

SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING

This fascinating study examines Samuel Richardson's letters as important works of authorial self-fashioning. It analyses the development of his epistolary style, the links between his own letter-writing practice and that of his fictional protagonists, how his correspondence is highly conscious of the spectrum of publicity, and how he constructed his letter collections to form an epistolary archive for posterity. Looking backwards to earlier epistolary traditions, and forwards to the emergence of the lives-in-letters mode of biography, the book places Richardson's correspondence in a historical continuum. It explores how the eighteenth century witnesses a transition, from a period in which an author would rarely preserve personal papers to a society in which the personal lives of writers become privileged as markers of authenticity in the expanded print market. It argues that Richardson's letters are shaped by this shifting relationship between correspondence and publicity in the mid-eighteenth century.

LOUISE CURRAN is a junior research fellow at Trinity College, Oxford. She is co-editor (with George Justice and Devoney Looser) of *Correspondence Primarily on Pamela and Clarissa*, a forthcoming volume in The Cambridge Edition of the Correspondence of Samuel Richardson. As well as articles on Richardson's correspondence, she has written on Pope's *Rape of the Lock* and Milton's reception in eighteenth-century verse miscellanies.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON AND THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING

LOUISE CURRAN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-107-13151-4 — Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing
 Louise Curran
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
 a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107131514

© Louise Curran 2016

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
 of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
 place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2016

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Curran, Louise.

Samuel Richardson and the art of letter-writing / Louise Curran.

New York : Cambridge University Press, 2016. | Based on the author's Ph D.
 thesis, University College London, 2011. | Includes bibliographical references and
 index.

LCCN 2015041802 | ISBN 9781107131514 (hardback)

LCSH: Richardson, Samuel, 1689–1761 – Criticism and interpretation. |

Richardson, Samuel, 1689–1761 – Correspondence. | Richardson, Samuel,

1689–1761 – Friends and associates. | Authors, English – 18th century –

Correspondence. | English letters – 18th century – History and criticism. | Letter

writing – England – History – 18th century. | Letter writing – Social aspects –

England. | Autobiography – Social aspects.

LCC PR3667 .c87 2016 | DDC 826/.6–dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015041802>

ISBN 978-1-107-13151-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
 or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
 publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
 remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-107-13151-4 – Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing
Louise Curran
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For Joe and Mary Curran

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page viii
<i>Prefatory note</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction: Undesigning scribbler	i
1 Forming a style: <i>Pamela</i> , plainness, and the ‘True Sublime’	19
2 Lady Bradshaigh’s <i>Clarissa</i> and the author as correspondent	51
3 Trifling scribes: Women’s letters and patchwork writing	89
4 The <i>Grandison</i> years: Men, morals, and manliness	124
5 Editing letters in an age of index-learning	157
Conclusion	189
<i>Notes</i>	196
<i>Bibliography</i>	243
<i>Index</i>	261

Illustrations

- | | | |
|----------|---|---------|
| Figure 1 | ‘Letters Relating to <i>PAMELA</i> ’, FM xvi, 1, f. 9 ^f , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. | page 41 |
| Figure 2 | ‘Contents of the Letters in this Volume’ [i.e. on <i>Pamela</i>], FM xvi, 1, f. 7 ^f , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. | 42 |
| Figure 3 | Letter from Lady Bradshaigh to Samuel Richardson, 5 March 1751, FM xi, f. 21 ^v , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. | 62 |
| Figure 4 | Joseph Highmore, <i>Samuel Richardson</i> (1750), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 1036, oil on canvas, 20 ³ / ₄ in. × 14 ¹ / ₂ in. (527 mm × 368 mm). | 63 |
| Figure 5 | Edward Haytley, <i>A Portrait of Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh with Haigh Hall, Lancashire, beyond</i> (1746), Museum of Wigan Life, Wigan Council, oil on canvas. | 64 |
| Figure 6 | Joseph Highmore, <i>Samuel Richardson</i> (1747), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 161, oil on canvas, 30 ¹ / ₈ in. × 25 in. (764 mm × 635 mm). | 65 |
| Figure 7 | Thomas Loggan, <i>The remarkable characters who were at Tunbridge Wells with Richardson in 1748, from a drawing in his possession with references in his own writing</i> , colour aquatint reproduced in <i>The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson</i> , ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), vol. 3, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. | 70 |
| Figure 8 | Detail from image of Loggan, <i>Tunbridge Wells with Richardson</i> , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. | 73 |
| Figure 9 | Joseph Constantine Stadler after Susannah Highmore, ‘Mr. Richardson reading the Manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison in 1751 to his Friends in the Grotto of His House at North End, from a drawing made at the time by Miss Highmore’ (1804), © National Portrait Gallery, London, D5810, coloured aquatint. | 126 |

<i>List of illustrations</i>		ix
Figure 10	Mason Chamberlin, 'Samuel Richardson' (c. 1754), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 6435, oil on copper, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. \times 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (249 mm \times 197 mm).	152
Figure 11	Jonathan Richardson, 'Alexander Pope' (c. 1737), © National Portrait Gallery, London, 1179, oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. \times 18 in. (613 mm \times 457 mm).	155
Figure 12	Letter 8 from Thomas Edwards to SR, 24 January 1751, indexed as 'L.8: p. 21' in the contents to the SR-Edwards correspondence, FM XII, I, f.184 ^r , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.	166
Figure 13	Richardson's annotation, 'For more of Mr Edward's Sonnets, than what are in this Book, See the bound Volume Letter'd POETRY', FM XII, I, f.193 ^v , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.	167
Figure 14	Richardson's annotations on 'Index' to letters on <i>Clarissa</i> and <i>Grandison</i> , FM xv, 3, f.1 ^v , © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.	168

Prefatory note

Quotations from Samuel Richardson's (SR) early works and *Pamela I* and *II* are taken from the relevant volumes in the new *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Samuel Richardson*, 12 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011–), cited separately in the Abbreviations list. For *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, not yet available in this edition, I cite the first editions of 1748–1749 and 1753–1754. As for the correspondence, the volumes that are already published in the Cambridge Edition are cited: Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 10 covering SR's letters with Aaron Hill and the Hill family; George Cheyne and Thomas Edwards; Sarah Wescomb, Frances Grainger, and Laetitia Pilkington; and correspondence primarily on *Sir Charles Grandison* (1750–1754).

The remaining letters are cited from manuscripts where they exist or early printed versions where this is the only copy-text available; details of these are given in the footnotes. References to the folios of manuscript letters refer to the place from which the quotation is taken (rather than the first leaf of the letter in question). In my own transcriptions of manuscript letters, square brackets ([]) enclose editorial points unless specified (as SR was fond of using them), pointed brackets (<>) enclose SR's deletions, and interlined letters and words are enclosed within diagonals (/ /). Where a reading is conjectural I have enclosed it within square brackets preceded by a question mark. All year formats have been normalised to a year beginning on 1 January, according to the reformation of the calendar and the introduction of New Style dating in 1750.

Acknowledgements

The person who has lived with this book for the longest time is John Mullan, who supervised my PhD thesis and deserves thanks for his good humour and wise advice then and now. I am also grateful to Peter Sabor who, as one of the general editors of Richardson's Works and Correspondence, provided me with copies and transcriptions of various letters and access to many other useful sources, and was a mine of useful information on Richardson's correspondence and networks that enlivened my subject immeasurably. Thanks are also due to those who provided help, criticism, and information on different sections of this work at its various stages: Paul Davis, Markman Ellis, Helen Hackett, Sören Hammerschmidt, Judith Hawley, Matthew Ingleby, George Justice, Tom Keymer, Devoney Looser, Bill McCarthy, Michael McCluskey, Kate McNaughton, Claude Rawson, John Richetti, Betty Schellenberg, Dan Starza-Smith, and Henry Woudhuysen. At Oxford, I have benefitted from the scholarship and friendship of Ros Ballaster, Paddy and Rebecca Bullard, Christine Gerrard, Kantik Ghosh, Grace Egan, Stefano-Maria Evangelista, Oliver Herford, Roger Lonsdale, Jim McLaverty, Lynda Mugglestone, and, in particular, Freya Johnston and Abigail Williams. At Cambridge University Press, Linda Bree and Anna Bond have carefully and cheerfully guided me through the daunting process of publishing my first book. I am also indebted to my two anonymous readers for their encouragement and cogent criticism. The faults that remain are, of course, all my own.

Trinity College, Oxford, and University College London both helped support the completion of this work through funding and other resources, for which I am thankful. I would also like to acknowledge staff at the following institutions: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Beningbrough Hall, York; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the Manuscript Room and Rare Books Room, the British Library; the Rare Book and Manuscript Collection of the Firestone Library, Princeton

Acknowledgements

xiii

University; the Heinz Archive, the National Portrait Gallery; Houghton Library, Harvard University; Knowsley House, Prescott, Merseyside; McGill University, Montreal; the Morgan Library, New York; the National Art Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum; New York Public Library; Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University; and University College London. For help with access to books, letters, places, and paintings associated with the research of this book, I owe specific thanks to the following individuals: Jacqui Grainger (Chawton House Library); Chris Walne and Brian Barton (Haigh Hall and Country Park); Kirstin Waibel and Emma McCarthy (Knowsley Hall); and Yvonne Webb (Wigan Heritage Service).

Parts of Chapter 2 first appeared as “A Man Obscurely Situated”: Samuel Richardson, Autobiography, and “The History of Mrs Beaumont”, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36:2, 2013, 279–95. Part of Chapter 5 has been published as “Into Whosoever Hands Our Letters Might Fall”: Samuel Richardson’s Correspondence and “the Public Eye”, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 35, no. 1, Winter 2011, 51–64. In both cases, the writing appears here in a revised form; nevertheless I am grateful for permission to reprint.

There would be no book without the various kinds of support that my parents and family have provided over the years. The dedication registers my debt. Thanks also need to be recorded for ‘The Circuit’ and ‘Fram Thread’. You know who you are.

This book has been on my mind for a long period of time. It attempts to respond to some of the questions about Richardson that I first had on encountering him in print, and have explored with students since. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Fred Parker who introduced me to eighteenth-century literature in the first place and taught me the value of a mode of scepticism that is unfailing curiosity.

My last note of appreciation is for my kindest reader in so many ways: Adam Rounce.

Abbreviations

Barbauld	<i>The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Author of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison; selected from the Original Manuscripts bequeathed to his Family. To which are prefixed, a Biographical Account of that Author, and Observations on his Writings</i> , ed. Anna Lætitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804)
<i>Clarissa</i>	Samuel Richardson, <i>Clarissa. Or, The History of a Young Lady</i> , 7 vols. (London: Printed for S. Richardson: 1747–8)
CECSR	<i>The Cambridge Edition of the Correspondence of Samuel Richardson</i> , 12 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013—)
<i>Dictionary</i>	Samuel Johnson, <i>A Dictionary of the English Language</i> , 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755)
Eaves and Kimpel	T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, <i>Samuel Richardson: A Biography</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
<i>EW</i>	Samuel Richardson, <i>Early Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pettit (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
FM	Victoria and Albert Museum, London, National Art Library, Forster Collection, MSS. XI±XVI (48E5–48E10) [Samuel Richardson's correspondence]
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>

List of abbreviations

xv

<i>Pamela</i> I	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded</i> [1740], ed. Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
<i>Pamela</i> II	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela in her Exalted Condition</i> [1741], ed. Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
<i>Grandison</i>	Samuel Richardson, <i>The History of Sir Charles Grandison</i> , 7 vols. (London: Printed for S. Richardson, 1753–4)
SR	Samuel Richardson