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 **Domestic Intelligence: Newspaper Advertising and the
Eighteenth-Century Novel**

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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Domestic Intelligence:

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I.

An advertisement published in the March 25, 1728, issue of *The Daily Journal* exhibits the "formal realism" for which Richardson's novels were to be so celebrated. Positioned between a notice that "a large Brick House" is "To be Lett" and an announcement that "the Principal Part of the Collection of Pictures, of Mr. Nicholas Blick, deceased" is "to be sold on Wednesday the 20th Instant, at his Son's House," it reads:

Lost on Thursday last, between Grace-Church-street, and Long-Acre, by a Person that went Part of the Way in a Hackney-Coach, about five Yards of Cambrick and two of Muslin, three little square Boards and several small Bits of Linen of different Colours, all ty'd up together in a blue and white check'd silk Handkerchief, with a reddish Border round the Edges, and mark'd with a D at one of the Corners: If the Person who has found the abovesaid Things, will bring or send them to Mr. RICHARDSON'S, Printer, in Salisbury-Court; or to Mr. BENN'S Coffee-house, in New Bond-street, by Hanover-Square, they shall receive half a Guinea Reward, and Thanks.

The advertisement's detailed description of the contents of the lost bundle is reminiscent of famous passages in *Pamela*, such as Pamela's account of the contents of the third of the three bundles into which she divides her belongings ("here is a Calicoe Night-gown, that I used to wear o' Mornings. . . . Then there is a quilted Callimancoe Coat, and a Pair of Stockens I bought of the Pedlar, and my Straw-hat with blue Strings; and a Remnant of Scots Cloth. . . . And here are four other Shifts") or her delighted description of the "new Garb" in which she clothes herself to prepare to return to her parents ("[I] put on my round-ear'd ordinary Cap; but with a green Knot however, and my homespun Gown and Petticoat, and plain-leather Shoes; but yet they are what they call *Spanish Leather*. . .").¹ Like such passages in *Pamela* and similar ones in *Clarissa*, *The Daily Journal*'s advertisement aims, in Ian Watt's phrasing, to bring an "object home to us in all its concrete particularity," as well as to place it with concrete particularity in space and time.² We might speculate that it was in his early career as a printer, when he served as printer for *The Daily Journal*, *The [End Page 251] Daily Gazetteer*, and other periodicals, owned shares in several newspapers, and occasionally (as above) appeared in newspaper copy himself as the go-between for lost goods or items offered for sale, that Richardson developed the language of "close and detailed," particularizing description that became the hallmark of his novelistic style.³

The immediate purpose of particularizing description in the advertisement quoted—with its references to specific dates; street names; number, size, color, and distinguishing features of individual items; and so on—is obviously different from the purpose of passages of description with very similar features in a work of fiction. The "Person that went Part of the Way" between Grace-Church-street and Long-Acre in a hackney coach and lost a bundle along the way hopes that a reader will match the details of the advertisement's description to a bundle that he or she has found. The object is brought "home" to the reader in all its textually "concrete particularity" that it may be brought home to its owner in material form. Hyper-particularized referential language here seeks to reunite the object evoked with the person who has written or paid for its description; that pragmatic effort may succeed or fail. The conviction that informs the posting of such an ad, however, is a broad and implicit one that undergirds the page full of advertisements in which this one appears, serving a larger purpose than any single advertisement's pragmatic...

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