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# MARKETING THE “GOOD MAN” Sir Charles Grandison and the Clementinas

Murray L. Brown

*S*ir Charles Grandison (1753–54), Samuel Richardson’s last novel is an unusual work given the historical circumstances at the time of its composition. Those who have read it (and even those who haven’t) will remark that it is unusually long, and although it is several hundred thousand words shorter than *Clarissa* (1749), it is still quite an undertaking.<sup>1</sup> As lengthy a novel as *Grandison* is, however, what really sets it apart from others of the period, as Teri Doerksen and Patricia Brückmann have both noted in a recent articles,<sup>2</sup> mostly owes to the author’s balanced treatment of Catholics relative to several other novels of the period.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). All references are to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Teri Doerksen, “The Anglican Family and the Admirable Roman Catholic,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 15 (2003): 539–58; Patricia Brückmann “Men, Women and Poles’: Samuel Richardson and the Romance of a Stuart Princess” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27 (2003): 31–52.

<sup>3</sup> Other critics have observed this relatively balanced treatment as well. See Margaret Anne

I would also like to stress at the outset that Richardson's refusal to demonize Catholics, and in fact to present them, at least individually, as honorable and respectable persons was really a rather brave thing to do. As Doerksen points out, *Grandison* was produced during "a short peace time gap between English wars with the Catholic Continent" (544) and even though "the retreating and scattered forces of the Jacobite Rebellion of '45 had been treated poorly and even brutalized by the English citizenry, there was a general air of amnesty and forgiveness by the first several years of the 1750s" (544).<sup>4</sup> A survey of printed works 1750–1755, however, does not really support this "general air of amnesty and forgiveness."<sup>5</sup> It must be recalled that even if such feelings prevailed in the general population, they certainly did not extend to the King. 1753, the same year *Grandison* was in press, Dr. Archibald Cameron was taken in Scotland, arraigned and examined by the Lord of the Privy-Council in London, condemned before the King's Bench for treason and sentenced to be drawn and quartered—although he was merely hanged and had his heart torn from his body.<sup>6</sup> If such feelings did exist widely, however, the undeserved and gruesome death of Dr. Cameron was probably at least

Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 322; Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat English Conduct Book* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986), 59.

<sup>4</sup> Doerksen quotes both Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) and Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688–1791* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, James Ray, *A compleat history of the rebellion. From its first rise, in 1745, to its total suppression at the glorious Battle of Culloden* (York, 1755) (no fewer than seven printings of this work appear between 1747 and 1757); James MacKay, *The spirit of loyalty, and of rebellion, during some late troubles, detected, in the conduct of the commissioners of excise in Scotland* (London: printed and sold by H. Griffiths, 1755); Henry Brooke, *Essays against Popery, slavery, and arbitrary power, published during the late unnatural rebellion, in the years 1745 and 1746* (Manchester: R. Whitworth, 1750 [?]); James Burton, *The warning: a religious and divine poem upon the contagious distemper amongst the horned cattle of this Kingdom: also touching the late rebellion, earthquakes, and ominous signs and wonders in the heavens* (York, 1752); Andrew Henderson, *The history of the rebellion, MDCCXLV and MDCCXLVI* (London: printed for A. Millar; W. Owen; W. Reeve; and by J. Swan, 1753) (no fewer than five editions by 1753). The anonymous author of *Treason, sedition, and rebellion, fully and impartially considered with remarks upon the case of the unhappy Doctor Cameron* (London: C. Corbett, 1753 [?]) recoils from Cameron's supposed treasons but does, or would, support mercy should it be shown. It was, of course, not shown. See Margaret Anne Doody, "Richardson's Politics" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2 (1990): 113–15, 126.

<sup>6</sup> For a pamphlet relating to Dr. Cameron's case, see note 5 (above) *Treason, sedition, and rebellion*. See also William Jackson, *The new and complete Newgate calendar; or, villany displayed in all its branches* (London: Alex. Hogg, 1755), IV, 44–49.

in part responsible. The potential for further retribution, however, perhaps something akin to the Gordon Riots (still some thirty years in the future) must also have been present. Anti-Catholic feeling continued to run very high, a Stuart threat remained, and merely because immediate pressures were relieved, I think that it's a mistake to assume that forgiveness was the general rule—any spark might rekindle animosities.

I have heard or read over the years Samuel Richardson described as a Puritan, a Quaker, as an Anglican, and as a probable Jacobite. This is very difficult to square, and part of the problem in defining Richardson's sympathies lies in the wide range of material coming from his press. He published far too broadly for conclusions to be drawn. Surely, he leans—he must—but his press does not appear to do so; or rather, it seems to lean in more than one direction at the same moment. With some qualification, this is also the case with his new and improved man, Sir Charles Grandison. "I shall be greatly disappointed," Richardson writes in 1753,

If I have not done as much Honour to the Lady [Clementina] for her Zeal and Steadfastness, and that from motives that could not be found fault with at Rome; as to the Gentleman [Sir Charles]...this Part is one of those that I value myself most upon, having been as zealous a Catholic when I was to personate the Lady, and her Catholic Friends, as a Protestant, when I was the Gentleman. (*Selected Letters* 236–38, quoted in Doerksen 540)

Whatever Richardson's politics might have been, however, he certainly attempts to calculate and to heighten the moral impact his novels make on his readers. While, for the most part, he succeeds in this, *Pamela* was certainly not without its detractors on moral grounds (as is evidenced by the several "Anti-*Pamela*" pieces) and neither was *Clarissa*. I would argue that Lovelace ranks among the most diabolical characters in all of English letters; what's more, and despite the fact that the novel was often recognized more as a "a System of religious and moral Precepts and Examples," Lovelace is himself a powerful emblem of the very behaviors Richardson sought to defeat.<sup>7</sup> Richardson "has dispersed, in some parts of his book, the particulars of freedoms taken by *Lovelace*, which exceed the bounds of decency," and in this Richardson has

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Philip Skelton to Richardson (1749), quoted in T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson [:] A Biography* (hereafter referred to as E&K) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 172.

“abused the privilege, which he derives from the unbounded liberty of his country.”<sup>8</sup> More to the point, and even more damning of Lovelace’s influence is “a Lover of Virtue” who writes:

But may it not be asked with equal, if not greater propriety, would many profligate and abandoned, as they naturally are, be so profligate and abandoned, were it not for Richardson?...If Alexander exceeded Achilles in cruelty, may not many go beyond Lovelace in that, as well as in debauchery? None but such as Alexander have ever proposed to imitate Achilles, but every man of a moderate fortune may set up Lovelace for a pattern, by whom to model his conduct.<sup>9</sup>

So, while Richardson’s noble intentions are often repeated, many felt the attractions of Lovelace’s charms, including one of Richardson’s most trusted and candid correspondents, Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh. When, for example, she writes, “but you must know, (though I shall blush again,) that if I was to die for it, I cannot help but being fond of Lovelace,” she should have known how deeply her words would wound Richardson (10 October 1750; E&K 221). Whereas *Pamela* was the object of subversive and satiric readings, and despite his best efforts, Richardson could not subdue Lovelace’s attractions, he certainly hoped that the example of the Grandison, the “Good Man,” might instill in his readership a greater appreciation of virtue. Therefore, “either at his own or at Lady Bradshaigh’s suggestion, he substituted his Good Man for the rake” (E&K 367).

One curiosity that raises numbers of questions concerning his purposes and motivations is Richardson’s choice of character names in his last novel. Indeed, one would think that any novel of the period with a main character named Charles must raise such questions—despite the wide and actual use of the name by those who surely cannot be counted as supporters of the Stuart cause; but when the rather unusual name “Clementina” is coupled with Charles—and especially when such a character is a zealous Roman Catholic, there can be no avoiding associations with Jacobitism. Maria Clementina Sobieski (1702–1735), the daughter of Prince James

<sup>8</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 19 (August 1749), 348.

<sup>9</sup> Anonymous [A Lover of Virtue], *Critical remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela. Enquiring, Whether they have a Tendency to corrupt or improve the Public Taste and Morals* (London: J. Dowse, 1754), 49–50.

Louis Henry Sobieski (1667–1737) of Poland and Hedwig Elisabeth Amelia of Neuburg (1673–1722), was betrothed to Prince James Francis Edward Stuart (the Old Pretender), and despite arrest and imprisonment by Emperor Charles VI (owing much to the efforts of George I of England), escaped and was first married by proxy to Prince James and then formally married to him in 1719 at Montefiascone, Italy.

In addition, James Francis Edward Stuart's son, Charles Edward Stuart (1720–1788), known as the Bonnie Prince, or the Young Pretender, also had his Clementina. Clementina Walkinshaw was mistress to Charles from 1746 for some fourteen years; indeed, as Lawrence Lipking points out, their child was born while Richardson was finishing the novel.<sup>10</sup>

Although Richardson's biographers go to considerable lengths to present possible models for the characters in the novel (365–69), they make no Jacobite associations with the names Charles and Clementina.<sup>11</sup> In fact, they steer clear of Richardson's political leanings altogether:

Richardson's political views do not seem to have played a large part in his life. We have described how when he first set up as a printer he got involved with the 'high flyers', the Tories suspected of favoring the Pretender. But there are no signs of Jacobite leanings in his later life. The account of the '45 added at the end of the 1748 edition of Defoe's *Tour*, though factual and moderate in tone, shows no sentiment but loyalty to the House of Hanover and is especially warm in its praise of the conduct of the Duke of Cumberland. (E&K 545)

While I think it is most reasonable to assert that an endorsement of the Duke of Cumberland's actions does indeed constitute a political opinion, I do not find it anywhere recorded that Richardson's many friends—and especially those who sought to offer much advice and make many observations, made any mention of possible associations with the names Charles and Clementina.

Nevertheless, Clementina is the character who has attracted the critical gaze. Much of it, indeed nearly all of it stems from her first name. As Doerkson, points out: "That name would have been familiar and redolent of Jacobite Catholicism to many eighteenth-century readers. Both the

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence I. Lipking, "The Jacobite Plot," *ELH* 64 (1997): 844.

<sup>11</sup> Jocelyn Harris is the first modern critic to make such associations with Richardson's characters. See *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 160.

Old Pretender, the so-called James III, and the Young Pretender, Charles Edward, were romantically involved with and had children by women named Clementina" (551). Doerkson also observes that public intolerance of James's Clementina undermined his support in England—her retreat to a convent when James insisted that the young Jacobite princes be educated by protestant tutors expended much political capital. One might recall that Sir Charles and the zealous Clementina della Porretta engage in this sort of discussion as well; she threatens to resort to the convent several times, and Sir Charles must come to terms with his own loss of property and rights were he to marry her. It is proper to observe, of course, that the very pious Clementina Sobieski did retreat to the Convent of St. Cecilia in Rome when she was convinced of her husband's infidelities. For Richardson's contemporary readers, despite omission by Richardson's advisers and friends, these many similarities must have stood as consciously drawn parallels and intended points of comparison so closely related to actual events that they cannot be mistaken for mere coincidence.

Both Brückmann and Doerkson discuss the parallels that exist between Clementina Sobieski and Clementina della Porretta and the former addresses the pretended or projected hagiography of Clementina Sobieski in great detail. Brückmann, for example, quoting from a letter written by Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, some six years before the death of James, alludes to Clementina's supposed working of miracles and her possible beatification (39), and this discussion apparently taking place prior to 1760; in a letter of 1780 he speaks again of this possibility. In an engraving *Maria Clementina Magne Britannie & Regina executed by M. Sorello after A. Masucci* (1737) Clementina Sobieski appears kneeling before an altar and its radiating host (reproduced in Brückmann, 42); this is a representation both of her piety and her zeal and is clearly an overtly propagandist representation and perhaps an early suggestion of an effort to beatify her. That the circulation of this sort of image<sup>12</sup> must have been the source of a considerable amount of consternation among those dedicated to the Hanoverian succession goes without saying, but in keeping with Margaret Anne Doody's observations that "Sir Charles Grandison [is] a political allegory, a corrective and hopeful image...of what the true Tory Prince should look like," then we might look for similar types of representations of Clementina in the novel.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Neil Guthrie, "A Polish Lady: The Art of the Jacobite Print" *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 14 (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Doody, "Richardson's Politics," 125.

But such *contradictory* vagaries never did I know in my slumbers, Incoherencies of incoherence!—For example—I was married to the best of men; I was *not* married: I was rejected with scorn, as a presumptuous creature. I sought to hide myself in holes and corners. I was dragged out of a subterraneous cavern, which the sea had made when it once broke bounds, and seemed the dwelling of howling and conflicting winds; and when I expected to be punished for my audaciousness, and for repining at my lot, I was turned into an angel of light; stars of diamonds, like a glory encompassing my head: A dear little baby was put into my arms. Once it was Lucy's; another time it was Emily's; and another time Lady Clementina's—I was fond of it beyond expression. (VI, Letter XXXII, 148–49)

Richardson's habit is to cluster visual allusions and assemble them in recognizable graphic or painterly contexts. It is a type of tableau or *ekphrasis*, by which I mean Richardson's habit of constructing iconic moments or scenes, much in the way and in keeping with the practices of his contemporary and acquaintance, William Hogarth. These visual/physical constructions always point up significant moments in Richardson's novels—or perhaps it is their appearances that signify the moment; in any event, by way of these scenes Richardson intervenes in overt ways and with what might be called omniscient or providential effect.<sup>14</sup> These authorial interventions tend to appear at emotionally pitched moments in the narratives; they are, therefore, often associated with anxiety, stress, and with acts of violence or threatened violence. They also figure frequently as dreams.<sup>15</sup> With the possible exception of the second part of *Pamela*, Richardson uses dreams to great effect in all his novels: Pamela dreams a sexual threat; Clarissa has a Gothic dream that foreshadows her own death; Lovelace has a dream of his own damnation and Clarissa's ascension. Many of these dreams have recognizable painterly, graphic, or architectural contexts and Harriet's dream is not an exception. The stars encompassing her head figure as part of the standard iconography of

<sup>14</sup> See my articles: "Emblemata Rhetorica: Glossing Emblematic Discourse in Richardson's *Clarissa*," *Studies in the Novel* 27.4 (1995): 455–76; "The 'tyger-hearted' Men and 'that Obelisk behind us': Representations of Sexual Violence in Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Philological Quarterly* 75 (1996): 451–70.

<sup>15</sup> See my article, "Conflicting Dreams: Lovelace and the Oneirocritical Reader," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 19 (1995): 1–21.



the Virgin as does the placement of an infant in her arms. Her dream is based on the hope that she will be elevated, but also on the fear that Clementina will supplant her and rise in her stead. Although Harriet's discussion continues for another page or so, just as Lovelace dismisses his presaging vision, she claims to dismiss her dream as the "fleeting shadows of the night."

As in other examples in his novels, Richardson uses iconographic contexts with a purpose beyond what the mere vagary of a random dream might offer. Here Harriet recounts her anxieties in clear hagiographic contexts with purposes that belie her dismissal. While Harriet tells of her dream, one that indicates her fears of abandonment in favor of her Catholic rival, it must also be admitted it is equally possible her dream's interpretation might indicate that Clementina will herself be the abandoned one. Although it is unclear to whom the baby actually belongs, Harriet never suggests that the dreamed child is her own; nor is it ever suggested that Clementina is possessed of the saintly trappings—they are exclusively Harriet's. If we find it odd that Harriet, an English protestant, should actually entertain a dream where she steps into the role of the Virgin—complete with the iconography of a Counter-Reformation painting—it is less so if we consider that Richardson has this dream appear as a response to images such as the Sorello engraving, ones that represent Clementina Sobieski in the attitude of a saint. That is, by way of Harriet's dream, Richardson pointedly rejects both the notion of Clementina della Porretta as the future Lady Grandison as well as the representation or actualization of Clementina Sobieski as saint.

In the novel's concluding volume, well after Harriet has become Lady Grandison and Clementina is about to make her exit, Clementina calls Harriet to her chambers and Lady Grandison records her speech:

I could not, my dear Lady Grandison, ask the favor of your ear on the subject I wanted to open my heart upon to you, till I saw you were perfectly recovered. God be praised that you are! What anxieties did your late indisposition give me!...I hurried to my chamber: Good God! said I...Where am I? What am I? Can I be the same Clementina della Porretta that I was a few months ago? Can I have brought misery to the family which was my only refuge? To the man who—[She paused: Then lifting up her eyes; Blessed Virgin! said she, And *is* Clementina in the house of the man whom she has been known to regard above all men; and whom she still *does* regard....]And then on my knees I offered up fervent prayers for your health and happiness; and that it would

please God to return me, with reputation, to my native country.... Tell me, advise me, May I not renew my entreaties to take the veil? (VII, Letter XLIX, 424–25)

Here Clementina does not merely pray for the health of her former rival and restate her desire to "take the veil" as recourse to having lost her place to a rival, she poses herself in the same attitude of prayer where we find Clementina Sobieski in the Sorello engraving. The purpose operating behind Clementina's circumstances replaces the context of the engraving with one absolutely antithetical to the Jacobite cause. Why would the fictional analogue to a Stuart queen pray for the health of her protestant rival, even to the point of asking her advise on taking refuge in a convent? This is incredible to me and would have been so to any eighteenth-century reader as well—especially so to one who was out to discover Jacobite contexts and content in this novel—and this brings me to my conclusion.

Eaves and Kimpel report that in the late 1750s Lady Barbara Montagu sought a printer and bookseller for a novel, *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House* (1759–60), penned by an anonymous acquaintance (perhaps Sarah Fielding).<sup>16</sup> The anonymous author recommends the new work on the grounds that, "the Title wou'd greatly forward [the] Sale of it, as it may encline People to buy it from various motive[s,] and tho' many perhaps may be disappointed of what they expect, yet [the Bo]okseller will receive the benefit, of their Curiosity" (463).

Lady Barbara reportedly "approved of this pious fraud" (463), and though Andrew Millar rejects the work on the grounds that the novel as a genre had run its course, Richardson is undeterred, writing that "it *must* appear, for Virtue's sake" (463). He offers to take the novel to Dodsley even though he is among those who, like Millar, "think the Day of the Novel is over" (463), and promises that should rejection follow "[I] will put her in the best way I can, to usher it into the world for her own Benefit" (464–65). Dodsley does reject the novel, maintaining that he has "left off Business to his Brother" (464) and Richardson suggests that a subscription edition be undertaken; this succeeds and Richardson prints the novel (464).

When we recall that the newly established Magdalen House (1758) was a hospital for repentant prostitutes, we do not have to guess what these

<sup>16</sup> See Betty Rizzo, "Two Versions of Community: Montagu and Scott" *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 65 (2002): 207; *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Megan Hiatt (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), introduction.

"various motives" might be.<sup>17</sup> My point here is that Richardson was certainly capable—and entirely approved of—pulling the bait and switch. In fact, Richardson and Montagu must have considered this "pious fraud" as perhaps the surest way to reach and reform a readership that was attracted to the title for prurient reasons—for these are the readers most in need of reform. If the bookseller and author benefit as a consequence, it is surely a just reward for providing virtue where vice was expected.

It is not surprising that Richardson liked this approach and I am suggesting that, with some minor qualifications, that is precisely what he did some four years previously with regard to *Sir Charles Grandison*. While I agree that the novel strikes a reconciliatory tone, Richardson knows, in fact he has learned the hard way, how subversive readings of and satiric attacks on his novels have weakened their effect.<sup>18</sup> Although he does not admit it openly, I feel that the ill treatment *Pamela* received was certainly part of the reason *Clarissa* was written at all and also why (despite many urgings to the contrary) Richardson shows no mercy for his heroine. It is as though he is saying: "lampoon this if you can." Surely, when Lovelace received sympathy and yet remained attractive to many despite all Richardson's efforts to represent him as a depraved rake, he felt defeated again. Therefore, and in the present situation, knowing full well that *Grandison's* title and the names he applied to its characters would almost certainly attract attention from the very quarter he wished to reach. Just as *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House* reaches those readers who expect one thing but get quite another, he essentially admits or entraps those readers who are seeking to discover a Jacobite agenda and presents them instead with something utterly other than what they are seeking.

<sup>17</sup> We might also recall that Richardson has *Grandison* endorse the establishment of such an institution for those women "betrayed by the perfidy of men" (III, Letter XVIII) and that Richardson himself had contributed some 10 pounds to the founding of Magdalen House (E&K 465).

<sup>18</sup> "But more deeply it [*Sir Charles Grandison*] embodies a dream of restoration, reconciliation, and wholeness to an England badly divided and given to division, even to the mangling of bodies" (Doody, "Richardson's Politics" 126).