novel is more understandable if she knowingly engages this “plotter” (1:17) whom she identifies as a second-degree game player. Indeed, when she writes to him in her posthumous letter that “I have long been greatly above you” (4:437), she confirms her belief in her superiority. From the beginning, she has penetrated his poor “cunning” where “undesignedly” his strategies become obvious to her (1:14). She believes she can always detect hypocrisy in him (1:180) and indignantly writes to Anna, “The man must think he has a frightened fool to deal with” (1:281). She sees, then, that Lovelace is artful but, as a third-degree player, Clarissa confidently believes she can defeat him. One subsequently compelling track of the enacted psychological drama in Clarissa lies in Lovelace’s progressive deterioration as he allows himself to be maneuvered into a third-degree game. Although he recognizes a kindred game player in Clarissa, he cannot (and never truly does) comprehend that the lady refuses to romp. Clarissa plays her third-degree game seriously and inexorably, as do all the Harlowes.

It is tempting to distinguish Clarissa from the rest of the family: the one, a paragon; the others, detestably flawed. It is not that simple. As an essential behavior, game playing is passed in a family from one generation to another and can be traced back to grandparents and forward to children; moreover, a particular game tends to run in one family: “game analysis takes place in a grand historical matrix, demonstrably extending back as far as one hundred years and reliably projected into the future for at least fifty years.” The “matrix” for Clarissa’s behavior lies in her grandfather’s bequest. Clarissa opens with Anna’s comment about Clarissa’s grandfather’s will, and her story concludes with Clarissa’s will and posthumous letters. In each case, a “dead hand” effects a devastating maneuver in the game of NIGY. Her grandfather shrewdly “gets” his son and grandson, defeating their expectations and ambitions. Clarissa “gets” her family and Lovelace, revealing how thoroughly she understands her grandfather’s maneuver. For example, in her posthumous letter, Clarissa “fearlessly” writes to her severely virtuous sister that the “happy” sufferer is now “purified and exalted” (4:363), recollecting, of course, that it was Arabella who so maliciously wrote of their father’s curse and in doing so reiterated three times Clarissa’s “wicked” soul (2:170). Through their actions, both her grandfather and Clarissa are revealed as particularly “hard” players, but the entire Harlowe family plays NIGY.

Richardson captures the inveterate hostility inherent in the Harlowes’ behavior. For example, however reprehensible James and Arabella’s be-
havior is, the tone of their language and their delight in assuming they have Clarissa in their power (or the surrogate power of Solmes) illustrates how truly akin they are to Clarissa. And throughout the novel, Richardson portrays the precarious psychic stability of the family members who tenaciously and urgently engage in this desperate life game, a game that is actually necessary not only for their “health” but for their survival. As a result, the family’s abusive comments and letters become psychologically understandable and not simply melodramatic or sensationalized rhetoric designed superficially to harass Clarissa or to elicit a reader’s sympathy on her behalf. Indeed, once defeated by Clarissa’s posthumous letters and deprived of their game, both mother and father soon die, a dramatized truth of what transactional analysis describes as players denied their game and thereby plunged “into irreversible despair and even psychosis.”42 When Clarissa claims she has inherited as much of her father’s family as her mother’s, she articulates a truth that the family bitterly discovers. Lovelace discovers the same truth.

In the game of NIGY, the moves are predictably identifiable. Although Clarissa, as a rescuer, may be “equally shocked at [Lovelace] and concerned for him,” she is also confident (as persecutor) that she can and should “mortify a pride that I am sure deserves to be mortified” (2:89). Equally satisfying is her role as victim: “But he is such a wild, such an ungovernable creature . . . that I am half afraid of him” (2:75). In NIGY, however, the primary switch in the role playing is from persecutor to victim, from victim to persecutor—with a concluding uproar, such as Clarissa’s locking herself in her room, refusing to dine with Lovelace, or in her posthumous letter denying what he most desires, that he could ever be a husband for her. The dynamics of the game are well illustrated at the widow Sorlings. Lovelace aggressively provokes Clarissa by attacking her “implacable family”; she asserts a counteraccusation, as victim, that he deserves similar “censure.” Lovelace continues his role as persecutor with a defensive attack against “their malice,” leading Clarissa to shift aggressively to the persecutor role where, affecting moral superiority, she haughtily chastises his behavior and claims she shall have “no obligation to you.” He, then, easily switches to become the victim, “there is no arguing with you,” and Clarissa levels the appropriate punishment, “withdraw and leave me to myself” (2:75–81). With this last maneuver and the ensuing uproar, doors slam and each retreats until the next aggressive maneuver recommences the game.

Throughout, the players’ rage (“Very well, sir!”; “Wretch, sir!”; “Spies set upon my conduct!”; “Darkness, light; light darkness; by my soul!” 2:78–80) is self-justified, but, equally important, all opportunity to develop a mature intimacy is lost. The fear of such an intimacy and of the risks to which it exposes the players represents the psychological motive
underlying third-degree life games. The calm following an emotional uproar, then, cannot be long tolerated. For Lovelace, each subsequent provocation is exhilarating and leads to new invention, but the dynamic of the game, rage, is for him only make-believe, ultimately a joke exactly because of its pretense. He can go to bed and laugh himself to sleep, and his self-justification is characteristically expressed in a fantastic rhetoric of flamboyant self-irony. He even periodically questions whether the game is up and whether he may not have to embrace intimacy as a real possibility. That, perhaps, would be the greatest joke of all. As a second-degree player, Lovelace fails to perceive that Clarissa, a third-degree gamester, plays in deadly earnest. She seriously searches for injustice and pursues provocations relentlessly because her rage is real, the product of her family matrix, its essential pathology.

And it is rage that ultimately defines the child ego state that underlies the discourse of the posthumous letters where an “emboldened” Clarissa addresses her father, knowing that it is not “out of her power ever to offend you more” (4:359). With asperity Clarissa comforts her mother to cherish Bella’s “augmented duty,” since the “augment” of her own “bliss” now lies “in the eternal mansions” (4:361)—a stinging reminder that Harlowe Place has been the source of misery. Attacking James, she caustically plays on his impetuous and rigorous heart, “who all see your fault, but are tender of speaking to you of it (4:363)—but not Clarissa, not now! To her uncles, the angry child-victim reiterates her sharp afflictions and “terrible misfortunes” never protected by what should have been their “fraternal love” (4:364–65). All the injustices and all the bitterly felt taunts and letters from her “friends” are surreptitiously enunciated and condemned. From her dead hand, the family has no escape—no countermaneuver is possible.

In games, players continually shift roles from aggressor to victim as circumstances require, and victims also frequently revert to two complementary games: in one, they enjoy complaining of injustices; in the other, they indulge in the preeminence of their misfortune. In either, however, instead of seeking vindication, they languish in a sense of self-worthlessness, the reverse side of a pathological need for self-justification. Both Lovelace and Clarissa follow this pattern as they play off Belford and Anna Howe, respectively; both third parties also willingly play their roles. Whereas Lovelace and Belford amuse themselves with this aspect of game playing, Clarissa and Anna’s exchanges exhibit how Clarissa seriously laments her circumstances, thereby revealing the severe worthlessness she feels and the repressed source of her rage. Anna only feeds Clarissa’s pathology by repeatedly emphasizing that adversities provide “your shining-time” (2:282). Even when Anna seriously tries to give Clarissa clear-sighted advice and realistic options, Clarissa con-
continues her role as victim by shifting to still another game called, "Yes, but." Here she rejects all solutions in order "to reassure and gratify the Child [ego state]" that wants to remain inadequate, determined to reject all help, never to surrender, and ultimately to demonstrate the inadequacy of everyone else. Consciously, the game satisfactorily confirms the individual's superior judgment of the world, and in Clarissa's case it confirms her belief that she can find her own solutions. Unconsciously, the game exposes how completely she resists engaging others in adult-to-adult transactions.

In addition to complementary games, Clarissa and Anna play their own version of NIGY, demonstrated in Clarissa's first letter when she nastily upbraids her friend, "so pray, my dear, be more sparing of your praise for the future, lest after this confession we should suspect that you secretly intend to praise yourself, while you would be thought only to commend another" (1:3). Lovelace, could he have imagined the ferocity of a third-degree game player, might have been warned when Clarissa specifically tells him that "Miss Howe can tell you, sir, that I never loved the faults of my friend; nor ever wished her to love me for mine. It was a rule with us, not to spare each other" (3:387). He fails to appreciate Clarissa's nature and continues, instead, to play what he thinks is their mutual game.

When, in the course of playing, a particular move demands more than a verbal response, the increased ante raises the transactions to a more intense level, forcing a "hard" player to take drastic action. Punishment is dealt out in real terms. When Clarissa's grandfather's will maneuvers the family to act regarding the estate, Clarissa must be forced to marry Solmes; if she cannot be persuaded verbally, then she will be physically carted off to the moated house, a tactic Clarissa accurately understands to be a sinister threat, a final move that defines the end of the game. Correspondingly, Lovelace's rape of Clarissa inexorably changes the context of "play." The game shifts to another level, and Clarissa's rage has a specific target—Lovelace the real man, not Lovelace the game player. The intensity of Clarissa's game reveals itself in the explosive reprisal she exacts. For all his interest in games (perhaps more accurately in role playing), Traugott apparently does not fully understand that players never willingly give up a game; only prolonged counseling with an intervening therapist can effect such a change. Clarissa does not, then, give up the game because she sees Lovelace's "acting" as pathetically superficial when she, in contrast, has recognized the truth of religious spirituality (thereby leaving him without an audience and consequently restless, a shrunken remnant of his earlier self). She calculatingly shifts her moves to match the intensity of her antagonist's maneuver. She plays now to win at all costs.
Frustrating Lovelace's continuing moves in the penknife scene, Clarissa dares to end the game permanently, terrifying Lovelace, who understandably retreats in the face of such an antithetical maneuver. She declares, "The law only shall be my refuge!" (3:289), only to discover how uncertain the law is when shortly thereafter she is arrested and removed to the spunging-house by officers of the law she so earnestly invokes. It is appropriate, however, that this particular strategy of Clarissa's is actually thwarted by Mrs. Sinclair rather than through a countermove by Lovelace. Despite all his plotting—the elaborate scheme concerning lodgings at the widow Fretville's house, the ploys to invite Clarissa's double-locked chambers, the designs to purloin her correspondence, the concocted script for Captain Tomlinson to follow at Hampstead (or even the apparently peaceful airing taken at Hampstead earlier where Lovelace and Clarissa seem so "delightfully easy," 2:430)—Lovelace's maneuvers are the posturings of what he himself calls "comic performances" (2:339). The latter are perfectly consistent with the tactics conceived by second-degree game players. The rape, however, is not a laughable contrivance; it is a desperate move perpetrated and engineered primarily by the old crone, Mrs. Sinclair, and her minions. They propel Lovelace into a third-degree game that inevitably leads not to the courtroom but to the morgue. Realistically and convincingly, Richardson embodies in Mrs. Sinclair the demented pathology of a player whose countermove to Clarissa's reveals how willingly the old witch plays for keeps. Clarissa is right to be frightened by Mrs. Sinclair, who illustrates how an inveterate antagonist in this life game reduces a victim to hapless misery.

Doodie sensitively explores the spunging-house scene in the novel, especially in terms that contrast the imagery of Harlowe Place, Mrs. Sinclair's, and Officer Rowland's. Here in this prison, there is no longer "the pretence of respectability," and Clarissa has "lost everything" that the material world values. Being confined to the various houses, Doodie argues, Clarissa develops "a mind which has passed from innocence to experience," recognizes the falsehood and betrayal of the world (as symbolized by the deceit-ridden habitations), and prepares for the only legitimate home any of us can hope to discover—our Father's House. Equally compelling, the worldly houses also reveal the corrupt nature of power exerted by the game players in Clarissa.

Trickery and perversion are endemic at both Harlowe Place and Mrs. Sinclair's as the players involved seek to control others. Mrs. Harlowe, for example, attempts to trick Clarissa into being excused from her interview with Solmes because of her daughter's modesty—as if Clarissa does consider Solmes to be her prospective husband; then, when Clarissa acts on the necessity to meet with him to counter her mother's
strategy, the family deceitfully accepts her decision (camouflaged as an act of duty but motivated as surely by a desire to engage in confrontation) to be a willing compliant to their will. The result is an immediate uproar, which is the real payoff for the game being enacted even when, pathologically, the turmoil is emotionally devastating. More explicitly, Mrs. Sinclair’s house, with its faux-respectable front parlor, demonstrates the perversions of power. Here the true nature of Mrs. Harlowe’s role, more subtly realized but fundamentally an expression of psychological aggression, is fully exhibited in the old dragon herself. If the latter openly abets an avowed rake’s rape, her connivance is hardly more despicable than Mrs. Harlowe and Arabella’s tacit willingness to subject Clarissa to Solmes’s brutish sensuality.

For all intents and purposes, Lovelace’s frantic appeal to Belford to rescue Clarissa from the spunging-house is a recognizable attempt to return to a second-degree game. With increasing intensity, he frantically tries to rescript the comedy he delights in performing: the cocksure intrusions at Mrs. Smith’s where on one occasion (with no Clarissa to play to) he even assumes the role of shopkeeper and amuses himself and a growing crowd by selling a pair of gloves; his humorous account of Sally’s mimicry of Clarissa—she “fell a crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, fainting, that I never saw my lovely girl so well aped” (4:134); his ecstatic reaction to Clarissa’s letter inviting him to “see me at my father’s” (4:157), his joy based on the assumption that his beloved has indeed renounced death in order to resume the game. What Lovelace fails to recognize through all his antics is that the moves in the game now being played have outstripped his power either to retreat or to renegotiate. Once removed from the abject misery of the spunging-house (having been reduced to humiliated victim) and safely back at the Smiths’ in Convent Garden (the London theater district), Clarissa becomes fully engaged as the aggressor in her third-degree game. She begins to prepare her last, calculated performance. Paralleling her grandfather’s maneuver, Clarissa writes her posthumous letters and her will, the final forum in her game of NIGY.

In her letter to Lovelace, her dramatic flourishes vilify him and warn him to repent. On one level of the novel’s polyphonic discourse, repentance, which Doody emphasizes, signifies amendment, reparation, and contrition necessary in the process of holy dying and for reconciliation to “the love of God.” Throughout the novel, however, and especially in her posthumous letters, Clarissa’s discourse is not a monologically diegetic authority. As in her other posthumous letters, Clarissa’s utterance reveals doubly oriented discourse containing a hidden agenda. Her comments (where the apparently literal “paroles” are transformed into parody) compete with and undermine the ostensibly spiritual mes-
sage. In fact, Clarissa combatively italicizes her remarks fifteen times, on seven occasions rebuking Lovelace for causing her death, her heavy emphasis revealing a ploy she also uses with the letters to her family. She cuttingly declares that she once preferred him and might have been his wife, knowing that the latter is precisely what Lovelace has at last hoped for but is now denied, maddeningly and irrevocably denied. She writes not as a "suppliant wife," not in the role of victim, not as a weak, lamenting lover grateful for any condescending dalliance. She is the aggressor, supremely confident that she has "long been greatly above you." Six more times she italicizes his perfidy that demonstrates the "portion of the wicked man from God," her punctuated flourishes driven by rage, her triumphant voice assured; she knows he is completely at her mercy: "Hear me, therefore, O Lovelace! as one speaking from the dead—Lose no time."

Clarissa means exactly what she says. The game is perilously close to its end, an end that Clarissa is orchestrating. Lose no time indeed! Repent before it is out of your power to act, before justice descends. Clarissa has written in allegory before, through misdirection, and here she unerringly tells him what to expect. Nevertheless, she knows that her accusations will prompt Lovelace to defend himself, which he promptly does in his letter to Belford that in the text immediately follows her posthumous letter to him. He even complains in his essential naiveté, "And now, why did she write this letter, and why direct it to be given me when an event the most deplorable had taken place" (4:439). He goes on to say that she acts "but for my good," a second-degree player to the last. Clarissa understands that real punishment is imminent. Her letter to Lovelace is only the penultimate maneuver to the end of the game. The last move is her letter to Colonel Morden.

On the surface, Clarissa pleads with her cousin to stay away from Lovelace and not, mistakenly, to attempt to salvage her honor. She judiciously begins her letter, however, by reminding him of her "present weak state" and how pitifully and vilely she has been compromised; especially when he hears the "particulars of [her] story," they may cause "active resentment" (4:461). Of course, he is not to let his "generous breast" dictate interference (vengeance belongs to God), since he might run a terrible risk in dueling with such a "guilty" man as Lovelace; moreover, dueling will "hurry a soul (all its sins upon its head) into perdition." And would not "the forfeiture of his life, and the probable loss of his soul, be a dreadful expiation" should Lovelace fall "by your hand"? Morden, so serious about honor, recognizes what Clarissa truly expects of him and understands her insistence that he act swiftly in order to catch Lovelace vulnerable to damnation. In fact, Clarissa artfully emphasizes vengeance twenty-four times (Clarissa’s choice of words reflects
her latent message: interpose, resent, vindicate, pursue, avenge, punish, vanquish, revenge). Her last words restrike the fatal note: "So prays, and to her latest hour will pray, my dear Cousin Morden, my friend, my guardian, but not my avenger—(dear sir! remembers that!"
(4:463). There are, again, two levels of discourse here, but it is Clarissa and always Clarissa who avenges. Morden is no different from the pen that Clarissa holds in her hand—both are tools and tools of writing. It is writing and writing from the dead that avenges.

Richardson's meticulous care with words at critical junctures in the novel's action is clearly evident in Clarissa's letter to Colonel Morden. It is especially appropriate, then, that she specifically refers to "a dreadful expiation" and that Lovelace finally echoes her term in his last breath, "LET THIS EXPIATE!" In their novel-length strategies of move and counter-move, these two players come to rest, invoking an identical terminology. Each player projects self-justification; atonement for playing is achieved only by winning. A "hard" player to the end, Clarissa embraces death itself and a calculated "dead hand" to win. Lovelace seemingly loses, but only as the aggressive partner in NIGY; in fact, he also wins, emotionally, by accepting and glorying in the opposite role of ultimate victim, aware in his final moments of that "frightful spectre" (4:530) embodied in his victorious antagonist but seeing her as well as a "Sweet Excellence!" This is the paradox of the game player who acknowledges the fearful will of a victorious opponent, but one who is equally and potentially alluring. In the posthumous letters (especially in Clarissa's to Colonel Morden), what appears to be adult-to-adult communication is, in transactional analysis, covertly an appeal from the child ego state to the parent ego state, and a game's resolution will be determined by that child—to the surprise and dismay of all the game's participants. A true member of the Harlowe family (for whom playing is ingrained) Morden enacts the terrible punishment insisted upon by Clarissa's final, "hard" maneuver in a third-degree game. As seriously and effectively as Belford, who, despite the family's objections, acts as Clarissa's executor, Morden performs as Clarissa in fact requests. The game ends in the morgue.

The dramatic "resolution" of Clarissa, the intensity of its psychological truth, lies in how accurately Richardson faithfully and consistently portrays the consequences of playing life games. The correspondents in Clarissa all have ostensible reasons for saying and acting as they do—as if what they desire is adult communication. However, since "solutions" are continually suggested and as readily rejected, it is obvious that characters act from ulterior motives, a sure indication that a game is in progress. In other words, Richardson's epistolary art suggests that at the social level the narrative discourse appears to represent adult communi-
cation, but on an unconscious, psychological level, the letters reveal that
the writers are playing games that require a child to parent or parent to
child response. Any attempt to end the game by initiating an antithetical
move will be resisted adamantly and defiantly.

On one hand, by responding to the social utterance of the letters,
readers can react to Richardson as a moralist or as an artistic innovator
who “crafts” his message (Christian exemplar) or manipulates his tech-
nique (stable or dramatic irony); analyses of form can thereby investigate
whether Richardson blackened Lovelace’s character or, as Janet Aikins
suggests, how references to Venice Preserved establish a central, thematic
focus for the novel’s structure.51 On the other hand, by understanding
the consistent, ulterior motives that Richardson observed dramatically
and captured accurately in his correspondents, we may appreciate the
hidden play being enacted in the novel; play discloses the psychological
disorder inherent in life games, a tragedy that hurls individuals into a
maelstrom of emotionally destructive behavior and that eliminates all
possibility for adult intimacy. The frightening vision of Clarissa is that it
is unmitigated tragedy. There is no transcendent, beatified Clarissa, no
moment of cathartic insight. The novel is a tragedy of characters inexo-
rably caught in the matrix of gaming. Richardson undoubtedly congrat-
ulated himself that he had resisted joining Clarissa and Lovelace in a
happy ending (thereby refusing to romanticize his material). Although
he overtly designs a sainted Clarissa, we applaud the artist who, consist-
tent to the somber end, is compelled to give his protagonist those post-
humous letters that accurately dramatize that even to her death Clarissa
is incapable of extricating herself from the programmed matrix of her
past. Clarissa’s death reveals that no one is game free. If we continue to
be fascinated with Richardson’s novel, to identify seriously with its
nightmarish vision, it may be because Johnson’s insight is more inclusive
than often thought. There is something we all prefer to truth where
the prospect of becoming game free, of embracing adult intimacy, may
be too perilous.

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NOTES

1. References to Clarissa, Richardson’s Author’s Preface, and his Postscript are
hereafter cited in the text.

2. Relying upon poststructuralist perspectives, Terry Castle considers the
novel to be a “hermeneutic anarchy . . . a cacophony of voices, a multiplicity of
exeges struggling to articulate different 'constructions' of the world (Clarissa's Ciphers [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982], 21). In contrast, Donald Wehrs claims that Richardson's ironic techniques provide a more reliable context for determining "a finalizing, monologic artistic vision" ("Ironic, Storytelling, and the Conflict of Interpretations in Clarissa," ELH 53 [1986]: 764). Others emphasize varying "centers" in the novel to solve the question of what Clarissa's death signifies: Clarissa's symbolic coffin (Alan Wendt, "Clarissa's Coffin," Philological Quarterly 39 [1960]: 481–95); Clarissa's rape (Terry Eagleton, The Rape of Clarissa [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982]); Clarissa's concupiscence in the Harlowe garden (Janet Butler, "The Garden: Early Symbol of Clarissa's Complicity," Studies in English Literature 24 [1984]: 527–44); and Clarissa's death contrasted with the grisly account of Mrs. Sinclair's end (Castle, 32–35).

3. Castle, 27.


5. Wehrs seems to suggest a particular end to Clarissa's active role in the novel: she "goes on talking and writing until the hour of her death" (775).


9. Although Warner develops an argument that depends on the tension between a comic-tragic "axis" with regard to Clarissa and her relationship to Lovelace, he perceptively sees that "Lovelace's violence against Clarissa plants the seed for a more insidious will to power over others: Clarissa's idea for a book that . . . will enact a revenge" (75). Clarissa's posthumous letters are inexorably linked to her "will to power" and represent a kind of insurance that revenge will occur whether her book is ever compiled.

11. Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 101, 125. Doody notes, certainly, that throughout Clarissa Richardson criticizes a “code of female docility” (103) and that she illustrates “the superlative importance of the individual’s psychic life” (152). Her emphasis upon Clarissa’s Christian will establishes her primary portrayal of a heroine compelled to transform “matter into spirit” as Richardson develops the theme that we must resist all “temptation to devalue this life of the spirit” (152). Equally convinced that Richardson minutely probes Clarissa’s psychic life (as well as the disturbing nature of his other characters’ lives), I believe Richardson’s novelistic techniques capture a competing vision of Clarissa, one whose natural passion is not spiritual regeneration but inherent anger—a hostility determined by a psychological urgency to control and, if necessary, to obliterate her antagonists.

12. Wehrs, 760.

13. Ibid.

14. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 125. Kinkead-Weekes stresses how accurately Richardson diagnoses contemporary problems and also stresses that the evolving Clarissa in the novel frequently “has no idea of the compulsions which are destroying her in the role of Proud Restoration Beauty” (159). In light of the psychological life game in which Clarissa engages throughout the novel, Kinkead-Weekes’s perception of the compulsions underlying Clarissa’s behavior is especially pertinent to understanding her actions as those of a third-degree game player.


17. Bernard-Donals, 58.

18. Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Theory and History of Literature 7, 2d ed., rev. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 212. Although beyond the scope of this immediate discussion, de Man notes that the *dédoublement* of irony is intimately connected with a fall (213) and “absolute irony is a consciousness of madness” (216); the implications for Clarissa’s fall after her rape and her subsequent madness are highly suggestive and deserve scrutiny.


23. Berne, 22.
24. For their intricate poststructuralist discussion of gaming, see Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud, *Just Gaming*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985). Because most recent theories of transactional analysis have focused especially upon "scripting," that is, devising scripts (or narratives) as a basis for adapting particular and observable behavioral transactions, the relationship between narrative theory, especially in terms of Richardson's epistolary form, and transactional analysis deserves more thorough analysis than I have explored in this text. See Taibi Kahler, "The Miniscript," in *Transactional Analysis After Eric Berne*, ed. Graham Barnes (New York: Harper's College Press, 1977), 222-56.
25. Castle, 18.
26. Frankel, 85.
28. Ibid., 16.
29. Lovelace's madcap hilarity is similarly illustrated when he tells Belford, "my whole soul is joy. When I go to bed I laugh myself asleep: and I awake either laughing or singing" (1:515).
32. How willing he is to play his game is clear: "Then, I fancy, by her circumposure and her continual grief, that she expects some mischief from me. I don't care to disappoint anybody I have a value for" (1:514).
33. Woollams, Brown, and Hige, 511.
34. Berne, 172.
37. Berne, 64.
38. Warner, 77.
39. Warner clearly notes how little Lovelace understands Clarissa's capabilities, particularly the way she will ultimately convert all his schemes and "subordinate 'his comedy' to her tragedy" (77). A second-degree player will never comprehend the untractable will of a hardened, third-degree player.
40. Berne, 171.
41. Charles Knight also considers the wills in *Clarissa* to be instruments that allow the dead to control the living, but suggests that the wills reflect the attitudes of the writers to material goods (see "The Function of Wills in *Clarissa*," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 11 [1969]: 1183-90).
42. Berne, 61.
43. Ibid., 116.
44. Ibid., 117–19.
45. A further level of Clarissa’s heightened degree of third-degree game playing may be perceived in how she now employs allegorical discourse that begins only after her rape (see Jonathon Loesberg, “Allegory and Narrative in Clarissa,” Novel 15 [1981]: 39–59). Also, an interesting parallel to Clarissa’s raising the ante in her game with Lovelace is discussed by Andrew J. Scheiber, who suggests that throughout the novel Clarissa defends herself with language. When Lovelace finds himself defeated by her discourse, he resorts to physical violence (see “‘Between Me and Myself’: Writing as Strategy and Theme in Clarissa,” Texas Studies in Language and Literature 30 [1988]: 496–509).
46. Doody, 206.
47. Ibid., 209.
48. A thorough analysis of Clarissa as drama can be found in Kinkead-Weekes’s Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist, esp. chap. 10, “The Novel as Drama,” 395–461. It is not always recognized how important is Clarissa’s residence in the theater district, particularly in terms of discourse theory. Because theatrical discourse propounds to be wholly mimetic, it seems to be the most purely autonomous from authorial, diegetic control. Clarissa’s letters written from the Smiths’ house represent her most calculated performance and are perhaps the most ambivalently dialogic (see Lodge, After Bakhtin, 28).
49. Doody, 169.
50. Lodge, 33–36.