

LITERARY CRITICISM IN ENGLISH PERIODICALS, 1749-1759

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1749-1759

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: The purpose of this thesis is to examine the place of literary criticism in the periodical literature of the decade 1749-1759 and to set forth the critical principles expressed in these periodicals, with special emphasis on movements in criticism, related to the development of the novel and biography. Although most of the relevant available periodicals have been used to some extent the examination concentrates on four periodicals which are not readily available and have received little scholarly attention, the Ladies Magazine (1749-1753), the General Review (1752), the Literary Magazine (1756-1758), and the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review (1758).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	: An introduction to the periodical literature of the decade with emphasis on the place of literary criticism therein. p. 1
CHAPTER II	: General critical principles expressed in book reviewing and in reviews of philosophical works. p. 44
CHAPTER III	: Principles expressed in criticism of drama and poetry. p. 73
CHAPTER IV	: Principles expressed in criticism of the novel and biography. p. 104
CHAPTER V	: Conclusions. p. 127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	 p. 135

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From 1749 to 1759 approximately 240 English periodicals are known to have appeared,¹ about half of these published in London and its suburbs. Some of these have completely disappeared and are known only by title, as is the Tatler Revived, which is mentioned by Johnson in the Rambler. This title also appears in the emblem² at the front of the Gentleman's Magazine, a new entry along with the Rambler, in the number for March, 1750. Since the title is omitted in the emblem of the May number, it can be assumed that the Tatler Revived ran for only two months or less. However, as in the case of many London periodicals, shown emphatically by R. M. Wiles in his study of the appearance of the Rambler in provincial newspapers,³ it was reprinted in a provincial newspaper, and parts of it are extant in the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer.⁴

¹R. S. Crane and F. B. Kaye, A Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals, (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1927), lists 229 periodicals for this period. [J. G. Muddiman], The Tercentenary Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers, Magazines, and Reviews, (London, 1920), lists seven others in its London and suburbs section (and there are possibly others in the Handlist's provincial section which are not included by Crane and Kaye), and the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, (Cambridge, 1940), lists three periodicals not found in either of these lists.

²This emblem, which appears at the front of every number of the Gentleman's Magazine, is a picture of Saint John's gate surrounded by titles of contemporary periodicals.

³Roy McKean Wilos, "The Contemporary Distribution of Johnson's Rambler", Eighteenth Century Studies, II, (1968), 155-171.

⁴Crane and Kaye, op. cit., entry 2031.

There may, of course, have been other periodicals published in this period, even the titles of which are lost. And many of those which did survive, survive only in part, as does the Ladies Weekly Magazine, which began in February, 1747. It must have run until 1750 or 1751 because it is included in the preface to the volume for 1751 of the Gentleman's Magazine, in a list of imitators which died that year. However, only the first number of the magazine survives.⁵ Of many of the surviving periodicals it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the extant numbers are the only numbers to have been published. For example, there are two copies of a volume of the General Review; or, Impartial Register containing the first five numbers of the periodical. There is positive internal evidence that the authors intended to continue the periodical,⁶ but there is no evidence that they did. On the other hand, many periodicals of the period are extant which have obvious conclusions. Some, particularly essay periodicals, were evidently intended to run only for a limited period, until a certain number of volumes were completed. (Like the many books that were published in serial form during this period,⁷ many periodicals were intended to be bound as books formed from

⁵It is found in the Bodleian Library, and is described by Bertha Stearns, "Early English Periodicals for Ladies (1700-1760)", Publication of the Modern Language Association, XLVIII (1933), 38-60.

⁶In the fifth number one of the authors speaks of "Our Reasons for converting our weekly into a monthly Publication . . . " and says that ". . . instead of distinguishing my different Subjects by the Days of the Week, I shall date them hereafter occasionally" (p.306). The authors' full intention of continuing their periodical after the fifth number is also indicated by the book reviewer, who in a list of recent publications states after one title: "This Work will be considered in our next" (#5, p.302).

⁷See R. M. Wiles, Serial Publication in England before 1750, (Cambridge, 1957).

the various numbers published during a given period of time.) Others announce their termination as not originally intended but as necessary for some reason or other, as does the Ladies Magazine (1749-1753) in the last number:

The Publisher desires to acquaint the Public, that Jasper Goodwill, Esq., Author of this Work, having for some time been afflicted with a lingering Consumption, he gave up the Ghost last Monday: So that, this Number concludes Volume IV, and all his Lucubrations, under the Name of The Ladies Magazine (Vol. IV, #23).

(Jasper Goodwill, Esq. was the eidolon of the editor,⁸ and the reading public would not necessarily have supposed that the actual editor had died.)

Most of the periodicals of the decade 1749-1759 which survive, survive only in small numbers of copies; many of these periodicals are found in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum, but a surprisingly large number are also found in various libraries in North America.⁹ For example, of the two surviving copies of the General Review; or, Impartial Register, one is in the Harvard University Library and the other in the library of the University of Iowa. Some of the periodicals, though only

⁸Author is not an appropriate word, for most of the contents are not original.

⁹Crane and Kaye list the locations of the extant copies in their Census. There are also catalogues for various libraries: R. T. Milford, D. M. Sutherland, Catalogue of English Newspapers and Periodicals in the Bodleian Library (alphabetical); Powell Stewart, British Newspapers and Periodicals 1632-1800 in the University of Texas; Anthony J. Gabler, Check List of English Newspapers and Periodicals before 1801 in the Huntington Library, 1931.

a minute proportion of the total number of periodical publications, were reprinted and have continued to be reprinted, so that they are readily available in most libraries. These are essay periodicals and they form a part of the various collections called The British Essayists.¹⁰ The essay periodicals of the 1750's which have been preserved in these collections are the Rambler (1750-1752), the Adventurer (1752-1754), the World (1753-1756), the Connoisseur (1754-1756), and the Idler (1758-1760).¹¹ The fact that essay periodicals from this decade form such a large part of these collections (approximately one-third of the volumes, the total number of which is drawn from the period 1709-1794) is indicative of the richness of the periodical literature of this ten-year period.

Not only are some of the periodical essays of the period preserved in reprinted, re-edited collections, but also much of the periodical literature written by the prominent authors of the time -- Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Tobias Smollett, Christopher Smart, Joseph Warton, Oliver Goldsmith, and Samuel Johnson -- has been collected and preserved with their works. The fact that so many of the outstanding authors of

¹⁰One is edited by Robert Iynam (London, 1827), another by James Ferguson (London, 1823), and a third by Alexander Chalmers (London, 1808).

¹¹Rambler (March 20, 1750 -- March 14, 1752), 208 Numbers, by Samuel Johnson. Adventurer (November 7, 1752 -- March 9, 1754), 140 Numbers, by John Hawkesworth. (Samuel Johnson, Joseph Warton, Richard Bathurst, and others also contributed.) World (January 4, 1753 -- December 30, 1756), 210 Numbers, by Edward Moore. (The fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Richard Cambridge, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, James Tilson, Edward Loveybond, John Earl of Cork, William Whitehead, and others also contributed.) Connoisseur (January 31, 1754 -- September 30, 1756), 140 Numbers, by George Colman and Bonnel Thornton. (The Earl of Cork, John Duncombe, William Cowper and Robert Lloyd also contributed.) Idler (April 15, 1758 -- April 5, 1760), 103 Numbers, by Samuel Johnson. (Thomas Warton, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Bennet Langton also contributed.)

the eighteenth century were prominent authors of periodical literature, beginning with Defoe, Swift, Addison and Steele in the early decades of the century, and that so many of these were writing in the 1750's -- Fielding, Smart, Goldsmith, Johnson, and others listed above -- is also indicative of the richness of the periodical literature of the period.

Although much of the periodical work of the prominent authors has been studied,¹² for the most part the periodical literature of the period has been neglected, perhaps because of the difficulty of finding it, since it is for the most part widely scattered and hidden away among rare, or just old, books in various libraries. The McMaster University Library is fortunate to have complete sets of the only three British magazines which ran throughout this period, the Gentleman's Magazine, the London Magazine, and the Scots Magazine, as well as some numbers of other periodicals of the period, the Annual Register for 1758 (the year it began), Volume 15 (1759) of the New Universal Magazine; or Gentleman and Lady's Polite Instructor, which began in 1751, eight numbers of the Test,¹³ six numbers

¹²As on Johnson: D. J. Greene, "Was Johnson the theatrical critic of the Gentleman's Magazine?", Review of English Studies, New Series III (1952), 158-161. D. J. Greene, "Johnson's contributions to the Literary Magazine", Review of English Studies, VII (1956). Arthur Sherbo, "A Possible Addition to the Johnson Canon", Review of English Studies, VI (1955). On Goldsmith: M. Golden, "Goldsmith's Attributions in the Literary Magazine", Notes and Queries, 201 (1956). A. Friedman: "Goldsmith's contributions to the Critical Review", M.P., XLIV (1946). R. W. Seitz, "Goldsmith and the Literary Magazine", Review of English Studies, 5 (1929). On Smart: Arthur Sherbo, "Christopher Smart and the Universal Visitor", Library, X (1955). C. E. Jones, "Christopher Smart, Richard Rolt, and the Universal Visitor", Library, XVIII (1938). R. B. Botting, "Christopher Smart and the Lilliputian Magazine", E.L.H., IX (1942).

¹³Numbers 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. It ran for 35 numbers, 1756-1757, by Henry Fox (Baron Holland), Arthur Murphy and others, according to the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature (CBEL), II, 664.

of the Con-Test,¹⁴ the London Gazette, April 10-13, 1756, and Rider's British Merlin, 1750, '51, '52, '55, '56, and '57. The magazines are most important in a study of the periodical literature of the period because they reprint material from contemporary periodicals. In fact the original purpose of the magazine, as stated by the Gentleman's Magazine, which was the first to appear, in 1731 (the London followed in 1732 and the Scots in 1739), was to gather important essays and articles from the pamphlets and newspapers and various other periodical publications appearing in a given month and to reprint them, fully, or in part, or in a condensed form. Although by the 1750's the magazines included other materials also, they remained repositories of contemporary periodical literature.

For this particular study, besides the periodicals in McMaster University's Rare Books collection just mentioned and the periodical essays reprinted in British Essayists and those parts of periodicals collected with the works of prominent authors, I have had access to microfilms of four other periodicals of the period, the Ladies Magazine (1749-1753), the General Review; or Impartial Register (1752), the Literary Magazine; or Universal Review (1756-1758), and the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review (1758),¹⁵ and have examined the first few volumes of the Monthly Review (1749-1845) in the library of the University of Toronto.

¹⁴Numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8. It ran for 38 numbers, 1756, 1757 by Owen Ruffhead, Philip Francis, etc., according to the CBEL, II, 664.

¹⁵These are from the Yale University Library, the Harvard Library, the Bodleian Library and the Yale University Library respectively, and were acquired by Dr. R. M. Wiles.

Certainly not all of the 240 periodicals which appeared between 1749 and 1759 are of literary value; many are simply newspapers and others are of obvious non-literary interest, such as the Mathematician (1745-1750) or the Historical List of all Horse Matches (1729-1749). However, a surprisingly large proportion of these periodicals are of literary interest. The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature lists fortytwo magazines and reviews for this period and in addition fortytwo essay periodicals, most of which are probably of some literary value. The periodical essay is, of course, the eighteenth century genre. Biography and the novel developed in the eighteenth century but became even more prominent later. The periodical essay, on the other hand, developed and reached its greatest prominence within the century. And it is the periodical essay which gave the whole area of periodical publication the necessary impetus for its development, which also took place in the eighteenth century, though it, unlike the periodical essay, continued developing in the following eras. The vast growth of the periodical press in the eighteenth century can be partly attributed to an increase in literacy¹⁶ along with the growth of the middle class, and also to the lack of patronage from the crown and the aristocracy for authors, who were then forced to turn to the growing reading public for patronage in the form of their purchasing power.

Whatever the reasons for the rapid growth of periodical publications, certainly in the 1750's all sorts of periodical publications.

¹⁶See R. M. Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy in Eighteenth Century England: Fresh Evidence", Studies in the Eighteenth Century, edited by R. F. Brissenden (Canberra, Australia, 1968). See also A. S. Collins, Authorship in the Days of Johnson. Being a Study of the Relationship between Author, Patron, Publisher, and Public, 1726-1780, (London, 1928).

looked back to the first essay periodicals - the Tatler and Spectator by Steele and Addison (1709-1714) - as their forebears. The Gentleman's Magazine in its preface to the volume for 1749 says in answer to the accusation that it reprints material just off the press:

It is true, yet we are justified by the consent, or request, of the authors, who rather chuse that they should . . . be preserved in a work that circulates through the world, than be entirely trusted to a single pamphlet, which rarely reaches posterity . . . As we want not materials, we forbear pieces prohibited by such proprietors as are not sensible to the advantage of being mentioned in a popular work; a recommendation, which, since the days of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq. [the Tatler's eidolon] those who are skilled in business are glad to procure, if they can, by properly placing a copy.

Although by the 1750's other kinds of periodicals had developed and were developing, the essay periodical was still a dominant form, not only because so many were being published nor only because the periodicals still being reprinted fifty years later were essay periodicals, but also because the periodical essay was an important part of other publications of the time. The magazine, of course, reprinted many periodical essays. The London Magazine for July 1751, for example, contains the Ramblers for July 2 and July 13. The March, 1750, number of the Gentleman's Magazine contains Rambler nos. 1, 2 and 3. The Ladies Magazine, throughout its four-year run, reprinted from the Rambler, the Adventurer, and the World. It also contains at least one unacknowledged Spectator.¹⁷

¹⁷The Ladies Magazine was very lax in acknowledging the sources of its pieces. Only one of its Ramblers is acknowledged and then without number or date. (It is #131, and it appears in the Ladies Magazine, July 27, 1751, #19, p.292). One Rambler which appears without acknowledgment is #126 of June 1, 1751, and it appears without any heading except "To Jasper Goodwill, Esq." (the Ladies Magazine's eidolon) in the number for July 13, 1751 (#18, p.277). Actually only a part of Rambler #126 appears here, and it is the same part that appeared in the London Magazine for June (p.275) with acknowledgement. A very strange case is an essay

The Literary Magazine (1756-1758) carried the World¹⁸ and Connoisseur¹⁹ as well as the Centinel,²⁰ the Humanist,²¹ the Monitor,²² and the Test and Con-Test;²³ and the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review, which ran for only sixteen numbers in 1758, carried the Monitor²⁴ and the Idler.²⁵

Not only did magazines reprint periodical essays, but newspapers had begun carrying periodical essays. The London Magazine and Gentleman's Magazine of the first few years of the decade reprinted the Fool from the Gazetteer, a Mr. Touchit from the Westminster Journal, and the Inspector from the London Daily Advertiser, and Literary Gazette;²⁶ and the Idler (1758-1760) was a part of Payne's Universal Chronicle.

appearing in the Ladies Magazine for October 6, 1750 (#24, p. 377) without any acknowledgment. This same essay appeared in the London Magazine for September 1750 under the heading "The Rambler for Sept. 10". There is no Rambler of September 10, and, in fact, this essay does not appear to be a Rambler at all!

¹⁸Numbers 178 and 179 appeared in #2 of the Literary Magazine (June 15, 1756) pp. 69 and 78. The number for October 7 in #7, #205 in #8.

¹⁹For July 1, 1756 in #3, for July 1756; #132 in #8.

²⁰For January 27, 1757 in #10; for March 3, 1757 in #11; an undated one in #13. The Centinel ran for 27 numbers in 1757, by Thomas Franklin, according to the CBEL.

²¹For April 23 in #13. The Humanist ran for 15 numbers in 1757, according to the CBEL, II, 664.

²²Numbers 62 and 66 in #7; #69 in #8; #86 in #11; #90 in #12; for June 3, 1757, in #15. The Monitor; or British Freeholder ran for 504 numbers, 1755-1765, by Richard Beckford and John Entinck - CBEL, II, 664.

²³Parts of numbers 1, 2, and 7 of both the Test and Con-Test appear in #9, pp. 453-460.

²⁴The Monitors for June 10, June 17, June 24, July 1, and July 15 appear on pages 303, 341, 371, 400, and 429 respectively.

²⁵Idler numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 14, and 15.

Another type of periodical, in some ways similar to the newspaper which carried a periodical essay, was the journal, which was built around or headed by the periodical essay, and which also carried news and advertisements. Such was Fielding's Covent Garden Journal, which began with generally a literary essay headed by a classical motto, like the essays in the Spectator. This was followed by 'Modern History', or items of home news, then by 'Foreign Affairs', which was also news taken from current newspapers, then by 'Covent Garden', which consisted of reports of cases which had come before Fielding in his Bow Street court, then stock quotations, and finally, advertisements. Unlike the newspapers which carried a periodical essay, not only was the essay under its particular eidolon -- as the Fool, or the Idler -- but the whole journal was under the eidolon; i.e. the Covent Garden Journal was "by Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knight, Censor of Great Britain". Although the impression is given that the Covent Garden Journal had many contributors, most of the essays are by Fielding himself, according to Dudden.²⁷

²⁶The Gentleman's Magazine contains the "Fool for April 19" and "Mr. Touchit from the Westminster Journal" in its number for April 1750. The London Magazine for June 1750 reprints an essay from the Fool "in the London Gazetteer of June 9" (p.276). An essay from the Inspector is reprinted in the London Magazine for June 1751, and the essay is introduced as having begun "about three months ago, and seems to gain ground, being writ with great accuracy and spirit" (p.273). The Fool and Mr. Touchit are not mentioned in the CEEL, but the Inspector is listed as consisting of 152 numbers (1751-1753) by Sir John Hill. F. Homes Dudden gives some account of the Inspector and of Hill in his Henry Fielding, His Life, Works, and Times, (Hamden, Connecticut, 1966), II, 929-954.

²⁷See Dudden, op. cit., II, 886-927.

The periodical essays of the 1750's are of two more or less distinct types: one literary and one political. Steele and Addison had excluded politics from the Tatler and Spectator, and the form of essay periodical which they began continued to be more or less apolitical by intention. But alongside these non-political periodical essays were many more of an intentionally political nature²⁸ which discussed the news "in depth" and commented upon it. With the exception of the Monitor and the Test and Con-Test, almost all of the essay periodicals mentioned above are of the literary type. There were numerous others, however, which fall in the category of political essay periodicals. Most of the numbers of the London and Gentleman's Magazines from 1749-1751 reprint essays from the Old England, the Remembrancer, and the Westminster Journal, and these essays are almost entirely of a political or other newsworthy nature.²⁹

²⁸The Old Whig (Addison) and the Plebian (Steele) are "almost wholly political in tone" (George S. Marr, The Periodical Essayists of the Eighteenth Century, [New York, 1924], p.61). The True Briton (1723), the Craftsman (1726), the Spectator (1728), the Free Briton (1730), the Citizen (1739), the True Patriot (1745) are others, among many more, which are largely political in nature. See Marr, op. cit., pp.64-82.

²⁹For example, the London Magazine of June 1750 contains an essay from Old England, June 9, entitled "Tyranny of the French king, Lewis XIV, over his Protestant subjects" (pp.246-247), and one dated June 16 decrying that Britain has become "the dupe and bubble of that very power [France] she has so long kept within bounds" (pp.247-248). The four Remembrancers for the month (these all appear to be weekly papers) are not reprinted in full, but their contents are summarized, all relating to the Westminster election. The four numbers of the Westminster Journal are also given in summary. These three weekly periodicals are not listed under essay periodicals by the CBEL, though their form, as it appears in the Gentleman's and London Magazines, is of a weekly essay; Old England and the Westminster Journal are listed as newspapers, and the Remembrancer is not mentioned at all. Crane and Kaye, op. cit., however, list the Remembrancer [1748-1751, by James Ralph, one volume in the British Museum and in the Bodleian Library].

That the political essay and the literary essay were generally seen as two separate types is illustrated by a most interesting and really unique periodical of the time, the General Review; or Impartial Register, which, although it is listed by Crane and Kaye and by the CBEL, is not mentioned by Marr (op. cit.) or Walter Graham³⁰ nor described or discussed anywhere. It is a quite interesting periodical in both its structure and its content, and it will be described in more detail further on. Its plan was to be the complete periodical without having to follow the practice of the magazine of reprinting pieces from other periodicals. Thus it has three sections of identical length, each with its own author. One of the sections is called the Critic and consists of book reviews, which genre will be discussed later. The other two are called the Trifler and the Patriot. The Patriot's subject is "Polity", according to the title page, and each number consists of various essays on political subjects, such as the necessity of Britain's maintaining a strong navy, along with pieces of general information, such as a list of territorial claims of Britain and the countries of Europe, or various official documents, and always included is a section called "Foreign and Domestic History" which is simply the "news". The Patriot, then, is the General Review's political essay (and includes the news); and of equal importance is its literary essay, the Trifler, which follows the patterns set by Steele and Addison in their Tatler and Spectator.

The literary periodical essay is thus demonstrated to be an

³⁰ English Literary Periodicals, (New York, 1930).

important part of the periodical literature of the 1750's - by the appearance of numerous essay periodicals, by the reprinting of periodical essays in the magazines, by the appearance of periodical essays in newspapers, and by the journal built around the periodical essay. Although the literary value of the various periodical essays varies according to the abilities of their authors; the essay periodicals are almost invariably of literary interest because literature itself as a topic is an important part of the form or pattern of the periodical essay as established by the Tatler and Spectator.³¹ The literary periodical essay is rich in literary criticism, both in the expression of ideas about literature in general and in the judgment of particular pieces of literature. For example, about thirtynine of the 208 Ramblers contain literary criticism, and an even larger proportion of the Adventurers - 34 out of 140 numbers - is of a literary critical nature. The World includes about 39 with literary criticism, out of 210 numbers, the Connoisseur, thirteen out of 140, and the Idler about twentytwo of 103 numbers. According to Dudden literary criticism is one of the four major topics of Fielding's essays in the Covent Garden Journal. The fact that most writers of periodical essays considered themselves authors and were interested in literature in general, along with the fact of the informal, personal style of the essay, meant that the periodical writer would frequently express his own ideas about literature in connection with his own work. Hawkesworth (of the Adventurer) wrote prose fiction, and he

³¹ Seventythree Spectators out of a total of 635 are directly concerned with literary criticism.

also wrote essays expressing his ideas about prose fiction and about literature in general. Johnson, similarly, wrote essays about writing biographies. And almost all of the periodical essayists wrote essays on the aims of their own essays, on the qualities and purposes of the good periodical essay and, invariably, of literature in general.

Another reason why the periodical essays contain literary criticism is that the essayists considered one of their principal purposes to be to educate the public - to improve its morals and its taste. Addison in the Spectator had written his series of nineteen essays on Paradise Lost so that his readers might better understand and appreciate it - that they might "see its beauties". The essayists considered themselves critics and they thought that the duty of "the man of taste" was to "expend his judgment in reforming the judgment and enlightening the understanding of [the public]".³²

The Trifler of the General Review, mentioned above, is the only periodical essay to which I have had access which has not been reprinted nor in any way described or discussed elsewhere. Because it is completely unknown and also because it is a typical periodical essay of the period, I shall describe it as an example of this type of literature and as an example of the way in which literary criticism is a part of the genre.

³²Critical Review, I (1756), p.227. Quoted by Edmund P. Dandridge, Literary Criticism in British Periodicals to the Mid-Eighteenth Century (A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1959).

The "Trifler", though certainly without the depth and solidity of the Rambler, which it follows immediately in time, and without the genius of the Spectator to "enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality" (#10), is yet quite an adequate periodical essay, certainly equal to parts of the World or the Connoisseur. Although only five numbers are extant, the length of these numbers, allowing the Trifler 112 pages altogether, gives the Trifler adequate space to display his ideas and ability.

In his introduction to his paper the Trifler places himself directly in the tradition of the Spectator when he withholds his name and abode and gives the impression that he will be an almost omnipresent viewer "of what is doing in the World" (p.37). He has "a Number of Correspondents . . . of the most busy and inquisitive Dispositions" who are to "pick up all Scraps of Wit, Humour and Learning, and to communicate every Thing that may affect the Publick, either in point of Amusement, Instruction or Interest" (p.38). The Trifler is at one with the Spectator in his purpose both to delight and to teach. In the same breath, so to speak, he mentions "Humour and Learning", "Amusement [and] Instruction". He hopes "to explode the Follies of Mankind and inculcate the Principles of good Sense and Virtue" (36). His interest in morals, like that of most of the writers of the century, is an interest in human psychology³³ more than in theology or philosophy. He intends to remark

³³Although psychology is not an eighteenth-century word, it is here given an eighteenth-century content. If morality can be defined as the impingement of theology (or philosophy) on human psychology, then a moralist must take both into account. What I am saying is that the eighteenth-century moralist is more interested in human psychology than in the theological or philosophical bases for morality, although these bases are presupposed.

"on the Humours and Inclinations of Mankind"; the observations of his various correspondents will "enable . . . [him] to trace the secret Springs of the Actions of the Great, and give proper Hints . . . of the Motives that have induc'd the Statesman or Writer to take those Steps which otherwise would be entirely unaccountable to the Generality of Mankind".

The Trifler's first essay, after his introductory remarks, makes use of a device which holds an important place in the Spectator tradition, that of the Club. He establishes his sophistication and powers of discrimination right away by declaring his low opinion generally of "such Meetings as these", but assures the reader that he "cannot help distinguishing this above any other that as yet has come to my Knowledge" (p.38). By his expressed desire to acquaint the reader with the "Characters and Abilities" of its members and perhaps to become a member himself, he obviously intends to make this club one of the important devices of his essays. And in fact he does use the club once again (in #4) within the five extant numbers.

The Trifler's attempt to make his essays both delightful and instructive is seen in this first essay, which is composed mainly of two speeches by two different members of the club. The first speech (pp.38-40) is a serious discussion of Pope's lines:

Thus God and Nature link'd the general Frame,
And bade Self-Love and Social be the same,

concluding with the affirmation: "'So that I think it is plain true Self-Love and Social are the same, the effect of both being Virtue, which is the only means to the Production of the general and private Good: as that alone is Happiness below.'" This morally instructive discussion

ends "for the conversation in this Society is not carried on merely for the sake of Dispute, but [for] mutual Pleasure"; therefore it is followed by the speech of a gentleman "many Years younger, and being of a much less Degree of Gravity" on "a Definition of Honour" (pp. 40-42). He quotes Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff and Butler's Sir Hudibras in his utterly ludicrous treatment of the subject, and by his reference also to Erasmus and the "Jewish Rabbins" and other "authorities", he ridicules the very form of the scholarly discussion or dispute.

Thus, the Trifler, by including an instructive speech and a humorous one, both built on pieces of literature, has attempted both to delight and to teach. But he has not achieved any unity between the two elements, for his moral instruction is not "enliven[ed] with Wit", nor is his wit "temper[ed] with Morality". Walter Graham states that the combination of morality and wit in the periodical essay, begun by Addison and Steele, gradually breaks down as the century progresses so that by 1750 the periodical essay is either instructive, like the Rambler, or delightful,³⁴ like the Connoisseur. If Graham's hypothesis is true, it is true only because no other author had quite the genius of Addison and Steele for achieving such a unity, not because other writers, like the Trifler, were not interested in such a combination.

In fact such a combination was seen not only as desirable but as somehow basic to each component. That is, what is truly moral is also delightful and what is truly delightful is also moral.³⁵ Such an

³⁴Graham, op. cit., p. 119

³⁵This theory, I believe, is basic to the literary criticism of the Spectator. Throughout its numbers morality is presented as basic to the nature of man and the world. In #523 Addison says: "No Thought is

aesthetic theory is hinted at in the Trifler's essay on the "art of Trifling" (#4, pp.211-213). After giving examples of men in formal situations, he says: " . . . they are under the Necessity of supporting so much assumed Dignity, that the real Man is not to be discovered; their Passions, natural propensions, even Abilities are concealed, and we can only discern their Figures, without being able to read their Minds" (p.212). Such situations, where a man cannot "Trifle", are not only devoid of enjoyment, but where the "real Man", with his "Passion [and] natural propensions" are absent, there is the possibility neither of art nor of those passions which are the springs of morality, for the Trifler concludes:

If then it is requisite to unbend the Mind to acquire an Ease of Manner, and Elegance of Habit, if we would indulge benevolent Sensations, and have our hearts glow for the human Species, it appears absolutely necessary that we should frequently join the Throng of Triflers, and share the Pleasure of unreserved Communications (p.213).

Thus, that which is pleasurable also causes "our Hearts [to] glow for the human Species". Also note how "elegance" follows "Ease" and how they both precede "benevolent Sensations". What is easy, or natural, is proper, or beautiful. Beauty is thus related to pleasure and morality at the point where they meet.

There is a strong hint in this essay, as seen in the quotation from it, of the goodness of the natural man and of his passions, which the role of literature is to uncover or to touch. Such a role is

beautiful which is not just and no Thought can be just which is not founded in Truth".

suggested by Addison earlier in the century,³⁶ but in the literary criticism of the 1750's the Trifler's position is a part of an increasing emphasis on the necessity of literature's touching the passions.³⁷

Just such an emphasis is seen in the Trifler's essay on epitaphs (#4, pp.221-223), and there, not so much in his arguments as in his examples. He argues that "nothing appears more absurd in this Kind of Writing, than Turns and Points of Wit" (222), and the examples he gives are indeed absurd, though their wit would, for the most part, come under Addison's classification of "false wit".³⁸ Even though he seems to set up straw men in his attack on wit, his example of the proper epitaph is so far from containing any semblance of true wit, that the effect of the essay is a denunciation of wit altogether. But not only does the Trifler denounce the use of wit - for example, by saying that this "Kind of Writing should be plain, simple, and solemn, without the least Pretensions to Wit" - he suggests by his examples that the epitaph, rather than appeal to the intellect, should appeal to the emotions. His favourite epitaph begins:

Reader pay thy Tribute here,
A Tear, a Rose, and then a Tear,

and then attempts to arouse the reader's emotions by setting before him the mother of this dead child, concluding with the couplet:

Keep [her] safely, sacred Tomb,
Till a Mother ask for Room.

³⁶In his essays on tragedy, especially Spectator #39, 40 and 548; in one of his essays on the pleasures of the imagination, #418; in #315, 345 and 369 on Paradise Lost, and in #85.

³⁷Discussed in Chapters II, III and IV.

³⁸See the Spectator, #58-62.

Whether or not the poem succeeds in genuinely touching the passions, it is apparent that the aim of the poem is to do so.

It is perhaps also significant that the Trifler uses the word "Pretensions" in connection with "Wit", suggesting that "Wit" is not natural or, rather, not a part of that natural (and good) man which literature at its best touches, or seeks to uncover and bring forth.

Immediately following his essay on epitaphs, and in remarkable contrast to the concluding epitaph, appears a long poem (about eighty lines, pp.223-224), "To Delia", which "is not inferior to most of the Pieces of Rhyme that are the Productions of the present Age" (223). It is "a poetic Epistle of the Elegiac Kind" and is composed in the language and images of the classical pastoral, replete with classical allusions and personifications --

. . . - No more
the 'enamell'd Plains
Where, born on Zephyr's Wings, sweet
Fragrance reigns, . . .

Even more remarkable than the contrast between this highly involved and intellectual, typical neoclassical elegy and the simple, sentimental epitaph is the fact that the Trifler does not note the contrast, but simply says immediately following the epitaph: "I cannot introduce at a more suitable Opportunity [this elegy]. . ."; thus he illustrates the ability of the mid-eighteenth-century literary critic to hold together seemingly contrasting critical theories (or at least theories which pull in opposite directions), as well as their practical expressions.

The Trifler's longest piece of literary criticism is an essay in this same number (#4, pp.225-231) which takes as its starting point a debate in his club on the comparative value of poetry and painting.

It is assumed throughout the essay that the role of both arts is to convey images to the mind of the reader or viewer. The Trifler begins by giving the views of those who spoke in behalf of painting:

. . . [I]ts Images give us a more sensible Idea than those of Poetry; the latter not having the immediate Conviction of the Organs of Sense to convey its Pieces to the Understanding; but being altogether dependent on the Powers of Knowledge and Reflection; for, if the Reader has not those perfect Ideas existing in his Mind as the Poet, he will not understand him; and, in Proportion as he has those Ideas, he will more or less comprehend and taste the Beauties of the Performance. (p.225)

The Trifler agrees that "the Knowledge of the Reader should be adequate to that of the Writer" but asserts that this requirement "holds good also in regard to Painting; as the Merits of a good Piece can never be truly relish'd, but by a Connoisseur in the Art." In his characterization of this connoisseur and in the following discussion of the judgment of poetry he states that both require "a powerful Retention of the Images conveyed to us by the Organs of Sense" (p.226), but that more is required of the reader of poetry, for: "Poetry also goes often so far beyond the common Appearance of Nature, that there is required a Retention not only of simple natural Images, but also a complex chain of Ideas dependent on, and consistent with, each other . . ." (p.226).

Although the Trifler does not say so, he implies by the remainder of his essay that where more is required, more is gained. He says, in conclusion to the debate of which he has given an account, that "Superiority must be allow'd to that which give us the most lively Images of Nature, and can make the most extravagant Ones of Imagination most relished and admired" (p.226). He then attempts to show through quotations of poetry with comment upon them that poetry can in fact meet this requirement. He takes his examples of "Landscape Poetry" from

Milton's descriptions of Paradise and examples of "personal Pourtrait" from Spenser, Milton and Shakespeare. Then, saying that poetry is found even "more superior in describing [Images] of the Imagination" (228), he again quotes from Paradise Lost, Milton's description of Death and then several passages of Spenser, including his description of Discord, and then Ovid's description of Envy which, he says, is "surpassed, in my Opinion, by our own Countryman Spenser", whose own description of Envy is quoted.

The Trifler concludes his essay by returning to what might be called further images of nature, the ones which, though he does not say so, he probably thinks are the most important ones for art to convey -- images of "the Passions of human Nature". These, he says, "when express'd by Painting . . . fall very short of that Idea we conceive of them, when given us with all the Advantages of Poetry". After quoting Milton's "Picture of Distress" of Adam and Eve after the Fall, the Trifler speaks of a passion which he calls "the daring Spirit", which his contemporaries would probably include under the term "Sublime",³⁹ and he give as an expression of this "Spirit" part of Satan's speech to his fellow angels in Paradise Lost, Book II -- as the climax and conclusion of his essay.

The Trifler's high regard for Milton is obvious from his many quotations from him, but he explicitly expresses this regard at one point when he says:

³⁹ See pp. 69-70, Chapter II.

I cannot leave this Passage [description of Death] without confessing, at the same Time, I think this the greatest, among all the truly great Instances, that this Poet has given of his possessing a poetical Genius superior to all the rest of Mankind. (p.228)

The "Trifler" contains other shorter essays of a literary critical nature, such as one "On Taste", which is really nothing more than a rather ill-natured complaint against the taste of the town by a struggling author, "A Man of Genius and Spirit, . . . [who] cannot flatter the illiterate Vanity of a puff'd Citizen; cringe to the Petulancy of a sharpening Bookseller; or truckle to the mortifying Insolence of a Playhouse Manager . . ." This essay is introduced as coming from a correspondent, as is another short essay, "On Ridicule", which defends the use of satire against what must have been, at least to the author's view, a quite widespread rejection of it. He opens by stating that in the present age "Ridicule [is] exploded as a Weapon dangerous to the Commonwealth" (328). He gives some of the history of the development of satire - mostly classical - and then quotes Pope in praise of it as a method for propagating virtue. He again quotes from Pope two more twelve-line passages and concludes with a quotation from Shakespeare.

This essay, not in what it speaks for but in what it argues against, is indicative, along with the essay on epitaphs, of a changing spirit that by the 1750's leans away from the wit and satire of the first decades of the century and toward a more sentimental or passionate literature. Perhaps also significant is the Trifler's choice of quotations in his essay on painting and poetry, most of which are by Milton and Spenser, concluded with Milton's Satan's "Daring Spirit".

However, even if satire is going out of fashion, as the Trifler's correspondent assumes, much of the content of the "Trifler" itself, in

keeping with the Spectator tradition, is of a satirical nature. One of the several poems printed in the "Trifler" is a satire, "by a correspondent", the "Adventures of Sir Sydrophe", which is an imitation of Butler's Hudibras in rhyme and rhythm as well as in its satire. In the Trifler's introduction of his club, already mentioned (p.16), the speech on "a Definition of Honour" is entirely satirical, and throughout the five issues most of the humorous pieces are satires, such as an account of a ridiculous conversation overheard in a coffee house (p.86), or "characters", as of Sir John Gaudy (pp.218-220), Miss Whisper (pp.139-141), or John Easy, Esq. (p.237-240), or shorter characters used as satirical illustrations in essays, as in an essay on work, the suggestion that "Beau Tinsell, who spends at least half a Day in Dressing, dress Dolls for the Toyshops" (p.240). Most of the Trifler's criticism of fashions and social behaviour, such as an essay on high heels (p.231), or one on insolence (pp.308-310), are written in a satirical vein, and even some of his essays on domestic situations become satirical, as does his description of two parallel households, the negative one being much longer and more interesting, becoming finally caricature (pp.141-144).

Many of the "Trifler's" essays and an even greater proportion of its correspondence deal with domestic problems, a practice which is directly in line with that of the periodical essays in the Spectator's tradition. If, however, it is possible for a trend to develop in only five numbers, it appears that the "Trifler" was abandoning its domestic interests, for, with one exception, all of the "Trifler's" domestic pieces appear in the first three shorter numbers (16 pages each), whereas the last two numbers (32 pages each) contain none, the difference being made up by a significant increase in the amount of poetry and

literary criticism. The "Trifler's" domestic pieces are of a wide variety, of which at least one is domestic only in its setting. It is a husband's complaint of his wife's "intemperate interest in controversy and politics", a subject common to the periodical essay as far back as the Tatler's upholsterer, numbers 155 and 232. There are other letters from complaining husbands, especially ones whose wives dominate them in certain areas, as in the education of the children (pp.84, 85). And then there are pieces of a more romantic interest, such as a letter concerning a despairing lover who vows suicide and then changes his mind (p.45), and an essay on the behaviour of women toward their suitors (p.133) and one on the study of women as the "true Astronomy" (pp.134-137). There is a letter narrating a husband's jealous murder of his wife (pp.46, 47), which leads to an essay on jealousy by the Trifler in his next number (pp.87-89). The only domestic piece appearing in the last two long numbers of the "Trifler" is a sentimental domestic tale of the usual unfortunate girl, deceived and seduced (pp.320-323). Other than the "characters" and incidents used as examples in the essays, this story is the only piece of prose fiction in the entire "Trifler". In this minute amount of fiction and in the total absence of the commonly found "oriental tale"⁴⁰ the "Trifler" differs from the Tatler and Spectator and even more so from the Rambler and the Adventurer, its near contemporaries.

Other than literary criticism, satire, and essays on domestic subjects, the "Trifler" contains essays on several topics of contemporary interest, such as the report of appearances of ghosts to the defendant in

⁴⁰See footnote #36 on p.120 of Chapter IV.

a popular murder trial, in which essay the Trifler takes the opportunity to quote Addison's Spectator essay on ghosts (pp.90-94). Other popular subjects on which the Trifler writes are: the problem of crime, for which he suggests reward as a remedy (pp.94-96), and the problem of the over-dressing of the lower classes, a subject handled by the "Trifler", as well as by the World and Connoisseur, in a manner offensive to twentieth century democratic sensibilities,⁴¹ although the essay itself is interesting and well written.

The poetry printed in the "Trifler", with the exception of an ode⁴² on the occasion of the birthday of the Prince of Wales (p.47), appears entirely in the last two long numbers. The elegy "To Delia" has already been mentioned, as has the 'Hudibrastic' satire. Other poems are: "To Amoret", from a correspondent, a seventytwo line plaintive pastoral love poem, in which the lover describes, in neo-classical clichés, how Amoret's "Absence wastes the drooping Swain" (pp.209-211); "Sinkin, a Fairy Tale . . . a pretty Imitation of Shakespear's Midsummer Night's Dream", a four page narrative in rhyming couplets (233-237); "The Contest", a dramatic pastoral, with five characters and nine scenes, obviously meant to be sung (pp.310-319); and "Ode to Fancy", a fortyfive

⁴¹The really great essayists, such as Addison and Johnson, manage to avoid a pettiness in their discussions of mores and manners of their time so that their remarks do not become offensive to another age.

⁴²The ode is not given a title but is introduced as an "Ode performed at Ranelagh, and written by Mr. Havard. The Musick by Dr. Boyce". It consists of three "Recitatives", each followed by an "Air", and concluding with a "Duetto".

line poem written "by the Author of the Address to Amoret in our last Number", and similar to it in style. The large amount of poetry in the last number is justified by the Trifler in his introduction to the nine-page dramatic pastoral when he tells the reader of "the agreeable Reception [of] the poetical Performances in our last . . . " (309). It is interesting to note that all of this poetry, except the Hudibrastic satire, uses the classical pastoral setting, characters, and imagery.

This description of the Trifler demonstrates how the author's literary critical ideas pervade the periodical essay. Literary criticism is found not only in the essays on literary subjects - such as the Trifler's essay on poetry and painting, or the one on satire, or the one on epitaphs - but in essays in which he discusses his own design, as in his introduction or in his essay on the art of trifling. Literature is also important where he wants to be didactic as well as when he wants to be humorous; and in some ways his ideas about literature pervade the whole body of essays and are seen in what he includes and in what he omits.

Another type of periodical publication important in the 1750's is the 'review', or the periodical consisting of book reviews. This type of periodical publication is of especial importance to this study because it actually had its beginnings during this period as well as because it is a type of periodical which is rich in literary criticism. The first review periodical to appear was the Monthly Review, founded by Ralph Griffiths in 1749. Reviews of a kind, however, had appeared in the essay periodicals from their beginnings, reviews that consisted of an examination of a piece of literature, more likely a piece of old or well-known

literature⁴³ aimed at increasing the reader's appreciation of it. Addison's essays on Paradise Lost in the Spectator - already mentioned - exemplify this type of review. Another type of review, however, grew out of the magazine. The original purpose of the magazine, as has been said, was to gather together important articles and essays from the pamphlets and newspapers and various other periodical publications appearing in a given month⁴⁴ and to reprint them, fully, or in part, or in a condensed form. By mid-century, however, the magazines were also printing parts of books or summaries of books, sometimes with critical comments.⁴⁵ These reviews were intended, of course, not so much to increase the reader's literary appreciation as to inform the reader as to what was being currently published and to give him the most important information or ideas contained in these current publications. Such was the purpose also of the type of publication which is the most obvious forerunner of the 'review', the periodical consisting of abstracts of learned works.⁴⁶

⁴³An important exception is Addison's review of Pope's Essay on Criticism, Spectator # 253.

⁴⁴Budgell's Bee attempted to do this on a weekly basis. The important, long-running magazines of this period - the Gentleman's, the London, and the Scots - were, however, monthly publications.

⁴⁵By mid-century the magazines were also printing large amounts of previously unpublished material.

⁴⁶Important in the history of this type of publication are two Huguenots who had worked on similar journals abroad, Jean Cornand de la Crose, whose History of Learning in 1691-1692 was the first of such publications in England, and Michael de la Roche, whose Memoirs of Literature carried on the tradition from 1711 to 1717. Other periodicals of this type were the Compleat Library (1692), the History of the Works of the Learned (1699-1711), and New Memoirs of Literature (1725). A historical sketch of the development of this type of periodical is given by Walter Graham, op. cit., Chapter VII, pp.196-226. An excellent account of the content of these journals, especially the critical content, is

The abstracts in these periodicals, however, were usually limited to scholarly works and were normally quite lengthy. They were not aimed at the general reading public in the way that the periodical essays and the magazines were.

The book reviewer of 1750, then, as influenced by the practice of the magazines and by that of the scholarly abstracts, was not so much a critic as a condenser. However, the idea of reviewer as critic developed in the 1750's. Alongside the Monthly Review, which ran through this entire period, there appeared the General Review in 1752 with its three parts, the Patriot and the Trifler, described above, and its book reviewer called, significantly, the Critic. Since the Critic is completely unknown and also because it affords an excellent example of book reviewing of this period, I shall give an account of its methods of reviewing in comparison to that of the Monthly Review - which, having come out at the same time, reviewed many of the same books - as an illustration of the usual method of book reviewing of the time, with which the reviews of the Literary Magazine (1756-1758) and the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review (1758) can be compared, and also with which the many reviews appearing in the London and Gentleman's Magazines throughout the period can be compared.

Much more formal than the Trifler, the Critic does not introduce himself or his task, but simply begins with his first review, called

given by Edmund P. Dandridge, Literary Criticisms in British Periodicals to the Mid-Eighteenth Century (A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1959), Chapter IX, pp.239-272. Edward A. Bloom also discusses these journals in "Labors of the Learned: Neoclassic Book Reviewing Aims and Techniques", Studies in Philology, 54(1957), 537-563.

"Article I" and numbers each review consecutively throughout the five numbers, in the manner of the Monthly Review. Also following the practice of the Monthly Review, he concludes each number with a list of other books published during the period. Some of these listed books are followed by comments - from two or three lines in length, up to one and a half pages. Similar comments in the Monthly Review are more uniformly short.

Some of the Critic's comments appear to be simply an effort to give the reader some idea of the contents beyond that given in the title - such as the comment: "However ludicrous the Title of this Pamphlet may appear, yet the rest of it is wrote in a serious Stile";⁴⁷ or after the title: "A Narrative of the Affair between Mr. Brown and the Inspector"⁴⁸ the explanation: "This pamphlet represents the Inspector as entirely the Agressor" Some of the longer comments in these listings appear to be short abstracts of the works, as is the one on Memoirs of the Life of William Henry Cranstoun, which consists of more than a page of summary combined with extracts (#4, pp.207, 208). Such also is the case with the last title in a list of ten foreign language titles in number one. The Critic translates the title A Decisive Stroke at Judaism and then summarizes the book, concluding with a long quotation translated into English. In neither of these instances nor in the two short comments quoted above does the Critic make any judgment. However, some of his other comments in these listings make judgments, such as: "This pamphlet consists of two exemplary Stories, but they are both told in so

⁴⁷Number 4, p.207, after the title "Beauty in Danger: Or an account of the new Distemper. . . ."

⁴⁸The Inspector was a periodical essay appearing in the London Daily Advertiser, see p.9.

homely a Manner, as shews the Author to be by no Means a fit Person to write Instruction for the Ladies",⁴⁹ or

This is a low and scandalous Vindication of the Bawdy Houses, against the late Act for rooting them out; in doing which, and in his Preface, the Author attempts, though very unfortunately, to be witty. He declares himself a Libertine, and we find he is such a one, as every Person of Sense must utterly condemn and detest.⁵⁰

The first judgment above is of style, and the second, one, much more severe, is a moral judgment; and throughout the Critic's review, although he obviously considers it his duty to make judgments on style and upon other aspects to be discussed further on, his more important judgments finally become moral ones.

The longest of the Critic's comments in the listings of Books is one on Christopher Smarts's Poems on Several Occasions and is illustrative of the typical review of a book approved by the Critic. The opening statement of the contents of the book includes a favourable judgment of it: "This author, whose Labours have, in a peculiar Manner, been employed for the Amusement of the Publick, has here furnish'd us with a Collection of his Poems, some of which are entirely new" (p.299). The review -- or comment -- consists entirely of a listing of the various pieces in the book, telling which are new and which "may be found in a late Magazine" (301)⁵¹ and which of Smart's works are not included which

⁴⁹#4, p.208, after the title "A Companion for the Unmarried Ladies".

⁵⁰#4, p.208, after the title "A Speech made in the Censorial Court of Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Monday June 6, 1752, concerning a late Act of Parliament". Alexander Drawcansir was the eidolon of Fielding's Covent Garden Journal; see above p.10

⁵¹Probably the Midwife; or, Old Woman's Magazine, 16 numbers, 1750-1753, according to the CREL.

the Critic thinks should have been. After the titles of pieces which the Critic thinks are of particular note, he frequently remarks something like the following: "This Ode has its peculiar Beauties, which the Reader may judge of by the following lines". Then ten lines are quoted. The Critic evidently believes that he has performed his duty by giving the reader some idea of the contents of the book, by judging it as worthwhile or not, and by pointing out particularly noteworthy parts. He does not really explain what the "peculiar Beauties" are of the particular lines quoted, or, in other words, he does not perform a critical analysis.

This review of Smart's Poems is not only typical of the Critic's favourable reviews, it is typical of the contemporary reviews in the Monthly Review, and, according to Bloom's discussion in his "Labors of the Learned . . ." (op. cit.) it is typical of eighteenth-century reviews in general. That such a review could typify an unfavourable review also is seen in several reviews in the Monthly Review of this same period. In a review of Middleton's works, the Monthly reviewer, after a short survey of the contents, remarks that "there are some things in them which (we are sorry to say) cannot easily be reconciled with candour, or perhaps with truth".⁵² Then supposedly in illustration he gives fourteen pages of quotation mixed with a minute amount of summary, with no explanation as to what it is in the work which he disapproves of. In another review - Hunter's Life of Tacitus - the Monthly reviewer does not even indicate disapproval in his introductory remarks, but by his choice of quotations

⁵² Monthly Review, Vol. Vi (May, 1752), p. 353

he shows that he thought the author condemned himself obviously enough.⁵³

However typical such a review - that is, the review that favours or condemns without examining the reasons - is of the contemporary Monthly Review or of eighteenth-century book reviewing in general,⁵⁴ it is not really typical of the Critic's unfavourable reviews. For example, William Law's The Way to Divine Knowledge ". . . preparatory to a new edition of the works of Jacob Behmen", which is soundly condemned by the Monthly Review prior to a long quotation from it whereby the reader may see for himself how foolish it is,⁵⁵ is discussed fully by the Critic in the General Review, so that the reader knows how, according to the Critic, the book is foolish and why it is ultimately immoral. Also, the Critic's many long quotations from Law encompass the very heart of Law's argument and give a fair account of it, while the Monthly Review's long quotation seems to have been chosen solely for its large amount of esoteric language, thus supporting the reviewer's accusation that it is incomprehensible. Because the Critic's review is a good one irrespective of its complete condemnation of Law's work, it affords an excellent view of entrenched neoclassic ideas on the defensive vis-a-vis the radical,

⁵³Since the "Critic" in the General Review gives an even longer review of this work, it is possible to see to some extent how the reviewer in the Monthly Review uses the most self-damning quotations.

⁵⁴Bloom's blanket condemnation of eighteenth-century book reviewing seems, to my limited knowledge, not quite just. He admits that the Critical Review, which began in 1756, is superior to the Monthly in this respect, and, of course, he did not know of the General Review's "Critic". However, the Literary Magazine (1756-1758), which Bloom must know, contains a number of good reviews.

⁵⁵Monthly Review, Vol. VII (July, 1752), pp. 49-52.

anti-rational mysticism of the forerunners of Romanticism, much of which sounds even today surprisingly psychologically sound and theologically modern. The Critic's literary critical principles expressed in this review as well as in others will be discussed in Chapter II.

Another example of how the Critic supports his judgment in an unfavourable review is his review of Thomas Hunter's Observations on Tacitus, a work given an unfavourable review, though quite obliquely (see p.32), by the Monthly Review. Here the Critic expresses his disapproval partly by a satirical tone, such as:

If Mr. Hunter had not, with such Strength of Reason, such Exuberance of Example, and Force of Eloquence, convinced us, we should hardly have imagin'd there was a Writer, in the whole Class of Authors, so culpable as Tacitus. If we can be now induc'd by any Consideration to value him, it must be on account of his administering the Reverend Animadverter an Opportunity of obliging the World with a Display of so many fine Talents as he has discovered in the Observations he has made on him (p.26).

This kind of satirical tone is quite common in the contemporary reviews of the Monthly Review as the method of showing disapproval. In this review, however, the Critic supports his judgment by frequent references to the opinions of other authorities and finally, after saying "But I would have Justice done the Character of Tacitus", by a "brief Abstract of what . . . Thomas Gordon,⁵⁶ the last English Translator of that Author, has said of him . . . "

The most complete piece of literary criticism to appear in the General Review is a critical analysis of Mason's Elfrida. However, this piece is not the Critic's review of Elfrida - though the Critic gives

⁵⁶Number 3, pp.125-127. The book is in two parts; the review of the first part appears in #1, the second in #3.

the biographical information for Elfrida⁵⁷ -- rather, it is the Critic's review of a critique of Elfrida, "Remarks on Mr. Mason's Elfrida, anonymous, a Pamphlet, Price one Shilling". The Critic obviously approves the critique completely: "This is a fine comment on a most beauteous Dramatic Poem: a Work that has done great Honour to its Author, and abundantly proves we are not inferior in Genius to those happy Times . . . " He gives five pages to a summary of the critique, including much quotation. By reviewing this critique the Critic produces a review of the poem superior to that of the Monthly Review, which reviews it in the usual manner, a statement of praise and then quotation from its preface and then from the poem proper. However, since Mason in his preface discusses some of his critical principles, even the review of Elfrida in the Monthly Review is superior from a literary critical point of view to most of the other reviews.

If the review began as a simple abstract composed of quotation and summary and proceeded to include perhaps some statement of judgment at the beginning or end, certainly at least some of the reviews of the Critic, particularly its unfavourable reviews, show an advance in the amount of real literary criticism present. The idea of review^{er} as critic, implied by the title of the General Review's "Critic", must have become more prominent during the decade, because in 1756 another review began, parallel to the Monthly Review, called, significantly, the Critical

⁵⁷"Elfrida was published by Mess. Knapton, a few Weeks ago. There have been three Impressions. The first in Quarto, Price half a Crown, which sold off in about a Fortnight. A second and third in Octavo, each at eighteen Pence. All in Form of Pamphlets" (#2, p.65).

Review (1756-1817),⁵⁸ which, according to Bloom (op. cit.) was somewhat superior in its methods to the Monthly Review; and in that same year the Literary Magazine, containing some very fine reviews, began its three-year run.

One reason why book reviewing as critical analysis was slow in developing was the idea that criticism is adverse criticism and is destructive rather than instructive. This kind of thinking about criticism is illustrated in the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review's opening statement of intention:

We shall give accounts of all books, but characters of very few, . . . leaving, in general, our readers to judge for themselves from fair but short extracts that we shall produce . . . We are very sensible of the great prejudice done to authors by dogmatical censure and the excesses of criticism, which ever have been and ever will be, prejudicial to genius and learning.⁵⁹

The magazine does intend to make some judgments, however, for the author goes on to say: " . . . publications that are calculated only for pick-pocket impositions on the world, we shall treat in a manner they deserve" (p.3).

⁵⁸I have not had access to the Critical Review. It has been the subject, however, of a number of studies: C. E. Jones, "Contributors to the Critical Review, 1756-1785", Modern Language Notes LVI (1946); C. E. Jones, "Poetry in the Critical Review", Modern Language Quarterly 9 (1948); C. E. Jones, "Dramatic Criticism in the Critical Review, 1756-1785", Modern Language Quarterly 20 (1959); R. D. Spector, "Attacks on the Critical Review in the Literary Magazine", Notes and Queries 205 (1960); P. J. Klukoff, "Smollett and the Critical Review - Criticism of the Novel, 1756-1763", Studies in Scottish Literature, IV (1967); P. J. Klukoff, "A Smollett Attribution in the Critical Review", Notes and Queries 210 (1965). See also 211 (1966), 212 (1967). D. Roper, "Smollett's four gentlemen: the First Contributors to the Critical Review", Review of English Studies X (1959); C. E. Jones, "The Critical Review's First Thirty Years (1756-85)", Notes and Queries 201 (1956).

The Critical Review was edited by Tobias Smollett during this period and later by Percival Stockdale.

⁵⁹#1, for Saturday, April 15, 1758, pp.2 and 3.

That there must have been much destructive criticism about, as is indicated by the above quotation, is reinforced in an article on criticism in the Literary Magazine which attacks "the Remarkers and Reviewers", saying that:

The method used by these people is, to run a Goose quill tinged with gall into the very heart of a writer, while two or more physicians are present to review the operation, not with the intent to see that the patient does not suffer too much, but on the contrary to add cruelty to torture.⁶⁰

However, the article, which is in the form of a letter from Oxford to the Literary Magazine, goes on to justify the role of the critic, praising the critics among the ancients, those of France of the last century "who always criticised like scholars and gentlemen", and finally those of England a few generations earlier. The article concludes with a long set of very good instructions for the book reviewer, beginning with the advice: "In order to fill up the page you should never tease your readers with the lassitude that must necessarily attend a prolixity of quotations" (p.30). Part of the instructions are for a kind of literary analysis derived from the practice of the earlier critics - particularly the ancients. But, of course, none of these critics were actually book reviewers - a fact which the writer does not state - so that his instructions are partly derived from the practice of contemporary book reviewers, but modified by the idea of the critic as one who sets forth rules - or critical principles - as Aristotle did. The letter writer himself actually sets forth some literary critical principles which he asks the Literary Magazine to use in its reviewing.

⁶⁰Vol. II, Number X (February 15, 1757), p.28.

Sometimes the reviewer in the Literary Magazine will digress during a review to speak of his own task as a reviewer, as he does in the review of "An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times, by the Author of the Essays on the Characteristics". After giving a brief account of the subject matter and warning the reader that some would naturally find it dry, he says:

Thus much we thought necessary to premise, that the reader should not expect a pleasure in this book which was not intended and which is foreign to the subject. This is the business of the critic on every composition that comes before him: to him it belongs to consider the nature of the subject, the kind of embellishments of which it is susceptible, and the scope of the writer.⁶¹

In the reviews by the General Review's "Critic", the only ones which actually contain literary analysis are the unfavourable reviews, in which the reviewer explains what he disapproves of, and why. The Literary Magazine also contains many unfavourable reviews which are detailed in their critical analysis. One of these - very rich in literary critical ideas - is a review of Edmund Burke's A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. The reviewer disagrees with the author on almost every point and he very carefully states the author's position and very patiently argues his own. It is a really very thoughtful review, concluding with this statement: "Upon the whole, though we think the author of this piece mistaken in his fundamental principles, and also in his deductions from them; yet we must say, we have read his book with pleasure".⁶² The reviewer then explains why and

⁶¹Number XII (April 15, 1757), p.126

⁶²Number XIII (May 15, 1757), p.189

recommends the book to his readers. Although many unfavourable reviews do not conclude with recommendations - as this one does - there are very few books which are handled disrespectfully or with sarcasm, as was a common practice of the Monthly Review.

The Literary Magazine contains not only unfavourable reviews which are detailed in their analysis, but also favourable reviews in which the works are just as fully analyzed. One of the most excellent of these is a review of "an Essay on the writings and genius of Pope".⁶³ The reviewer opens with the usual statement as to what the work is. "This is a very curious and entertaining miscellany of critical remarks and literary history The facts which he mentions, though they are seldom anecdotes in a rigorous sense, are often such as are very little known, and such as will delight more readers than naked criticism" (p.35). He then goes through the work with the usual summary and quotation. But at many points he enters into discussion with the author; he disagrees and gives reasons; or he agrees and gives further evidence; or he simply adds a thought of his own. For example, at one point when the author says that he prefers an image of Theocritus to one of Pope, the reviewer discusses fully the connotations of both images and concludes that he cannot see that either is superior to the other. At another place the reviewer says:

He [the author] mentions, with great regard, Pope's ode on Solitude, written when he was but twelve years old, but omits to mention the poem on Silence, composed, I think, as early, with much greater elegance of diction, music of numbers, extent of observation, and force of thought. If he had happened to think on Baillet's chapter of Enfans celebres, he might have made, on this occasion, a very entertaining dissertation on early excellence (p.36).

⁶³Vol. I, Number I, (May, 1756), pp.35-38.

Where the reviewer so freely includes his own critical ideas in the review - as when he says, "We shall pass . . . to a piece of more importance, the epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, which may justly be regarded as one of the works on which the reputation of Pope will stand in future times" (p.38) and then explains why - and when the reviewer makes a real literary analysis of a work, then the review naturally becomes an excellent source of literary criticism.

However, there is another reason why the reviews of the 1750's are a good source of literary criticism, and that reason is that what they review is frequently of literary critical relevance - as the "Essay on the writings and genius of Pope" just mentioned, or the General Review's Critic's review of Law's introduction to Jacob Behmen, or of the critique of Mason's Elfrida, or the Monthly Review's review of Mason's preface to Elfrida. The Literary Magazine contains a review of David Hume's Four Dissertations, with an especially full summary with quotations and critical comments on the essays on the passions, on tragedy, and on taste. The Literary Magazine also contains reviews of "Letters concerning Taste" and of the "Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" already mentioned, among many others of literary interest.

Another type of review common in the 1750's which is a good source of literary criticism is the play review. Although the review periodical may include reviews of plays - the Literary Magazine reviews "Douglas, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden"⁶⁴ among others - the play review is generally considered a less

⁶⁴Vol. II (#12, April 15, 1757), pp.136-141..

scholarly, more popular type of review, and thus a larger proportion of the reviews in the popular magazines are play reviews. The London and Gentleman's Magazines contain play reviews in almost every number, and the only kind of review to appear in the Ladies Magazine (1749-1753) is the play review.

Whereas many reviewers purposefully omitted any criticism from their reviews of non-dramatic works, plays were never considered as exempt from criticism. In the introduction of the Weekly Magazine and Literary Review just after the statement that it would leave "our readers to judge books for themselves from fair extracts that we shall produce" (quoted above, p.36), the writer speaks of the theatre as a most proper area for criticism by the magazine:

As the Theatre is become a darling of the times, and indeed ought to be considered as the most rational of all public entertainments, we shall, during the season of exhibition, be frequent and ample in our animadversions thereon . . . This is part of our design that we shall endeavour to execute with becoming spirit, freedom and candour; being resolved, in the public behalf, to be neither sparing of our commendation or reproof on whatever we observe to be deserving of them.⁶⁵

Although much of the criticism in play reviews is not of a literary critical nature, a surprising amount of literary criticism does appear in these reviews, if not in the words of the reviewers, then in the words of the prologues or epilogues to the plays, which are almost inevitably quoted in such reviews. Quite frequently the author of a play will use his prologue or epilogue to explain or justify his work and consequently will include in them some of his literary critical ideas.

⁶⁵#1 for Saturday, April 15, 1758, p.3.

For example, the prologue "to the last New Tragedy, entitled the Roman Father, now acting, with great Applause, at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane" contains the following lines as quoted in the Ladies Magazine:

Our Bard has play'd a most adventurous Part
And turn'd upon himself the Critic's Art:
Stripp'd each luxuriant Plume from Fancy's Wings,
And torn up Similes like Vulgar Things.
Nay even each Moral, Sentimental, Stroke,
Where not the character but Poet spoke,
He lopp'd, as foreign to his chaste Design,
Nor spar'd an useless tho' a golden Line.⁶⁶

Even where no play review is given, the prologues and epilogues of the current plays are almost always printed in the poetry sections of the London, Gentleman's, Ladies and Literary Magazines.

The poetry sections of these magazines are themselves sources of literary criticism aside from the prologues and epilogues of plays; for evidently aspiring poets were frequently interested in literary criticism, and literary criticism was certainly considered a suitable subject for poetry, with Pope's Essay on Criticism always prominently in view.⁶⁷ The Ladies Magazine, for example, which contains no book reviews at all, except some extracts, contains a long poem "On the incomparable History of Tom Jones" which is a fairly complete statement of neoclassical literary critical principles applied to Tom Jones in panegyric fashion.

It may be said in summary that of the large number of periodical publications which appeared in the decade 1749-1759, a great many contain literary criticism. Of especial interest are the periodical essays and

⁶⁶Vol. I, #9 (March 10, 1750), p.140.

⁶⁷The Essay on Criticism is frequently quoted in the periodical literature throughout this period.

the reviews. Periodical essays, which had begun to appear earlier in the century, not only appeared as separate publications - essay periodicals - but were also published in newspapers and journals and reprinted in newspapers and magazines. Review periodicals had their beginnings in this decade and rapidly developed in both numbers and review methods. Book and play reviews also appeared widely in the magazines. Contributing to the richness of the literary scene is the fact that many of the prominent authors of the century were involved in the periodical publications of this decade.

A study of the literary criticism in these periodicals is interesting not only because so much of it appears and because the major authors of the period wrote for the periodicals, but also because new developments in literature, related particularly to the development of the novel and of biography, were occurring which either needed critical justification or reflected changes in literary critical ideas. The purpose of this thesis is to present the literary critical ideas which appear in the periodicals (especially those periodicals to which I have had access and which are not widely available - though these will be examined within the larger context) and to examine them in the light of neoclassical criticism, especially that set forth by Addison in the Spectator, for any changes. Although there are few literary critical ideas presented during this period which were recognized as being new at the time, significant changes in emphasis were taking place, and these will now be set forth and examined.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CRITICAL PRINCIPLES EXPRESSED IN BOOK REVIEWING AND IN REVIEWS OF PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

The underlying literary critical question is this: what makes a literary work valuable? Inseparable from this question of what makes a work valuable is the question of what works are valuable.¹ Related to the question of the value of a work, though not identical with it, is the question of the importance of a work. A reviewer may judge a work to be of little or no value, but that he should review it at all indicates that he sees it as in some sense important. Therefore, when one examines the literary critical principles of a book reviewer, the question of the kinds of books he reviews is of interest as having some bearing on his criteria of judgment.

The General Review's "Critic" contains for the most part reviews of books related to religion,² philosophy,³ and literature and learning;⁴

¹It is not likely that the critic first decides upon his principles of judgment and then applies them to a work in order to decide its value. Neither can literary critical principles be seen solely as rationalizations by the critic to justify his decision that a work is or is not of value. Although some critics may follow either of these practices, for the most part the two activities are inseparable, if not simultaneous.

²Nine works in all: Middleton's Works, Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, a pamphlet on the Uses of External Religion, Walter Hodge's The Christian Plan Exhibited in the Interpretation of Elohim, A Treatise of Infallibility, John Kennedy's A New Method of Stating and Explaining The Scripture Chronology, William Law's The Way to Divine Knowledge, John Jackson's Chronological Antiquities.

although there is one on mathematics, one on geography, and one on political theory.⁵ This exclusively humanistic interest of the "Critic" contrasts with that of the Monthly Review which, although it reviews most of these works, includes also a number of reviews of scientific works, particularly works of medical interest. It is significant that the Monthly Review emphasizes medical works⁶ in that these are scientific works with most obviously valuable practical applications. The Monthly Review, along with most of the other magazines and reviews of the period, is suspicious of the validity of the gathering of knowledge that is not open for validation by everyone of intelligence and education. These suspicions are illustrated by a review in the Monthly Review of a set of essays written on observations made with the use of a microscope.⁷ The reviewer treats the author in a manner similar to the way the virtuoso is treated in periodical essays from the Tatler⁸ through the Rambler:⁹ he

³Bolingbroke, Reflections Concerning Inate Moral Principles.

⁴Mason's Elfrida, Hunter's Tacitus, and a new French encyclopaedia.

⁵John Nourse, Select Exercises for Young Proficients in Mathematics; Joseph Robson, An Account of Six Years Residence at Hudson's Bay; Thomas Pownall, The Principles of Polity.

⁶In its catalogue for the month it has a section entitled "Medical", along with one entitled "Miscellaneous" and one "Controversial".

⁷Monthly Review, VII (July, 1752), 62-65. "Essays in natural history and philosophy. Containing a series of discoveries, by the assistance of microscopes. By John Hill, M.D."

⁸#216 by Addison. Much study of a small area of nature is "apt to alienate us too much from knowledge of the world and to make us serious upon trifles Studies of nature should be the diversions . . . , amusements of life".

⁹Numbers 82, 83 and 177.

is one who foolishly spends his life collecting information or pursuing knowledge that is irrelevant to life. But the author is criticized on other grounds also: the reviewer, or any other reader of this author's work, cannot really know whether or not what the author says is true. It is obvious that the reviewer of the Monthly Review (like most men of the eighteenth century) cannot conceive of the idea that a man cannot know and understand everything that is knowable and understandable. The reviewer reviews books in every area of knowledge with the confidence that he can understand them all and adequately judge their truth. Thus, when he cannot judge the truth of the observations made with a microscope, he wonders if knowledge is valid that cannot be universally validated.

There are numerous articles, pieces of books, and reviews of books in the Gentleman's, London, and Literary Magazines of scientific interest. Works dealing with special problems of the decade appear frequently -- works on diseases of horned cattle and on scurvy and other diseases of sailors.¹⁰ There were also works on such subjects as methods of bleaching¹¹ or "Rational and easy methods to purify the Air, and regulate its heat in Melon Frames and hot Green-houses";¹² there is an article introducing the potato as a good food in place of bread, since

¹⁰One notable work on scurvy, reviewed fully by the Literary Magazine, II (June 15, 1757), 233-237, was "A Treatise of the Scurvey . . . together with a critical and chronological view of what has been published on the subject. The second edition, with additions. By James Lind, M.D."

¹¹"Experiments on Bleaching" by Francis Home, M.D. in the Literary Magazine, I (June 15, 1756), 136-141.

¹²By Stephen Hales, Literary Magazine, II (May 15, 1757), 191.

there is a "distress for want of corn", including directions for planting, growing and storing them.¹³ Like these, almost all of the scientific works are of immediate practical value and contain truths that can be universally validated.

The Literary Magazine, however, while taking generally the same attitude toward scientific works as the others, is cautiously respectful of the virtuoso. In a review of "The History of the Royal Society of London, for the improving of natural Knowledge . . . as a Supplement to the Philosophical Transactions. By Thomas Birch"¹⁴ the reviewer says, after an introductory description:

I am yet far from intending to represent this work as useless. Many particularities are of importance to one man, though they appear trifling to another, and it is always more safe to admit copiousness than to affect brevity. Many informations will be afforded by this book to the biographer . . .¹⁵

Aside from a cautious withholding of judgment from what may not be of any use, the quotation indicates a genuine respect for facts and an interest in biography, both of which are emphases which have been growing during the century.¹⁵ One might say that earlier the universal overshadowed

¹³Literary Magazine, II (May 15, 1757), 202.

¹⁴Reviewed by Samuel Johnson, according to Edward A. Bloom, Samuel Johnson in Grub Street, (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p.267.

¹⁵There are many instances of this respect for facts in the reviews of this period. In the review in the Literary Magazine on bleaching (see p.46) the reviewer says: "His measures are not always determinate, he mentions too frequently spoonfuls, and tea-spoonfuls, by which the reader cannot be very nicely informed of the quantity intended. The error indeed cannot be great in these cases, nor of great importance, but accuracy is always desirable" (p.139).

any interest in particularities, in science as well as in biography, but that by the 1750's, although the idea of universality was in no way diminished, the particularities, in which the universal is expressed, receive greater attention. This emphasis is especially evident in Samuel Johnson's interest in factual accuracy in general, and when related to biography this factual accuracy is no less important even though the value of the biography for Johnson is its expression of universal truth (see below, p.116).

The General Review is unlike the other magazines and reviews in that it reviews no scientific works; it also differs from them in that it has no reviews of biography or fiction. The Ladies Magazine (1749-1753), which contains no real book reviews, as has already been stated (p.41), includes long extracts from biographies and/or works of fiction in every number. In the first number alone are a voyage tale, "The Generous Slave" (p.4), and two biographies, one of a rather famous man executed for political reasons¹⁶ and one of an infamous criminal, "Life and Dying Confessions of Amy Hutchinson". The latter type of biography appears in every number along with a generous amount of fiction, frequently sentimental domestic tales. The Gentleman's and London Magazines also contain a large amount of biography and some fiction, though not nearly so much as does the Ladies Magazine; and the Literary Magazine reviews both types of literature.

The omission of biography and fiction and scientific works from the General Review's "Critic" section probably indicates, for one thing,

¹⁶"Account of the unfortunate Bosavern Penlez", p.7.

that the "Critic" is more interested in a learned than a popular audience.¹⁷ (The Ladies Magazine, with its massive amounts of fiction and biography, by the very fact that it is for females, is not aimed at a learned audience). The fact that the Critic emphasizes the humanities in his choice of books to review, omitting both science and medicine,¹⁸ is also perhaps indicative of certain principles upon which his literary judgments are based. He is conservative, believing that value and truth are more likely to be found in man's past learning than in new discoveries. A scepticism of entirely new discoveries or interpretations is apparent throughout his less favourable reviews. His chief grounds for criticizing Hunter's Observations on Tacitus is that Hunter seems to discover in Tacitus that which has not before been seen. He says with heavy irony after a discussion of Hunter's accusation of Tacitus for vanity: That no one has ever noticed this before "proves the Clergyman Hunter to have more Sagacity than many of his Forerunners in Criticism . . . " (p.24). Similarly, he casts doubt on John Kennedy's A New Method of Study and Explaining the Scripture Chronology, upon Mosaic Astronomical Principles, Mediums and Data, as Laid down in the Pentateuch

¹⁷The "Critic" does make certain concessions to popular taste, however. After the first number, in which are listed ten foreign language titles, foreign listings no longer appear but, even more significantly, the listings include such popular works as biographies of criminals with summaries and quotations and no adverse criticism; works such as The Secret History of Miss Blandy, or Memoirs of the Life of William Henry Cranstoun, both of which got nothing from the Monthly Review but the comment: " . . . contains nothing worth notice, or that may be depended upon for truth". [VII(July, 1752), 74].

¹⁸His omission of biography and fiction will be discussed later.

by an ironic emphasis on the newness of his discovery.

As it is strange, that very many learned and judicious Men in several Ages diligently studied this Subject without coming to any Certainty, only erring or trifling all the while; so it is a great Blessing considering its vast Importance [irony on Importance]¹⁹ that our Author has in this our Day acquir'd a demonstrative Knowledge of it, that he has freed it of all Incertitude, and convey'd the Evidence of it indubitably to those who can but understand²⁰ this Book of his. A Confidence of his Success, and a Self-Approbation, are visible throughout the Work, nor is it less obvious how he heartily despises those who have laboured at it, in vain, before him.

Although the General Review's Critic is the most extreme reviewer of the period in his rejection of whatever appears to be new, throughout the period new interpretations are approached with considerable caution. In the Literary Magazine review of A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of the Sublime and Beautiful²¹ the reviewer says in his introduction: "But the love of novelty seems to have been a very leading principle in his mind, throughout his whole composition, and we fear that in endeavouring to advance, what was never said before him, he will find it his lot to have said what will not be adopted after him". The reviewer, however, does not - as does the General Review's Critic - use as his argument against the work the fact that the work expresses new ideas. Rather he proceeds to show just how and why the new ideas are wrong.

The General Review's "Critic", by his omission of scientific work and by his scepticism of new interpretations in his reviews, is

¹⁹Here again is the condemnation of the virtuoso, whose work is irrelevant.

²⁰And here it is hinted again that a work is not valid that cannot be universally understood.

²¹II (May 15, 1757), 182-189.

perhaps the most conservative reviewer of the period. His underlying critical principles are not basically different for the most part, however, from those held by other critics of the period; at least they are not basically different from those given allegiance to by the other critics of the period.

One of the reviews which sets forth most completely some of the "Critic's" basic beliefs is his review of Law's The Way to Divine Knowledge (mentioned on p.33 along with the review by the Monthly Review). The most disturbing thing to the "Critic" in the whole of Law's works is his treatment of reason. The "Critic" says: "Reason is commonly regarded as the superior Privilege and Ornament of human Nature. But . . . Mr. Law considers it very contemptuously". The fact that the "Critic" presents his own firmly held belief as "commonly regarded", with no further defence of it, is a further expression of his perception of truth as being a present distillation of past knowledge and experience. This typical neoclassical attitude is closely related to a belief in the unity and universality of truth. As Addison expressed it in his essay on Chevy-Chase²² (an old ballad which has been "universally tasted and approved by a Multitude"), "Human Nature is the same in all reasonable creatures". Reason is thus common sense. Since common sense is universal (by definition) then for Addison no true idea is every really new, but has been thought before by human beings as reasonable as we. He says in his essay on Pope's Essay on Criticism:

It is impossible, for us who live in the later Ages of the World, to make Observations in Criticism, Morality, or any

²²Spectator, #70.

Art or Science, which have not been touched upon by others.
We have little left to us, but to represent the common
Sense [my underlining] of Mankind in more strong, more
beautiful, or more uncommon Lights . . . 23

The belief in the universality of truth expressed by Addison and other neoclassical writers and by our "Critic" in the General Review is not only related to the idea that there can be no new truth, but it is also closely related - as seen in the quotation from Addison - to common sense, to reason.

Thus the Critic would see Law's contemptuous treatment of reason as such an obvious undermining of truth that, in order to expose the utter folly of Law's work, the Critic need only point out that Law does in fact attack reason. After an introductory condemnation of the work as not religiously edifying, he states that Law says that "there is somewhat to be awakened in Man by this Gospel, much deeper than Reason"²⁴ and he underlines "much deeper than Reason" as if pointing to the place where Law obviously goes wrong. Amidst several pages of summary and quotation he says: "Mr. Law cannot bear any connexion of Reason with Christianity" (p.276), and again: "Reason, he says, is the vain Idol of modern Christianity" (p.280), and again: "The Author enters on this Part of his Undertaking with a fresh Declamation against Reason" (p.286). At the same time that the Critic points out Law's attack on reason he also constantly states how unreasonable, how nonsensical²⁵ Law's arguments are:

²³Spectator, #253

²⁴Page 274; he is not quoting Law here.

²⁵This, in fact, is the Monthly Review's only attack on Law, that

But instead of a plain Account of the Matter [of what Christianity is] which everyone may understand, this Gentleman, who seems to have an Antipathy to plain Accounts, envelops every Thing relating to it with Mystery (p.273).

What an amazing Expression is this! What unintelligible Jargon! Done in and by that Spirit (p.275).

Here, I say again, is a Description of Religion, if such a Rant can be fairly termed a Description, which no man in his Senses can tell what to make of (p.276).

In truth it is hard to form any Idea of such a Religion as he defines, a Self-evident Growth of Nature and Life within us (p.286).

When Reason is against a Man, no Wonder the Man is against Reason (p.282).

The idea which the "Critic" finds most nonsensical and perhaps most disturbing is Law's idea that knowing comes by means of feeling, intuiting, rather than by reason. The "Critic" points out that Law is against using reason for the "converting of Infidels". A part of his argument concerns the doctrine of original sin. The "Critic" says: "The Fall of Man . . . is suppos'd to have been reveal'd by God to Moses. . . . But Mr. Law is against any Recourse to the sacred Historian for the Knowledge or Proof of this interesting Fact". (That the "Critic" can refer to the fall as an "interesting Fact" is, of course, indicative of just that kind of emotional detachment that Law is denouncing!) Instead, Law appeals to an intuition or self-knowledge. "There are, he pleads, in our present Nature and Condition, internal and more demonstrative, Evidences thereof. These are abundantly, and only, sufficient

the work is nonsense. And the extract following, containing some of Law's most esoteric language, is set forth as proof.

to convince the most resolved Infidel, of this Melancholy Truth" (p.278). That Law's appeal to feeling or intuition is the focal part of the "Critic's" objections is seen in his statement (quoted above): "In truth it is hard to form any Idea of such a Religion as he defines, a Self-evident Growth of Nature and Life within us" (p.286). And he points to the word Self-evident as the key to the offence:

He [Law] lays a great stress on the word Self-evident, and expresses himself in such Terms as would incline one to think, he placed all Reality in our self-evident Perceptions; in short, he speaks, as if there were no God, Devil, Heaven, or Hell, but what existed in our Minds. I would charitably suppose he does not really intertain so wild an Opinion, but his Language has too much the Appearance of it (p.286).

Although the "Critic" does not discuss Law's idea of the Will, he quotes Law on the will among the examples he gives from "several Pages filled with this strange Language, in which the most extravagant Flights of the primitive Quakers are equalled, or rather very far outdone" (p.284). Although he does not say so, it is likely that he believes that Law gives to the will (as he does to intuition) what rightfully belongs to reason. He quotes Law as saying: " 'The Seed of every Thing that can grow in us, is our Will . . . it is the only Workman in Nature; every Thing is its Work . . . ' " (p.284).

The "Critic's" extremely negative reaction to Law is possibly the reaction of a rigid neoclassicism on the defensive rather than an absolutely natural neoclassical response, for the neoclassicism of Pope and Addison had in it seeds of developments perceptible in the periodical literature of the 1750's which were not seen, by those involved, to be out of line with earlier neoclassical ideas. An example of this kind of development is the Trifler's essay on epitaphs (see above, p.19). Much of the periodical literature and criticism of the 1750's assumes that the

chief role of literature is to touch the passions because the passions are the springs of morality. And, of course, the idea that the passions are springs of morality is certainly present in the earlier neoclassicist literature, as in Addison's literary criticism, in such places as his discussion of tragedy which, he says, is the noblest sort of literature because of the passions it arouses, which make it the most moral entertainment,²⁶ or in his essays on Paradise Lost when he praises its beauties "which are designed to raise the Passions of Divine Love and Religious Fear".²⁷

Although the idea of divine love as a passion or of morality as springing from the passions is not far removed from Law's idea of religious knowledge as being a matter of intuition or feeling rather than of reason, Law seems to be almost asking for rejection by the typical thinkers of his day by his direct attack on reason as a means to Truth. As was said above (p.51), for the neoclassical thinker reason, frequently called common sense, is directly related to the universality of Truth, a principle underlying neoclassicism. Law, however, affirmed the universality of truth as strongly as does the neoclassicist. He says that "the Gospel is 'a Manifestation of an essential, inherent, real Life and Death in every Son of Adam . . . ' " (p.273). This statement of universalism, however, because it bypasses the structures of reason and appropriates the truth immediately by feeling, is, the "Critic" says, "enveloped with Mystery". Mystery seems to be an opposite of reason for the "Critic";

²⁶Spectator, numbers 39, 40, 548.

²⁷Spectator, number 315.

it hides the Truth rather than exposes it.

It is here at the point of Law's language and tone that another of the "Critic's" objections lies. And this objection is very closely related to the "Critic's" understanding of the function of literature and of the responsibility of the writer. He complains that Law "exhibits Religion in such a Dress, as must rather terrify and amaze the Weak, must rather excite the Contempt and Aversion of the Licentious, than allure, instruct, or edify any" (p.273). And, of course, to allure, or delight, and to instruct or edify is for the neoclassicist the main responsibility of literature. Addison and Steele not only take this standard as their own in their periodical essays,²⁸ but they apply it to all the literature which they discuss.²⁹ The "Trifler" also follows this standard (see above, p.15) and, of course, as was pointed out on pages 17-18, the idea of "allurement" is not simply of delight as a sugar coating for the pill of instruction, for the two are seen to be inherently related; Addison said in the Spectator #523: "No Thought is beautiful which is not just and no Thought can be just which is not founded in Truth".

Thus, for Law to turn his back on both allurement and instruction by his tone and language is seen by the "Critic" as an abdication of the writer's role. The extremity of Law's tone, which the "Critic" would see as almost an attack upon the reader rather than an attempt to allure him,

²⁸Spectator, nos. 10, 124, 179, 445.

²⁹Spectator, no. 65 (the play, Sir Foplin Flutter), no.270 (Fletcher's Scornful Lady), no.266 (Fletcher's Humorous Lieutenant), no.446 (on comedy), no.35 (on humour), no.39 (on tragedy, Otway's Venice Preserved), nos. 40 and 548 (on tragedy), no.369 (on Paradise Lost), and the list could go on and on.

is seen in Law's statement that Jacob Behmen, whose work he is introducing, "prohibits the Use of his Book . . . (1) to such as are not in an earnest Purpose on the Way to the New Birth; . . . and (2) to the Men of Reason, who give themselves up to the Light of Reason, as the true Touchstone of divine Truth".

But not only does Law attack his readers rather than allure them, he does not really instruct them, according to the "Critic". The "Critic" says: "But instead of a plain Account of this Matter, which everyone may understand, this Gentleman, who seems to have an antipathy to plain Accounts, envelops every Thing relating to it with Mystery" (quoted above, p.53). Rather than appealing to his reader's common sense, which is the neoclassical idea of instruction, he appeals to the reader's understanding by way of feeling or intuition, and the "Critic" immediately labels this as either mysterious or non-sense, two words used synonymously by the "Critic", and two words farthest removed from the "Critic's" idea of what is instructive.

Law is, in the final analysis, asking the reader to look into himself for his knowledge rather than out to the world to the received tradition. The "Critic", perhaps in recognition of this, sees Law's work as finally immoral ("Cant and Bombast may be innocent" but this is "of so wicked a Nature . . . "; or he asks a rhetorical question: Is Mr. Law "a vain Babbler, or, a Blasphemer?" p.275). Although he condemns Law's rejection of reason and complains of Law's nonsense and mysteriousness, he accuses Law of wickedness because, he says, in Law's work "a Foundation is laid of perpetual Disquietude". He sees the received tradition as offering a security which is destroyed when a man must look into himself for his saving knowledge.

As was stated before, there were developments in the eighteenth century, evident in the periodical literature of the 1750's, which were related to ideas not far removed from some of Law's beliefs, though much less extremely stated, which were not seen as departures from the neo-classical norm. Two of these developments are those of prose fiction and biography (to be discussed later), and it is perhaps significant that both the "Critic" and the "Trifler" ignore these genres; the "Critic" does not review any fiction or biography and, as was pointed out earlier (p.25) the "Trifler" differs most from the periodical essays of its kind in the minute amount of fiction it includes - only one story, and no biography, unless that one story can be called a biography. The General Review's lack of consideration of fiction and biography might possibly reflect the kind of conservatism evident in the "Critic's" choice of books reviewed (see above, p.49; all humanistic, no science and medicine) and especially in the philosophical and critical principles expressed in the review just considered.³⁰

Besides the review of Law's work just discussed, there are several other reviews of philosophical works during this decade that are important in setting forth principles which are basic to literary criticism. One of these is the review of "Four Dissertations by David Hume" in the Literary Magazine.³¹ The reviewer expresses disappointment with Hume's essay on taste because he "expected that a writer of his philosophical turn and close way of thinking, would have endeavoured at

³⁰It is also possible that the General Review's conservatism was at least partially responsible for its failure, if indeed it did fail. See p.2 and footnote 6, Chapter I.

³¹II (February 15, 1757), 32-36.

setting some fixed and immutable standard, instead of subscribing to the proverb, that there is no disputing about tastes" (p.35). This disappointment of the reviewer reflects his belief not only in the desirability, but in the possibility of such a standard. The reviewer goes on to say: "Surely a criterion of beauty might be established to decide between objects that are approximate as well as those that are widely distant: fixed principles of right and wrong, we should think, may be settled in literature as well as religion" (p.35). The reviewer does not, however, attempt to set forth any standard of good taste, but he again expresses the desire for such a standard, even more explicitly, in his review of "Letters concerning Taste, by the author of the life of Socrates".³²

. . . [I]t is natural for people, when they see this performance advertised, to expect to have a standard of taste fixed and determined; the reasons why certain objects offered to our imagination, either in nature or in poetry, should have a pleasing effect, or else should excite a disagreeable impression, explained and made easy, and rules might have been laid down for the acquisition of a good taste, or the correcting a vitiated one. Little of this sort is done (p.134).

Although the author, like Hume, does not set any standards or lay down any rules, he does at least define taste to the satisfaction of the reviewer, even though the author does not, according to the reviewer, "offer anything new on this subject" (p.135). The author says that a good taste

is that instantaneous glow of pleasure which thrills through our whole frame, and seizes upon the applause of the heart, before the intellectual power, reason, can descend from the throne of the mind to ratify its approbation, either when we receive into the soul beautiful images through the organs of bodily senses or the decorum of an amiable character thro' the faculties of moral perception; or when we recall, by the

³² Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 134, 135. The page numbers 134 and 135 are repeated. This review appears on the first pages numbered 134 and 135.

imitative art, both of them through the intermediate power of the imagination.

In another place the author defines good taste again as " 'an instantaneous feeling of what is beautiful' ". The longer definition, above, of good taste contains an implied definition of good literature as it affects the man of good taste: it first gives him a sensation of pleasure before his reason can tell him that it is good; i.e., the literature appeals to his feeling before it appeals to his reason. Also implied is that this feeling is both aesthetic and moral. It is ~~aesthetic~~ when related to beautiful images and moral when related to good actions; but when related to literature "through the intermediate power of the imagination", this good taste is both moral and aesthetic. Of course, as the reviewer complains, the definition begs the question of what good taste is by defining it in terms of its reaction to good literature or to anything already defined as good and beautiful. What the reviewer finds missing, of course, both in this work and in Hume's, is not a definition of taste, but a definition of what is good or beautiful.

Although the reviewer is disappointed that Hume did not attempt to set "some fix'd immutable standard" of good taste, he is pleased with a passage of Hume "concerning the different degrees of fineness in our perceptions" (p.35), and in fact what Hume calls fineness of perception is hardly distinguishable from good taste. At one point in this discussion Hume even uses the expression "delicacy of taste" and in another "delicacy of imagination", both synonymous with "fineness of perception". Hume says that "though it be certain that beauty and deformity, no more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment internal or external; it must be allowed that there are

certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings" (p.35). The man of delicate taste will have those particular feelings produced by those certain qualities even when they appear only in small amounts and are mixed with many other qualities. Hume gives for an example the story from Don Quixote of the wine tasters, one of whom said a certain wine tasted of leather, the other that it tasted of iron. When the cask was emptied, a key on a leather thong was found in the bottom. Hume says that to produce the general "rules of beauty . . . drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases and displeases, when present singly, and in high degree, or [to produce] avowed patterns of composition, is like finding the key with the leathern thong" (p.36). The taste of the wine tasters was equally delicate whether or not the cask was emptied, and similarly "though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged, the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted" (p.36). Hume then shows how the bad critic can be proved wrong by the use of the principles.

But when we show him [the bad critic] an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by example, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive nor feel its influence: he must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse.

Surely in this passage Hume indicates, in contradiction to his introductory statement, that there is "disputing about tastes", at least there is if "avowed principles of art" do exist, as Hume certainly seems to imply in the above quotation.

Both Hume and the author of the "Letters concerning Taste" are concerned with the psychology of taste rather than with the principles of art; however, they both assume that there are principles of art in the received tradition. It is possible that the reviewer, in his disappointment that these authors do not set forth standards, is less sure of the validity of the received tradition and feels the need for a restatement. He does, of course, completely accept the definition of taste as a matter of feeling, set forth by both these authors.

There are several ideas in these reviews that have a bearing on literary criticism. The idea of taste as feeling, absolutely accepted by authors and reviewer, is a part of the growing emphasis on feelings as opposed to reason. The interest in psychology, though certainly present in earlier neoclassicism, has also been increasing. The reviewer, when he assumes that a standard of taste is possible and Hume in his piece "concerning the different degrees of fineness in our perception" both presuppose a kind of universal psychology (or universal human nature) which is certainly a part of the neoclassical universality along with common sense³³ but which by 1750 is receiving more emphasis. Also of significance in these reviews is the reviewer's dissatisfaction that neither author attempted to set standards, reflecting perhaps his own lack of assurance about the standards of the received tradition as well as his feeling that standards are needed. The authors, on the other hand, may either accept the received standards as adequate (as Hume seems to do at one point) or may feel that they are not important, or even may feel that

³³See above, p. 51, also Spectator #70

such standards are not possible (as Hume seems to do at another point).

If Hume's reviewer is disappointed by Hume's treatment of taste, he is dismayed by his treatment of wit, wherein Hume completely throws aside all previous studies and definitions and says that wit is merely a matter of taste: "It is by taste alone we can decide concerning it; nor are we possest of any other standard by which we can form a judgment of this nature" (pp.33 and 34). Hume then defines this taste as "nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of disgust from false, without our being able to tell the reason of that satisfaction or uneasiness" (p.34). The reviewer precedes his quotation of Hume's statement on wit with the statement that Hume's position is "surprising from one, who in general seems to think with precision". And immediately following his quotation of Hume's statement, the reviewer counters it with the neo-classical definition of wit: "We thought Wit had been long since very justly defined, a similitude unexpectedly pointed out between two objects not apparently resembling each other, in such a manner as to give new lights to the subject, and excite the agreeable sensations of surprise". According to this definition, which is "certainly just", wit is decided by "judgment and not taste". However, the reviewer admits that taste is gratified by true wit and attempts to give the reason:

As to the reasons of our satisfaction or uneasiness when wit is offer'd [Hume's "sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of disgust from false"], we imagined Bohours had given us an excellent rule, which is, that no thought can be beautiful that is not true; and truth or the reverse of it, will always be agreeable or disgustful to the human mind.

Thus the reviewer here, in relating pleasure to judgment, attempts to trace pleasure to its ultimate source, and posits an underlying neoclassical tenet, that truth is the source of pleasure. Since truth is also the

source of morality, the two basic neoclassical standards for judging literature -- that it be delightful and morally instructive -- are inseparable (as has been said above, p.15ff), and when one examines eighteenth-century literary criticism, moral judgments can never be validly separated from aesthetic ones.

It may be concluded from the review of Hume's examination of wit that although Hume may have implied the existence of "avowed principles of art" in his essay on taste, his denial of the neoclassical definition of wit, surely an "avowed principle of art", would cast doubts on the validity of such "avowed principles" in general. And that such doubt was already being felt is perhaps indicated by the reviewer's disappointment in both essays on taste because they do not set standards.

Hume's "dissertation on Tragedy" is not actually on drama at all, as the reviewer points out, but is an enquiry "into the reasons why grief, terror, pity, and other sensations in themselves uneasy, should give us pleasure", reflecting again Hume's psychological interests. He does not actually present any new ideas here, but bases his discussion, as the reviewer says, "upon principles that have been already subscribed to by many elegant English writers". He quotes Fontenelle, saying that "pleasure and pain, which are two sentiments so different in themselves, differ not so much in their causes. From the instance of tickling, it appears, that the movement of pleasure pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the movement of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure". Thus a man may actually enjoy a pain if it is "moderated", and by "moderated" he means mixed with other feelings. In the theatre " . . . we weep for the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached: In the same instant we comfort ourselves, by reflecting, that it is nothing but a fiction: and

it is precisely that mixture of sentiments, which composes an agreeable sorrow, and produces tears that delight us . . . " (p.34).

The reviewer is particularly delighted with Hume's illustration of this "agreeable sorrow", in which he uses Cicero's oration on a particular historical calamity as an example. The horrible occurrence which Cicero describes could cause nothing but painful feelings, but the pleasure arising from Cicero's eloquence changes the pain into pleasure. As Hume says: "the whole movement of those passions [of sorrow] is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us" (p.35).

Thus it could be concluded that since "the heart likes naturally to be moved and affected" (p.34), the more that a piece of literature arouses the emotions the more delightful it is; and as long as even the most tragic or horrible circumstances are either fictitious or eloquently presented, the painful emotions aroused will be pleasurable.

Without denying the explanation of the pleasure of tragedy given here, the reviewer of another work - Edmund Burke's A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful³⁴ - adds a further explanation which makes this kind of pleasure distinctly moral. The author of the work horrifies the reviewer with his explanation of this pleasure as being "a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others". Thus in literature the more realistically the pain is presented the more we delight in it. The author says: "We shall be mistaken if we imagine our pleasure arises from its being no

³⁴Literary Magazine, II (May 15, 1757), 182-189.

reality; the nearer it approaches to reality, the more perfect its power", and the reality itself gives still more pleasure than the imitation. The reviewer, arguing that "this is certainly very false reasoning", explains that the pleasure actually is in "feeling and compassionating the misfortunes of others". And he distinguishes such feelings caused by reality from those caused by literature as follows:

The fact is this: in real distress we have a joy in finding an aptitude in ourselves to indulge the feelings of humanity; in fictitious representations, we have the same pleasure, and the additional delight of seeing beautiful imitation, and considering the distress is not real.

Thus, the critical principle emerges that good literature arouses the emotions, particularly those of the melancholy sort, and it arouses these emotions because such feelings are both pleasurable and moral.³⁵

The author of the work just mentioned - Edmund Burke, though his name is not given in the Magazine - with his theory that the pleasure of tragedy is in the misfortune itself rather than the artistic representation of it, extends this theory into poetry and visual art as well, saying that "the power of the poem or picture is more owing to the thing itself, than any consideration of the skill of the imitator however excellent". The reviewer in violent opposition, using examples both from the painter Hogarth and from the actor Garrick, argues that "If the object be inconsiderable, or even odious it will please in a just representation, and if the object be sublime or beautiful, it will please the more on this account, if the imitation be just; but if the imitation be defective, we revolt from it, notwithstanding the excellence of the original". Although

³⁵Here again is the coming together of those two basic neoclassical standards, to delight and morally instruct.

Burke may express these ideas in a way that makes them seem diametrically opposed to basic neoclassical principles -- opposed to art itself as understood by the neoclassicist -- in some respects his ideas may be seen simply as extreme statements of certain tendencies developing from neoclassicism, especially those tendencies toward realism in fiction and biography³⁶ and the related emphasis on the particular as an expression of the universal in the developing interests in science and biography.

Burke's argument concerning the sublime, the principal argument of his work, is also opposed by the reviewer. Burke begins by denying the long-accepted connection of pain with pleasure, restated in the work of Hume just discussed, and then Burke connects the sublime solely with those passions arising from pain. These, he says, are the passions of self-preservation, and they "excite the strongest emotion [terror] which the mind is capable of feeling". The reviewer argues -- after giving examples of things which he says are terrible and not sublime -- that the sublime can exist with or be enforced by any strong passion. He says:

Cannot the sublime consist with ambition? it is perhaps in consequence of this very passion, grafted in us, for the wisest purposes by the author of our existence, that we are capable of feeling the sublime in the degree we do; of delighting in every thing that is magnificent, of preferring the sun to a farthing candle, that by proceeding from greater to still greater, we might at last fix our imagination on him who is the supreme of all. And this is perhaps the true source of the sublime, which is always greatly heightened when any of our passions are strongly agitated, such as terror, grief, rage, indignation, admiration, love, etc. By the strongest of these the sublime will be enforced, but it will consist with any of them (p.183).

³⁶And also in the theatre, wherein the reader or viewer is to be able to identify so closely with the characters that his emotions may be aroused. These developments will be discussed more fully in chapters three and four.

The reviewer's connection of the sublime with the passion of "ambition", by which he evidently means the continual reaching for whatever is beyond oneself,³⁷ is closely related to Addison's understanding of the sublime.

Although the Spectator's standard for literature is that it copy nature, this standard is always qualified. (For example, the play Sir Foplin Flutter is condemned because "although the play is Nature . . . [it is] Nature in its utmost Corruption and Degeneracy", #65). This qualification is not really an exception to the rule to copy nature, for it is related to the nature of the mind of man. It is, that the "Mind of Man requires something more perfect in Matter, than what it finds there" (#418). Therefore, " . . . it is the Part of a Poet to mend and perfect Nature" (#418). This ideal nature, which this "perfect[ed] Nature" might be called, is closely related to what Addison calls the Sublime. In his third essay on Paradise Lost Addison says, "It is not sufficient for an Epic Poem to be filled with such Thoughts as are Natural, unless it abound also with such as are Sublime" (#279), which statement indicates that the Sublime is not natural. Addison goes on to show that he means greater than natural; and then he says in praise of Milton: "Milton's chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence, lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts . . . It is impossible for the Imagination of Man to distend itself with greater Ideas than those which he has laid together in his first, second, and sixth Books" (#279).

³⁷Further on he speaks of it as "that strong progressive motion of the mind, which cannot rest contented with what it has grasped, but must be forever urging on to something at a distance from its power, and, as it were, with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls" (p.186).

Addison says in his next essay on Paradise Lost, in a discussion of its language: "It is not sufficient, that the language of an Epic Poem be Perspicuous, unless it be also Sublime. To this end it ought to deviate from the common forms and ordinary Phrases of Speech" (#285). Thus, Sublimity for Addison requires an unnatural language as well as thoughts that are beyond nature.³⁸

Since the sublime, as understood in this way, is beyond nature, it is not within the reach of the understanding; it cannot be encompassed by reason. As the reviewer would say, connecting the sublime with ambition, man reaches for something beyond himself, even beyond his mind and ability to understand. Therefore it follows that the sublime would be understood, as it is by the reviewer, as something that can be approached by feeling. Thus the reviewer says that the sublime will be " . . . always greatly heightened when any of our passions are strongly agitated . . . " (p.183).

The sublime is used in some literary criticism of the 1750's to refer to the human spirit as it stands firm and brave against odds so powerful that the reason could only advise it to surrender. There is quoted in the Literary Magazine³⁹ a letter written during the civil war

³⁸Some critics, for example Lee Andrew Ellicseff, The Cultural Milieu of Addison's Literary Criticism (Austin, Texas, 1963), take their understanding of Addison's use of the sublime from his essays on the pleasures of the imagination in which he describes the "great", meaning objects great to the sight (nos. 11, 12, 13), as one of the three sources of the pleasures of the imagination. Addison himself, however, does not use the word sublime here, and his definition of the "great" is not altogether congruent with his use of sublime.

³⁹II (April 15, 1757), 111.

by the Earl of Derby, defiantly refusing to surrender although he was in an impossibly dangerous position. The letter is then compared with that written by Longinus for Queen Zenobia to the Roman Emperor Aurelian, which is also a proud, brave, defiant refusal to surrender in the face of certain death. The reason for the quotation of the two letters is their sublimity, and the reader is asked "to determine whether it [the Earl of Derby's letter] does not carry with it a sublimer spirit than the much admired letter of . . . [Longinus], who afterwards suffered death for the same". This "sublime spirit" is closely akin to the Trifler's "daring spirit" which he describes at the climax of his discussion of "the Passions of human Nature" (see above, p. 22) by a quotation from Satan's speech to the fallen angels in Book II of *Paradise Lost*. Here Satan is expressing the same kind of brave defiance evident in the letters of Longinus and the Earl of Derby.

This use of the word "sublime" is, of course, not far removed from Addison's use of it or the use of it by the reviewer of Burke's work, wherein the sublime is understood to be beyond reason and to be appropriated by feeling or the passions.⁴⁰ Burke's definition, however, which relates the sublime solely with the passions of self-preservation,

⁴⁰Since the sublime is usually understood to be beyond nature, it is also frequently connected with the imagination in literary criticism of the 1750's, as in the following quotation: "The same vein of thought [encomiums on Oxford] is carried on with the noblest energy, and sublimest flights of imagination, to the end of the poem". ["Remarks on a Poem, entitled *The Triumph of Isis*, occasioned by Isis, an elegy", *London Magazine*, XIX (June, 1750), 274-275.]

chiefly terror, would seem totally incongruous with the use of the word "sublime" to mean that spirit, passionately defiant and brave beyond reason, evident in the letter of Longinus.

Thus it can be seen that Burke, first by denying the connection of pain with pleasure and then by relating the sublime solely to those passions arising from pain, is in fact positing a new psychological basis for the sublime, which basis disallows older uses and some contemporary uses of the word. However, the increasing emphasis on the passions, especially on the darker passions as seen in the discussion of the pleasure in tragedy (p.64), would have paved the way for this new interpretation by Burke and would have perhaps made it appear to be a sound basis for the sublime as the term was coming more and more to be used. At any rate Burke's work reflects the increasing emphasis on the darker passions as well as the increasing interest in psychology already mentioned (p.62).

The part of Burke's work in which he discusses beauty is seen by the reviewer to be equally erroneous to that on the sublime. Burke bases his theory of beauty, as well as his theory of the sublime, on the complete separation of pain and pleasure and, the sublime being founded solely on pain, beauty is founded solely on pleasure. Burke then offends the reviewer further by stating that neither proportion nor perfection is essential to beauty. The reviewer counters with such statements as: "This is certainly a new philosophy, but we apprehend very erroneous. Proportion is not beauty itself, but one of its efficient qualities" (p.187), but by using words like self-evident and obvious he does not give the impression that he thinks Burke's argument deserves a serious rebuttal at this point. He does say further on concerning Burke's

enumeration of the causes of beauty that he "allows proportion under another name". Burke also "finds fault with the application of beautiful to virtue, though", says the reviewer, "it is observed by Mr. Locke, that most words which denote operations of the mind are derived from the objects of bodily sensation". Burke then "applies beautiful to all our other senses", and the reviewer again argues that "as this is ever done metaphorically in language, it is surprising our author would not allow the phrase to be translated to modes of the mind by the same analogy".

By making such complete separations between pleasure and pain, between the sublime and the beautiful, and finally, between the beautiful and the good, Burke certainly can be interpreted as attacking basic neoclassical principles. He seems not to be just focusing on the particulars rather than the universals, but to be denying the universals themselves; and by denying the application of "beauty" to virtue, he is denying the underlying unity of the good, the beautiful, and the true, which is basic to neoclassical criticism.

It may be that the earlier idea of the sublime as being ideal nature, as expressing something beyond nature, could not consist with the increasing emphasis on the particular as the expression of the universal, which emphasis means that nature must increasingly be presented as real, or realistic, particular nature. Therefore a basis for the sublime which places it within particular nature was called for, and since Burke's interpretation did this and also took advantage of the increasing emphasis on the passions and the related interest in psychology, his theories naturally become influential. They could not, however, be acceptable to the man - like this reviewer - who, though flexible and intelligent, seriously held neoclassical principles.

CHAPTER III
CRITICISM OF DRAMA AND POETRY

In 1752 there appears in the Monthly Review an article on Mason's Elfrida and shortly thereafter an article in the General Review on "Remarks on Mason's Elfrida". Although neither of these reviews contains much separate criticism by the reviewer (as was state above, pp. 34-35), the articles themselves are important because of the criticism quoted; and the criticism quoted in both reviews is presented as fully acceptable to the reviewers. The Monthly Review article is an abstract of Mason's own introductory remarks to the work, and the General Review article is an abstract of a critique of the work which had recently appeared as a pamphlet.

Mason's Elfrida is "a dramatic poem written on the model of the antient Greek tragedy".¹ If it can be called a play - it was not actually produced on the stage - it is the only play reviewed by the General Review and the only play reviewed by the Monthly Review in the May, June, and July numbers. It receives the very highest praise from both reviewers: the critic of the General Review undoubtedly agreed with the Monthly's reviewer when he predicted that "the author of Elfrida may one day be esteemed the first tragic writer of the present age, which this nation hath produced".²

¹Monthly Review, VI (May, 1752), 381.

²Ibid.

The central critical principle expressed in both reviews is that perfection was achieved by the ancient Greeks and that the closer the modern writer comes to the Greek model, the more perfect is his work. (This principle is, of course, integrally related to the one discussed earlier, defended most emphatically by the General Review's "Critic", that knowledge is to be found by looking at man's past learning and experience, by looking to the received tradition. See above, pp. 49-52). An important corollary to this principle is that modern popular opinion, in as much as it refuses to see the excellence of the ancient model, is wrong and should be ignored. Thus "Elfrida was not intended for the stage. Mr. Mason did not chuse to sink his plan to that level to which it must have been lowered in order to secure its success before an English audience", explains the Monthly Review. The "Critic" of the General Review, however, does not make deprecatory remarks about the English audience, nor mention the fact that Elfrida was not intended for the stage. Rather, he spends the body of the review showing (in the words of the critique he is reviewing) how exactly Elfrida conforms to the Greek tragedy, how it " 'is strictly agreeable to the Rules of Aristotle' ",³ and thus how excellent it is. He does in his final paragraph deal with the problem of modern taste (again in the words of the critique): " 'The old dramatic Plan it may be said, is indeed the most rational and excellent: But the general Palate is not found to relish that real Excellence. Well, what then? Is a good Writer to conform to the vitiated Taste of the World, or to the sound Rules of good Sense and Criticism?' " (Note the words "rational" and "good Sense". The good

³General Review, I (#2, n.d. [about June 8, 1752]), 65.

critic, as Addison showed earlier,⁴ accepts the authority of the classics only because of the higher authority of common sense). And furthermore the author of the critique answers this question -- What should the good writer do? -- by again referring to the Greeks: "Had the early Poets of Greece thus complimented their Nation, by complying with its first Relish and Appetite; they had not done their Countrymen such Service, nor themselves such Honour, as we find they did, by conforming to Truth and Nature". Note how "Truth and Nature" are joined with rationality and good sense as the characteristics of the Greek model to enforce further the reviewer's case that the classical rules are authoritative because they conform to principles which everyone agrees are authoritative. In some sense the entire review is an argument in behalf of the classical rules, for after examining the play fully and summing it up with extravagant praise as to its "Fable", "Characters", "Contexture of the Piece", "Sentiments", "Diction", and "Versification", the reviewer says:

And now will anyone say, that by preserving all the Unities, as Mr. Mason has done, and subjecting himself to the most scrupulous and strict Observance of the dramatic Rules, as laid down by the best Critics, in Antiquity, the Genius of the Poet is at all strait'ned or cramp'd? Are those rules to be looked on as harsh and galling Chains, and not rather

⁴The Spectator frequently refers to classical literature, but examines it with the same principles with which it judges modern literature (#223, #229, #74 among others). It is obvious, however, from remarks in the Spectator, that many of its readers did consider classical literature as a final authority. Addison said in #351, on Paradise Lost, that one reason he had showed parallels between Paradise Lost and Homer was in order to "guard [it] against the Cavil of the Tasteless and Ignorant", who would, of course, accept Homer as the final authority.

As soft wreath'd Bands of Flow'rs,
 which well the Muse
 Might wear for Choice, not Force;
 Obstruction none,
 But loveliest Ornament?

Mason's Musaeus.

Of course the "Critic", the reviewer he is quoting, and Mason himself are arguing a point - the value of the classics as models - that obviously, by the argument itself, is a live issue, and it is one that appears frequently in contemporary periodicals.

Complete rejection of the classics as models occasionally appears, usually as light scoffing as in the following poem, which appeared in the London Magazine in 1751.

Go forth, my muse! and if, by chance, you find
 The peevish criticks are to sneer inclin'd,
 Tell 'em I ne'er was on Parnassus bred,
 But write to show my heart, and not my head;
 Tell 'em, that you're no sister of the Nine,
 But, yet, can boast a birth that's more divine;
 That you, whilst they the bards with fiction fire,
 Me, me, an artless swain, with truth inspire.⁵

Here the poet uses the same authority - truth - to reject the classics that the "Critic" used to defend them when he said that they "conform . . . to Truth and Nature" (see above, p.75).

A more subtle and perhaps more important rejection of the classics occurs in criticism of literature produced by those without education in the classics. Such criticism is contained in a review of "Two Volumes . . . of Poems on several Occasions, by the late Mrs. Leapor", who was "a country Girl, without the advantage of Education".⁶

⁵XX (May, 1751), 230.

⁶London Magazine, XX (July, 1751), 311.

By the reviewer's high praise of her "peculiarly pleasing" poetry, of her "true greatness of soul" and of "the quickness of her genius",⁷ set forth over against her lack of education, the value of the received tradition and certainly the value of conscious imitation of the classics is seriously questioned.

On the other side of the argument is the frequent reference to the classics by the various writers of essays to support and illustrate their positions. The letter in the Literary Magazine on the proper role of the critic (mentioned earlier, p.37) used the classical critics Aristotle and Horace as its prime examples.⁸ And similarly the "Trifler's" essay on satire begins his account of good satire with the classics.⁹

There is practically no contemporary periodical writer who would assert that the classics are their own final authority; the "Critic's" position, stated in his review of Elfrida, that they are authoritative because they conform most perfectly to a higher authority -- "good Sense", "Truth and Nature" -- is the most conservative position which appears and is very widely held, at least in the lip service it receives.

In the "Critic's" analysis of Mason's Elfrida, in terms of the classical rules, he begins, of course, with the "Fable", which, he says, "is strictly agreeable to the Rules of Aristotle" in that, first, "It has the grand Unity of Action". He does not elaborate on this "Unity", nor in fact does he again mention the word "Unity" until the conclusion, when he asks, rhetorically, if the poet was hampered "by preserving all

⁷Ibid., 312.

⁸Literary Magazine, II (February 15, 1757), 28.

⁹General Review, I (n.d., #5, probably c. August 1, 1752), 328-

the Unities" (see the quotation, p.75). It can only be assumed that the reviewer is completely sure that his readers understand what the "Unity of Action" is, what the other unities are, and that if the fable is "agreeable to the Rules of Aristotle" it must preserve all the unities. He feels no need to explain the unities and neither does he argue the value of the whole body of rules. There is argument going on at the time, however, as to the value of the unities; Mason says in his introduction to Elfrida, as quoted in the Monthly Review, that he hopes to "obviate the current opinion, that a strict adherence to these unities, restrains the genius of the poet" ¹⁰. He frequently refers to the French and especially to Racine for support and justification. "In France", he observes, "the excellency of their several poets is chiefly measured by this standard [the unities]", ¹¹ and he blames "the disregard which our immortal Shakespear shewed of all the necessary rules of the drama, in compliance merely with the taste of the times" for current English opinion. This opinion, he says, falsely considers Shakespeare's disregard of the unities "as the characteristic of his vast original genius". He fears that "notwithstanding the absurdity of this low superstition, the notion is so popular among Englishmen, that it never will be properly discredited, till a poet rises amongst us, with a genius as elevated and daring as Shakespear's and a judgement as sober and chastised as Racine's". He himself, however, is making an attempt in Elfrida to discredit it.

¹⁰VI (May, 1752), 387.

¹¹Ibid., 388

Mason is at least partially correct in blaming Shakespeare for the English rejection of "the necessary rules of the drama", for until the latter part of the eighteenth century Shakespeare is consistently presented not only as ignoring "the necessary rules of the drama" but as being without education; and this lack of education is usually presented as contributing to the greatness of his work. An important example of such a presentation is Rowe's biography of Shakespeare prefixed to his 1709 edition of Shakespeare's works. This biography was used by Pope in his 1723 edition of Shakespeare's works,¹² and this same biography, as rearranged by Pope, appears in part in the London Magazine in 1751.¹³ According to this "standard" biography, Shakespeare had little schooling.

But whatever he wanted in learning, nature amply supplied; and perhaps his unacquaintance with the antients gave his genius a freer scope, than it might have had if he had been ever so well versed in them. For tho' the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet his over attention to that correctness might have abated that fire, and restrained that impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance, which we so much admire in Shakespear.¹⁴

¹²Pope credited Rowe with the biography, but cut and rearranged it without indicating that he had done so; Pope's rearrangement of Rowe's biography is frequently used throughout the century, sometimes with no credit given and sometimes with credit given to Rowe. Rowe's own biography, except as rearranged by Pope, does not again appear, strangely enough. (I wrote a paper for Dr. William Cameron's biography course on biographies of Shakespeare before 1800, using biographies appearing in the works of Shakespeare published during the eighteenth century and in dictionaries of biography and other collections, all found in the rare books collection of McMaster University).

¹³XX (April, 1751), 150.

¹⁴Spelled as Rowe and Pope spelled it, but not Theobald in his 1733 edition. Theobald's spelling, Shakespeare, however, by the end of the century had become standard.

As in this passage, almost whenever Shakespeare is praised, (and he is often praised), there is a subtle underlying criticism of the classical rules. The following lines appear in the Literary Magazine describing Shakespeare's work:

Sublime you soar on nature's wing;
How sweet the strain! how bold the flight!
Above the rules
Of critic schools,
And cool correctness of the stagyrite.¹⁵

Sometimes the underlying criticism of the classical rules becomes an open criticism of critics in general, who, as a whole, are seen to waste time studying minutiae and quibbling over trifles. The following lines are put in the mouth of Shakespeare's ghost:

Let not the critick charm your taste away
To waste, on trifling words, the studious day:
No, to the idly busy bookworm leave
Himself with length of thinking to deceive;
Let him the dross, and not the metal chuse,
And my true genius in his language lose:
Do you, the unimportant toil neglect,
Pay to your poet's shade the due respect;
Go, to the lofty theatre repair,
My words are best explain'd and told you there;
.....
When all the critick race forgotten lie, 16
The actor's skill shall lift my fame on high.

The ultimate rejection of the critic, then - and the critic is associated with the rules and with the classics - is connected with an affirmation of the stage. Thus there is a connection between the acceptance of the stage and the rejection of it by Mason in his attempt to justify the classical rules in Elfrida.

¹⁵II (April 15, 1757), 153.

¹⁶From a poem entitled "Shakespeare's Ghost" in the London Magazine, XIX (June, 1750), 279.

In the General Review's account of Elfrida the "Critic", after remarking its unity of action, observes: "It has likewise the Advantage of great Personages for Actors in it to make it important, and answerable to the Dignity of Tragedy" Although this use of great personages is based on a classical rule and is widely understood to be necessary for tragedy, another principle, not derived from the classical rules, is seen by the reviewer to be a necessary qualification of this classical rule. And Elfrida maintains this qualification, for "at the same time [as it uses great personages] it is so far domestic* [Foot-note: "* Domestic here signifies, in as much as it is taken from common Life"], as to be closely interesting and affecting to the private Reader" The reviewer states this "domesticity" as an obviously positive quality of the play and in no way attempts to justify it. Mason, however, in his introduction to the play, quoted in the Monthly's review, recognizes this domesticity not merely as a definite departure but as the major departure of Elfrida from the Greek model. He says that in his attempt to adapt the Greek model "to the genius of our time and the characters of our tragedy . . . "

a story was chosen, in which the tender, rather than the noble passions were predominant, and in which even love had the principal share: characters too were drawn as nearly approaching to private ones, as tragic dignity would permit; and affectations raised rather from the impulses of common humanity, than the distresses of royalty, and the fate of kingdoms.¹⁷

Mason's refusal to appeal to popular taste when "the necessary rules of drama" are involved would indicate that in the issue of domesticity he sees the modern taste to be legitimate. And certainly the idea giving

¹⁷Monthly Review, VI (May, 1752), 388.

rise to such terms as "common Life", "the private Reader",¹⁸ "private characters", and "the impulse of common humanity"¹⁹ is a legitimate neo-classical idea related to the ideas of universalism and "common" sense.²⁰ Developments from these ideas led to the idea, expressed by Samuel Johnson in his discussion of both biography (Rambler #60) and fiction (Rambler #4, both of which will be discussed in the following chapter) as well as by Mason, here in his introduction to Elfrida, that literature should deal with that part of the life of a man which he has in common with all other men.

Closely related to the idea that literature should deal with "common Life" is the idea that literature should touch the emotions. As the General Review's critique of Elfrida explained, Elfrida is domestic in order to be "Affecting to the private Reader". If the reader, or viewer, can identify with the characters of a drama then he can feel as the characters feel; he can sympathize and have compassion. These emotions which all men have in common and which are played upon in "domestic" situations, Mason calls the "tender" passions; and it is clearly these "tender" passions which are central to the drama of this period. It is also clear that the ability of a drama to arouse the passions is a central criterion for judgment of drama in this period. David Hume says to the author of the play Douglas:²¹

¹⁸General Review, I (n.d., #2, about June 8, 1752), 65.

¹⁹Monthly Review, VI (May, 1752), 388.

²⁰These ideas are discussed on p. 51.

²¹A "Rev. Mr. Hume", no relation of David Hume. The play was evidently played to full houses in Edinburgh in the fall of 1756, because

That there the virtues without culture grow,
There the sweet blossoms of affection blow.

The Epilogue concludes with two lines that characterize the emphasis on the passions and accurately portray a widespread critical attitude of the period, an attitude which leans away from wit as it embraces pity.

Nor will I now attempt with witty folly,
To chase away celestial melancholy.

The "melancholy" becomes "celestial" because the heart, or the emotions, has become not only the seat of morality -- for example, the phrase appears: "Some moral Lecture to the Heart"²⁵ -- but of the understanding, and of that which makes a man "human". In one play review of the period there is the statement: " . . . there is no need to point out its beauties, which if they do not feel they cannot see . . ."²⁶ One needs to feel in order to understand. And it is this feeling and this understanding which make a man human. The purpose of the theatre is "To pierce the Heart, and humanize the Mind".²⁷ Humanity is even defined in one place as "not that smoothness and refined polish of external manners" but as "that pity for distress".²⁸

Douglas appeared in London.

²³From the Prologue, II, (April 15, 1757), 152.

²⁴From the Epilogue, loc. cit.

²⁵"A Morning Rhapsody", Ladies Magazine, III (June 13, 1752), 235.

²⁶"Some account of the Brothers, a new Tragedy" by Edward Young. Ladies Magazine, IV (May 12, 1753), 153.

²⁷"The New Occasional Prologue: Spoken at the Opening of Drury Lane Theatre, By Mr. Garrick". Ladies Magazine, I (October 6, 1750), 376.

²⁸"An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times", Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 127.

The purpose of the theatre just quoted -- "To pierce the Heart and humanize the Mind" -- is preceded by the lines "Sacred to Shakespear, was this Spot [the theatre] design'd". Shakespear is almost synonymous with good theatre, and certainly Shakespear is by far the most important figure in drama criticism of the period. Whenever Shakespear is praised it is his ability to arouse the passions that receives the greatest attention.

He, pow'rful ruler of the heart,
 With ev'ry passion plays;
 Now strikes the string, and ev'ry part
 The magic touch obeys.

 Now plaintiff sorrows flow:
 And now with pity's sigh oppress'd,
 We feel, we share the lover's woe.

 When horror ombers o'er the scene,
 And terror with distorted mein,
 Erects the hair, and chills the blood;
 Whose painting must be understood
 To strike such feelings to the soul:
 What master, genius works the whole?
Shakespear alone.²⁹

The idea that literature should touch the passions is certainly a neoclassical principle and is held by the neoclassicist alongside the principle of the value of the received tradition, especially of the classics, including the classical "rules". There is, however, in the emphasis on the passions in the 1750's frequently a connection between the embracing of the passions and the rejection of classical models. The poet who wrote "I ne'er was on Parnassus bred" (quoted, p.76), then said, "But write to show my heart, and not my head". The poetry of the country girl who had no education was praised because it "proceeded from the

²⁹"Ode to the Memory of Shakespear, Written by Mr. Havard", Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 153.

inmost sentiments of the heart",³⁰ These critics do not seem to recognize a distinction between what touches the heart and what proceeds from the heart - "I write to show my heart". Therefore they might easily conclude that the writer is better off without knowledge to restrain his passion. Much Shakespearian criticism verges on such thinking, as does Rowe's comment: "For tho' the knowledge of the classics might have made him more correct, yet his over-attention to that correctness might have abated that fire" And since Shakespeare is such a dominant figure, it is easy to see the truth in Mason's accusation that it is Shakespeare who prejudices the English audience against the classics - because he did not know the classics and still was the greatest dramatist (as was discussed earlier, pp. 77-80), and also because he was the greatest dramatist because he was the most impassioned, an attribute suggesting - at least to such critics quoted above - the use of the heart rather than the head (and the use of the head implies the use of classical models).

What has been said thus far concerning drama criticism in the 1750's holds true also for poetry (and of course much of the drama discussed, beginning with Mason's Elfrida, has also been poetry). Attesting to the same emphasis on the passions in poetry criticism is the following comment on "Ode to the Tiber". It is the only critical comment of the poem and it here given in its entirety: "This piece holds more of the sentimental than of the enthusiastic spirit of some ode-writers; it breathes notwithstanding an agreeable melancholy, and is in many places

³⁰ London Magazine, XX (July, 1751), 312.

affectingly impassioned".³¹ In a review of "Odes. By Mr. Gray", in the usual summary with quotations the reviewer remarks after a quotation: "What can be sweeter than the opening of the antistrophe: I have never been able to read it without feeling very affecting emotions". And, after another quotation, "He that hath not a soul willing to be touched with these lines, must be of a temper uncommonly impassive". [Literary Magazine, II (October 15, 1757), 424]. The increasing emphasis on the passions and the concomitant decreasing importance of wit and satire is indicated by the criticism of Pope in the 1750's. According to a reviewer, as well as to the work he is reviewing, Pope's Eloise to Abelard "may justly be regarded as one of the works on which the reputation of Pope will stand in future times".³² The reviewer, giving an account of a critique of Eloise to Abelard, says, "The critic pursues Eloise through all the changes of passion . . . There is not much profundity of criticism, because the beauties are sentiments of nature, which the learned and ignorant feel alike". Although both the author of the critique of Pope and the reviewer are certainly neoclassical critics and show throughout the review both a thorough knowledge of and a respect for the classics, there is a hint in this statement, a hint which is perhaps always underlying the emphasis on the passions in the 1750's, that knowledge of the received tradition is not of great importance. Really great literature, which is that which concerns the passions, is

³¹"Elegies with an Ode to the Tiber, written abroad by William Whitehead", Literary Magazine, II (February 15, 1757), 31.

³²A review of "an Essay on the writings and genius of Pope" (which, according to Bloom, op. cit., p.267, is by Joseph Warton and reviewed by Samuel Johnson), Literary Magazine, I (May 15, 1756), 38.

understood, or felt, by everyone without special knowledge or the mediation of the critic. The review concludes with a summary evaluation of Pope's works with which the reviewer concurs, an evaluation justified by the following explanation: "for wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but nature and passion are eternal".

Alongside this emphasis on the passions, which frequently carries with it a de-emphasis of the classics, there is also found in poetry criticism of the decade much praise of the classics. Sometimes this praise is simply in conjunction with an examination or description of a classical work, as is the following statement: "It is very certain that the antients wanted many advantages we have, but it seems also certain that they excelled the moderns in strength of genius and boldness of their fancy".³³ Praise of the classics, however, is usually most extravagant when the critic is adversely criticising contemporary works, as in the following criticism of poetry by "Tho. G-bb-ns":³⁴

Immortal steed [Pegasus, which was evidently written
upon by G] ! in days of yore,
Wont with the sons of verse to soar,
With Homer, Pindar, Horace fly,
And catch the musick of the sky,
Till time and Grub-street had agreed,
To clip his wings, and check his speed.

These lines express the commonly held theory that the production of literature, as well as everything else, gradually degenerates with time. Thus the classics, having been written so long ago, would naturally be superior to literary productions of the present degenerate age. This theory,

³³Literary Magazine, II (September 15, 1757), 378.

³⁴London Magazine, XIX (July, 1750), 424-425.

referred to rather frequently in a similar light manner, does not, however, have much influence in any serious literary criticism of the time.

These verses also name "Grub-street" as a factor, along with "time", in the degeneracy of present literature. "Grub-street", of course, implies writing for financial gain, an important new development in the eighteenth century, but one which is not really seriously examined in the literary criticism of the 1750's. Instead it is automatically assumed, where Grub-street is mentioned in a literary-critical context, such as the above quotation,³⁵ that writing for financial gain means poor quality writing.³⁶

Praise of the classics in contemporary poetry criticism, aside from its use in a blanket condemnation of contemporary poetry, is frequently in the form of the assumption that the classics represent ideals and can therefore be used as examples of particular critical principles in the examination of contemporary poetry. Such is the use of the classics in the critique of Elfrida, already discussed (pp.73-76), and in a review of "The Fleece", among many others. The review of "The Fleece: a Poem, In four Books. By John Dyer" criticizes it by praising various aspects of it as conforming to Virgil's Georgics, with

³⁵The idea of "Grub-street" is referred to in this same perjorative way in articles such as the Trifler's essay "On Taste" in which the author claims that a "Man of Genius and Spirit" cannot succeed because he "cannot flatter the illiterate Vanity of a puff'd Citizen nor cringe to the Petulancy of a sharpening Bookseller" (General Review Number 5, n.d. [around August 1, 1752], quoted on p.23).

³⁶Samuel Johnson, who himself wrote to make a living, was interested in this question, and he dealt with it to some extent in some of the biographies in his Lives of the Poets, published two decades later.

special mention of Addison's discussion of the Georgics.³⁷ He makes such comparisons as follows: "We shall. . . transcribe another passage, which . . . is perfectly in the manner of the antient poets, who never fail to snatch any opportunity of describing a picture, a piece of sculpture, or the work of the loom . . .!"³⁸ The passage quoted is a description of the work of the loom.

The most frequent use of the classics in the literary criticism of the decade, however, is the use of classical literary criticism. That is, critical pronouncements of Aristotle, Horace, or Longinus are more often quoted than are passages of classical literature used as examples illustrating particular critical principles. For example, the reviewer of The Triumph of Isis begins by quoting from Horace in Latin with the following paraphrase: "Horace, in his art of poetry, observes that the exordium of every poem should be simple, both in stile, and sentiment". The reviewer then "venture[s]" to affirm, that no one has more happily executed what Horace has observed" than the author of The Triumph of Isis, and he proceeds to illustrate "the truth of this assertion".³⁹

Classification of literature, or anything else, is an interest in the eighteenth century which appears fairly commonly in the periodical literature of the 1750's. It includes a description of or rules for the various classes which distinguish them from each other. This, of course,

³⁷At this point in the review Addison almost appears as the authority appealed to by the reviewer in his praise of Virgil's Georgics. Addison, in fact, is frequently referred to throughout criticism of this period and is always held in high esteem.

³⁸Literary Magazine, III (April 15, 1757), 136.

³⁹London Magazine, XIX (June, 1750), 274.

is a classical interest which is taken up by neoclassicism and is closely related, in the literary criticism of the 1750's, to respect for the classics including the classical rules, and an interest in rules in general. In literary criticism, this interest is particularly manifested in the frequent discussion of genres and in the apparent necessity of the placing of a piece of literature in its proper genre and of judging a piece of literature by how well it conforms to the conventions of its particular genre. For example, a large part of the criticism of "The Epigoniad", an epic poem,⁴⁰ is involved in a discussion of the epic genre, in which the requirements of the epic in both subject matter and manner of treatment are set forth. It is intended that the poem in question then be judged by the reader according to its fulfillment of these requirements. The critic of "The Epigoniad", in his discussion of the subject matter of the epic, which, according to his fully presented argument, should be taken from pre-history, or tradition, also mentions other genres in such statements as the following:

[Tragedy should not] . . . approach too near to present times . . . [because] it has a degree of dignity to maintain, which it would endanger by meddling with events too recent, and characters too particularly remembered. Comedy, on the other hand, and indeed every species of satire whatever, ought to attack living characters only, and the vices and follies of present times.⁴¹

Such interest in and use of genres in poetry criticism is just as evident in drama criticism. (The above quotation is, of course, drama criticism, though found in a review of an epic poem). The review of

⁴⁰The name of the author is not mentioned. It is reviewed in the Literary Magazine, II (July 15, 1757), 293-295.

⁴¹Ibid., 295.

"The Author; a Comedy of two Acts; written by Mr. Foote . . . "⁴² is largely a discussion of genres; its whole aim is to define comedy and farce and to distinguish them from each other and from other genres. In the process Aristotle, Homer, Jonson, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Fielding are mentioned. The review concludes that the play in question is not a good comedy but is an excellent farce.

A critical principle frequently referred to in both drama and poetry criticism of the 1750's is "simplicity". Sometimes classical authority is appealed to, as in the review of The Triumph of Isis, mentioned above, where Horace's dictum on simplicity is quoted. The reviewer goes on to praise the poem for its "utmost simplicity of expression", saying further on "that the whole poem is compounded of the truly Doric simplicity".⁴³ The reviewer contrasts the simplicity of the poem with the "studied, elaborate description" of another poem on Isis, entitled Isis, which he obviously thinks is very poor. He seems to identify the simplicity which he values with both a scientific and grammatical correctness, for he follows his statement on the other poem's lack of simplicity with the following remarks:

Mr. M----- [the author of Isis]⁴⁴ had certainly forgot, that he was describing the grott of a river nymph, or he would never have mentioned coral, which is the production of the

⁴²Literary Magazine, II (March 15, 1757), 76-79.

⁴³London Magazine, XIX (June, 1750), 274.

⁴⁴The author's name is not given, but it is obvious from hints in the review, including the fact that the author also wrote the "much-admired" Musaeus, that the author is the Mason who wrote Elfrida.

sea, and therefore can only be applied, with propriety, to the grott of a sea-goddess. As for the expression, where twin'd the wreathed shell, I am of the opinion that it is downright tautology, and shall always be so, unless it can be proved, that the participles twin'd and wreathed convey two distinct ideas! Nor is there less tautology in the following line

"Simplicity" also appears as an important critical principle in literary criticism which makes no appeal to classical authority. This kind of reference to simplicity is seen especially in the drama criticism of the decade, where the appeal to simplicity is almost constant. A performance of Romeo and Juliet is criticized because of the "Raree-show" of a funeral for Juliet.⁴⁵ The prologue to a revival of Every Man in His Humour expresses the hope that the public

Would learn from him [Jonson] to scorn a motley
Scene,
 And leave their Monsters, to be pleas'd with Men.⁴⁶

There is an essay in the Ladies Magazine "On the absurdity of Pantomime" which is actually a criticism of all kinds of stage gimmicks, including lack of simplicity in scenery.⁴⁷

The author of the play The Roman Father is praised in its Epilogue because he has

Stripp'd each luxuriant Plume from Fancy's Wings,
 And torn up Similes like vulgar Things.
 Nay even each Moral, Sentimental Stroke,
 Where not the Character but Poet spoke,
 He lopp'd, as foreign to his chaste Design;
 No spar'd an useless tho' a golden Line.⁴⁸

This emphasis on simplicity perhaps led to the "simplifying" of

⁴⁵Ladies Magazine, II (December 1, 1750), 26.

⁴⁶Ladies Magazine, III (January 25, 1752), 75.

⁴⁷Ladies Magazine, IV (January 6, 1753), 5.

⁴⁸Ladies Magazine, I (March 10, 1750), 141.

Shakespeare's plays, for there are occasional complaints of cuttings in contemporary productions. For example, the reviewer of two contemporary productions of Romeo and Juliet complains of the omission of the love affair between Romeo and Rosaline and of the omission of Shakespeare's figurative expressions.⁴⁹ It is probable, however, from the more commonly expressed critical stance, that most omissions could be made without stirring up any opposition at all.

It is perhaps in response to this kind of emphasis on simplification -- on removing "even each Moral, Sentimental Stroke/Where not the Character but Poet spoke" -- that Mason in his Elfrida brought in the Greek chorus, hoping to make it popular again. He prefaces the play with a long explanation and justification of the use of the chorus, in which he says that the speeches in plays should be simple and natural and that by omitting the chorus the true poet has lost "a graceful and natural resource to the embellishment of picturesque description, sublime allegory, and whatever else comes under the denomination of pure poetry".⁵⁰

In a critique of The Roman Father in the London Magazine, in which the play is compared with one by Corneille on the same historical circumstance, the play is praised above Corneille's because "In this, we are not tired with long speeches or tedious soliloquies: In this, every incident arises naturally from the principal subject". Unlike Corneille's "no chief person of the drama is introduced, but what is warranted from

⁴⁹Ladies Magazine, II (December 1, 1750), 26.

⁵⁰Monthly Review, VI (May, 1752), 389.

history" and "not one incident [is introduced] that does not appear probable from history".⁵¹ 'Simplicity' is related here, as it was in the review of The Triumph of Isis, to correctness - historical correctness or naturalness, however, rather than scientific or grammatical. The desirability of historical truth in literature is widely assumed in the 1750's. The author of the "Epigoniad" says in his introduction, quoted with approval by the reviewers,

I believe it will be easily allowed, that where truth and fiction are equally subservient to the purposes of poetry, the first ought always to be preferred; for true history carries a weight and authority with it, which seldom attends stories that are merely fictitious, and has many advantages besides for interesting our affections above the legends of remote antiquity.⁵²

Historical truth and scientific accuracy could both become identified with simplicity because simplicity is identified with naturalness.

Lancelot Temple is quoted with approval by the Weekly Magazine as saying:

. . . to the vulgar eye the specious is more striking than the genuine. The best writing is too plain, too simple, too unaffected, and too delicate to stir the callous organs of the generality of critics, who see nothing but the tawdry glare of tinsel, and are deaf to everything but what is shockingly noisy to a true ear. They are struck with the fierce glaring colours of old Frank, with attitudes and expressions violent, distorted and unnatural, while the true, just and easy, the graceful, the moving, the sublime representations of Raphael have not the least power to attract them.⁵³

Simplicity, expressed here in classical terms, is what is natural.

Another example of the use of 'simple' and 'natural' in drama criticism is this statement of a review of the play Douglas: "Our author never

⁵¹London Magazine, XIX (March, 1750), 101.

⁵²Literary Magazine, II (July 15, 1757), 295.

⁵³Weekly Magazine, I (May 27, 1758), 215.

writes with a disregard of nature and therefore his language seldom or never rises to bombast: It is generally easy, pure, and at the same time elegant". And further on the reviewer again speaks of the "pure and elegant language" of the play and makes the statement: "Old Norval's tale is elegantly simple".⁵⁴ The word 'elegant' itself, as defined by Johnson's Dictionary, implies the kind of correctness that relates it closely to simplicity and naturalness. What is elegant is absolutely appropriate to the situation - nothing extraneous - completely true to nature.⁵⁵

Nature, of course, is a key word in all these discussions and is the final authority, along with Truth (from which it is practically inseparable), appealed to by all critics, from the most conservative neo-classicist, who says that "the early Poets of Greece . . . conformed to Truth and Nature" (quoted on p.75), to the poet who says "I ne'er was on Parnassus bred/But write to show my heart and not my head" (quoted on p.76); Shakespeare, who flies "Above the rules/Of critic schools", "soar[s] on nature's wing" (quoted on p.80). 'Nature' is the key word in the review of the play, The Author. The review, which is a discussion of genres, is concerned with how each genre, particularly farce and comedy, handle nature. The writer of farce, the reviewer says, "where exactness and truth are less in demand" than in comedy or any other genre, is not "licenced to indulge himself in a frolicsome deviation from nature". He concludes his long discussion with the statement:

⁵⁴Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 139.

⁵⁵See Patricia Ingham, "Dr. Johnson's 'Elegance'", Review of English Studies, XIX (August, 1968), 271.

"Thus then it appears that the farcical portrait-painter is not to depart from nature, but may be allowed to draw larger than life". Since comedy is not allowed even that deviation from nature, the play in question is classed as a farce, but an excellent one.⁵⁶

The broad and deep meaning of the word 'nature' as generally used in the eighteenth century is indicated by the following quotation from Johnson, quoting Warton on Pope: "He [Warton] makes a just observation, 'that the description of the external beauties of nature, is usually the first effect of a young genius, before he hath studied nature and passions' ".⁵⁷ There appears to be in the 1750's, however, an emphasis on particular nature perhaps greater than earlier in the century. (This emphasis is related, of course, to that emphasis on the particular as the expression of the universal, discussed in Chapter II, pp.47-48). This emphasis is indicated by the connection in the reviews of Isis and The Roman Father, discussed above, between the simple and natural and the scientifically and historically accurate. What is true to nature is scientifically and historically true. This emphasis is also indicated by the review of Warton on Pope when Johnson says of Warton: "He remarks that writers fail in their copies [of external nature] for want of acquaintance with originals, and justly ridicules those who think they can form just ideas of valleys, and rivers in a garret on the Strand".⁵⁸

Although nature is seen on the one hand as a possession of

⁵⁶Literary Magazine, II (March 15, 1757), 76-79.

⁵⁷Literary Magazine, I (May 15, 1756), 36.

⁵⁸Literary Magazine, I (May 15, 1756), 36.

classical writers and therefore as a part of the knowledge gained from the received tradition, on the other hand it is spoken of as a possession or possible possession common to man apart from the received tradition, as when Johnson says, speaking of Warton's discussion of Eloise to Abelard, "There is not much profundity of criticism, because the beauties are sentiments of nature, which the learned and the ignorant feel alike". Here becomes clear the close relationship of nature to passion. Sentiments of nature are felt; nature, like passion, is common to all and is not dependent upon the received tradition; and in Johnson's concluding remark he says, quoting Warton: "wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but nature and passion are eternal".⁵⁹

'Nature' is also related to passion in much of the literary criticism of the 1750's because it is nature which gives rise to passion, according to the critics. As the author of The Fleece says:

. . . so lively glows
The fair delusion, that our passions rise
In the beholding . . .⁶⁰

or a drama critic:

Garrick, like Nature, moves the Heart!⁶¹

What is presented most true to nature, most realistically, will be most successful in giving rise to passion.

Thus it can be seen that the neoclassical principles of 'simplicity' and of 'nature' were a consistent part of a movement toward realism, including an increasing emphasis on scientific and historical

⁵⁹Literary Magazine, I (May 15, 1756), 38.

⁶⁰Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 136.

⁶¹Ladies Magazine, II (December 29, 1750), 60.

accuracy. The increasing emphasis on the passions, discussed earlier (p.82), is also related to this movement in that nature, as well as passion, although legitimate neoclassical principles and parts of the received tradition, can be separated from the received tradition as possessions common to all men independent of knowledge of the received tradition. Also the movement toward realism is related to the increasing emphasis on the passions because the passions were thought to be most successfully aroused when the reader or viewer was able to identify with the literary characters. Thus it was desired that characters be like the reader; or that the part of a character's life be stressed which he holds in common with all men. Thus, the passions required nature - real nature; thus the movement to realism.

Drama criticism in the 1750's cannot be discussed at all fairly without a consideration of the relationship felt to exist between plays and morality. The Literary Magazine of March, 1757, printed an admonition of the Presbytery of Scotland "occasioned by the tragedy entitled Douglas (see p.82), written by a clergyman and acted at Edinburgh very lately with great success". The admonition utterly condemns all stage plays but argues most strongly that in the present state of war it is especially wrong for time and money to be squandered on "foolish, not to say sinful amusements". The piece concludes with a plea "to all ranks and conditions" that they avoid "these seminaries of folly and vice".⁶²

This admonition is accompanied by an opposing argument by the Literary Magazine beginning with the flatly contradictory affirmation that "It has been allowed by all men of sense, that a theatre under due

⁶²Literary Magazine, II (March 15, 1757), 88.

regulations, might be rendered of great service to the morals of the nation". The writer of the argument admits, however, that at present in the theatre "vice is too often coloured over, and by the intermixture of some strikingly agreeable qualities, it is sometimes even endeared to us". That plays can be immoral or at least have an immoral effect is not only admitted, but stressed by an essay which appears in both the London and the Ladies Magazines entitled "The bad Consequences of Vicious Plays", which illustrates this contention with the story of a young woman who was seduced by means of the theatre.⁶³ The essay, however, is in agreement with the statement of the Literary Magazine because, although it argues that the theatre is "capable . . . of the most pernicious consequence, when its productions tend to promote infidelity and licentiousness", it also affirms that "the amusements of the theatre are capable of the greatest benefit, when rationally applied". The statement of the Literary Magazine goes so far as to argue that even when the theatre "deviates from the original intent of the drama", it "is of infinite service to mankind" because "if it does not promote virtue, [it] at least retards the progress of vice, and serves to keep great numbers every evening out of harm's way". The writer then quotes Addison on the relation of vice to idleness. The principal impact of the statement is, however, implied by his inference that a play which does not actively promote virtue is a "deviation from the original intent of the drama" and by his statement that "for the most part our poets fight under the

⁶³This essay, which appears in the London Magazine, XIX (September, 1750), 419, is credited as "From the Rambler, September 10". The essay appears in the Ladies Magazine, I (October 6, 1750), 377, with no credit given.

banner of virtue", is that a good play is by nature moral.

And certainly this principle -- that a good play is by nature moral -- is widely applied in drama criticism of the decade. The entire review of Johnson's Irene, after the list of the characters and summary of the plot, consists of a pointing out of various morals illustrated by the play. The reviewer says, in highest praise of the play, that "to instance every moral which is inculcated in this performance would be to transcribe the whole". He then selects ten quotations, each prefaced by such remarks as the following:

With how much strength and beauty are avarice and superstition exposed in the following speeches!

How is the mind armed against temptation in the following lines!

How lovely does disinterested virtue appear in this speech of Demetrius to Leontius!

The sophistry of the maxim, it is lawful to do evil that good may come, is finely exposed in these lines. ⁶⁴

In almost all drama criticism, no matter what else is said, it is the moral of the play which is considered to be most important. In the review of the critique of Elfrida, where the classical rules are so stressed, the reviewer says:

But the finest compliment our Author [of the critique] has bestowed on the Elfrida is at the Close of this Epistle, where he says, The Purity of its Sentiments, in Point of Moral, is throughout so very extraordinary, that were Plato now alive, he would surely venture to give Mr. Mason, with all his Poetry, a Place in his Republic. ⁶⁵

The point of most of the praise of the morals of plays reviewed is not that the plays have morals -- that a drama, to be a drama, has a

⁶⁴Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (February, 1749), 79,80.

⁶⁵General Review, I (n.d. [about June 7, 1752]), 67.

moral is practically assumed -- but that the morals of the plays are natural or integral to the play itself, not something just tacked on. The reviewer of Irene said he would have to quote the whole play to "instance every moral". And the critic of Elfrida speaks of the "Purity of Sentiments, in Point of Moral, throughout". This principle is, of course, related to the principle of simplicity and naturalness already discussed, where the dramatist is quoted as saying that he cut out "even each Moral, Sentimental Stroke,/Where not the Character but Poet spoke". Even this statement assumes that a play has moral "Strokes", but suggests that they should arise from the play itself; they should be natural. The basis for the stress on morality is, of course, the relationship -- almost one of identity -- believed to exist between morality and 'truth and nature'. The critic of Elfrida concludes his praise of it by saying: "Lastly, to compleat its Excellence, the Moral inculcated by it is no other, no less than that important general Maxim, a strict Observation of Truth, on which alone is founded all Morality and Natural Religion".

Morality, as close as it is to the principle of truth and nature, is also close to the principle of the importance of the passions. The epilogue to Douglas argues -- as pointed out earlier, pp. 83-84 -- that the play is successfully moral because it so successfully arouses the emotions.

They [the passions] leave behind them such a gentle
soil,
That there the virtues without culture grow,⁶⁶
There the sweet blossoms of affection blow.

⁶⁶Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 152.

Also emphasizing that the passions are the springs of morality is a little verse story in the Literary Magazine immediately following the prologue and epilogue to Douglas. The story illustrates that sympathy or pity ("Her breast, thick throbbing answer'd to the sigh,/And the big gush, swell'd social in her eye") is the best preparation for true love:

He [the most eligible bachelor, whom all
the frivolous girls were after] knew
compassion in the human breast
Was the rich soil where all the virtues shoot,
And bear abundant life's best flavour'd fruit;
He knew a worthy object might improve,
And risen pitying tears, to balmy love.

Thus it may be concluded that the emphasis on morality in the literary criticism of drama and poetry in the 1750's is not inconsistent with the increasing emphasis on the passions nor with the movement to realism, growing out of the neoclassical emphasis on simplicity, truth, and nature.

CHAPTER IV

CRITICISM OF THE NOVEL AND BIOGRAPHY

The novel and biography are two forms of literature which had their beginnings in the eighteenth century, and the very nature of these forms is closely related to important literary critical principles or trends of the century already discussed in connection with other forms of literature. Perhaps the most important of these principles is that of domesticity; that is, that literature should be concerned with that part of life which all men hold in common. This principle is, of course, a natural outgrowth of the neoclassical emphasis on universals and 'common' sense. It also is inseparable from the emphasis on the role of literature to arouse the emotions. The audience must be able to identify with the characters in order to feel for them and with them.

Although the word 'novel' was used interchangeably with 'romance' in the 1750's, it was the issue of domesticity which separated the 'new' romance, or what came to be called the novel, from the old romance. A review¹ of Richardson's Clarissa in 1749 places it in the "first rank among romances" and explains that it is so much better than "the most applauded of all the French romances" because in them "all the incidents of their private life (sic.) are suppressed: the hero only is exhibited, a being, who has neither wants, or manners, or virtues, or vices, in

¹This review, which appears in the Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (June 1749), 245, 256, is "from a book lately published in Amsterdam".

common with the rest of mankind". Even Marivaux, who "endeavour'd to bring back his countrymen to nature", did not "dare to entertain his country with private and domestic occurrences". Although his Marianne is presented as a girl of virtue,

the particulars which constitute a virtuous life are not exhibited; there is no representation of the minutiae of Virtue, no example of her conduct to those by whom she is surrounded as equals, superiors, or inferiors. Marianne is a kind of chronicle. Clarissa is an history, where the events of her life follow each other in an uninterrupted succession.²

The reviewer concludes his discussion of Clarissa with a remark which reinforces his praise of its 'domesticity' and relates this aspect of it to the neoclassical principles that literature should express universals, that it should be morally instructive, and that it should conform to nature.

Reflections and remarks [in Clarissa] . . . are the result of great knowledge of mankind; yet the whole is within the reach of every capacity, and is calculated to make every reader both the wiser and the better. Marianne amuses; Clarissa not only amuses, but instructs; and the more effectually, as the writer paints nature, and nature alone.³

The reviewer's use of the words "particulars" and "minutiae" (in the earlier quotation to characterize Clarissa and to praise it) together with his use of the word "nature" in the above quotation is indicative of the trend of nature to be particular, already mentioned in Chapter II in relation to nature as being what is scientifically and historically accurate.

Another review of Clarissa makes the same kind of comparisons of

²Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (June, 1749), 246.

³Ibid.

Clarissa with "other romances". The "method" of Clarissa, says the reviewer, "has given the author great advantages" as compared with that of other romances.

The minute particulars of events, the sentiments and conversation of the parties, upon this plan, exhibited with all the warmth and spirit that the passion, supposed to be predominant at the very time, could produce, and with all the distinguishing characteristics, which memory can supply, in a history of recent transactions.⁴

Other romances are, on the other hand, "wholly improbable".

Paradoxically, it is the minutiae of life, the particulars, that become the most accurate representations of the universals, for it is these minutiae that all men hold in common. The principle of 'domesticity', the principle that literature should be concerned with that part of life held in common by all men, leads to a detailed, particular, 'realistic' representation of nature; and thus 'domesticity' is a critical principle most influential in the development of the novel.

Samuel Johnson in his discussion of the "comedy of romance",⁵ the term which he says may be applied "not improperly" to this kind of writing, makes the same kind of comparisons between the new and the old romance as do the two reviews of Clarissa just discussed. Johnson derides the old "heroic romance", which "employs giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites . . . and knights to bring her back from captivity", which "bewilder[s] its personages in deserts . . . and lodge[s] them in imaginary castles", saying that it is hard to conceive "why this wild strain of imagination found reception so long in polite

⁴Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (August, 1749), 345.

⁵Rambler, #4 (Saturday, March 31, 1750).

and learned ages". Such books, he says, are "produced without fear of criticism, without the toil of study, without knowledge of nature, or acquaintance with life". On the other hand,

the works of fiction, with which the present generation seems more particularly delighted, are such as exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind.⁶

He says that the task of "our present writers" is much more difficult because they need not only learning from books, but also "that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse and accurate observation of the living world". They also are always open to criticism "from every common reader" because "they are engaged in portraits of which everyone knows the original, and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance".⁷

The principle of 'domesticity', that literature be concerned with what "every common reader" experiences -- in accurate detail -- is frequently identified in the novel criticism of the decade simply with 'nature'. The first reviewer of Clarissa quoted above concluded his review with the statement that "the writer paints nature and nature alone". And almost all novel criticism of the 1750's uses 'nature' as its basis for either praise or blame. An essay in the World⁸ on "romances", which "the present age is overrun with" is almost totally negative in its criticism, and the basic criticism is that these romances do not follow nature. The essayist derides the romances which "soar above nature" in much the same way that

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸#19 (Thursday, May 10, 1753), by William Whitehead.

Johnson does and then criticizes the writers who "write below nature" because, while they claim to copy nature, in reality they too "know nothing of life". The essayist suggests that Mr. Fitz-Adam (the World's eidolon) serve as a censor and that all his readers be forbidden "even to attempt to open any novel or romance, unlicensed by you; unless it should happen to be stamped Richardson or Fielding", who, the reader will assume, can be counted on to "paint nature and nature alone".

A poem in the Ladies Magazine "On the incomparable History of Tom Jones" opens as follows:

Hail! happy Fielding, who with glorious Ease,
Can'st Nature paint, and paint her still to please;
So exquisitely drawn; so true her Shape,
On each judicious Eye commits a Rape;

Of Fielding's adverse critics, the poet says:

Some squeemish Criticks, with pedantic Spleen,
Condemn the whole, as ludicrous, obscene;
Wou'd these grave Novices peruse Mankind,
Unprejudic'd, nor to Conviction blind,
They'd soon the Originals, so well-copy'd find.

.
The Author takes his Plan from Flesh and Blood,⁹

Another poem "To Henry Fielding, Esq.; On reading his inimitable history of Tom Jones" also bases its praise on 'nature', here a personified "Nature".

Long, thro' the mimic scenes of motly life,
Neglected Nature lost th' unequal strife;
Studios to show, in mad, fantastic shape,
Each grinning gesture of his kindred ape,
Man lost the name: while each, in artful dress,
Appear'd still something more or something less:
Virtue and vice, unmix'd, in fancy stood,
And all were vilely bad, or greatly good;
Eternal distance ever made to keep,

⁹Ladies Magazine, II (May 4, 1751), 202.

reason for this power, says the reviewer, is that "here nature is represented with all its circumstances, and nature only can persuade and move". Immediately following this statement of the moving power of particular nature, he says:

In Clarissa we see a virtuous character, in the same station of life with ourselves, suffer with an immovable and unshaken constancy. The misfortunes of an Ariane move me not at all, those of a Princess of Cleves but faintly. The heroes there are beings too different from myself, and the misfortunes which happen to them, bear no proportion to any that may happen to me.¹³

Thus, the reader must be able to identify with the characters of a story in order to become emotionally involved.

Hawkesworth, editor of the Adventurer and author of a number of short pieces of prose fiction which appear in it, also admits this principle without stating it. He says that "those narratives are most pleasing, which not only excite and gratify curiosity but engage the passions". He means that the narrative must contain a character with which the reader can identify or, at least, sympathize, because he disqualifies history, which deals with states rather than with individuals, and he also disqualifies "voyages and travels" because the character of the narrator "is not rendered sufficiently important".¹⁴

The principle that the good novel touches the emotions, as related to the principles of domesticity and realism, is intimately connected with the moral concern expressed in the literary criticism of the 1750's. In criticism of prose fiction, moral concern is actually the most frequent

¹³Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (August, 1749), 346.

¹⁴Adventure, #4.

kind of criticism during the decade. Hawkesworth, just mentioned, considers himself "a moral writer" or "a moralist".¹⁵ His primary aim is moral instruction and his method is "those narratives . . . most pleasing".¹⁶ He says, "I knew that it would be necessary to amuse the imagination, while I was approaching the heart: and that I could not hope to fix the attention, but by engaging the passions".¹⁷ Hawkesworth believes not only that "the writer of fiction . . . should teach virtue",¹⁸ but that the writer of fiction is in an ideal position to teach virtue:

Precept gains only the cold approbation of reason, and compels an assent which judgment frequently yields with reluctance, even when delay is impossible . . . , but by example the passions are roused; we approve, we emulate, and we honour or love; we detest, we despise, and we condemn, as fit objects are successively held up to the mind; the affections are, as it were drawn out into the field; they learn their exercise in a mock fight and are trained for the service of virtue.¹⁹

As Hawkesworth affirms that fiction can teach virtue because it involves the passions, Johnson, in his discussion of fiction²⁰ stresses that the novel, or the "comedy of romance", can be very effective in teaching either virtue or vice precisely because it is both domestic and realistic. "In the romances formerly written, every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men, that the reader was in very little danger of making any application to himself; the

¹⁵Adventurer, #140.

¹⁶Ibid., #4.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., #16.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Rambler, #4.

virtues and crimes are equally beyond his sphere of activity". But in the kind of romance currently popular

When an adventurer is leveled with the rest of the world, and acts in such scenes of universal drama as may be the lot of any other man, young spectators fix their eyes upon him with closer attention and hope, by observing his behaviour and success; to regulate their own practices when they shall be engaged in the like part.

Thus, says Johnson, making the same point as Hawkesworth, "these familiar histories may perhaps be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality, and convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy than axioms and definitions".

This same concern with morality appears in almost all fiction criticism of the 1750's. The first review of Clarissa mentioned above concludes with the statement that while the old romance amuses, "Clarissa not only amuses, but instructs". The second review of Clarissa states that "Clarissa is rendered almost inestimable, by those exalted sentiments of piety, virtue, generosity, prudence, and humility which adorn the person of the heroine, and are inculcated by her discourse and conduct".²¹

The only kind of fiction criticism which appears in the Monthly Review for May, June and July, 1752, is concerned with morality. Of "the history of the intrigues of a young nobleman" appearing in Du Clos' Memoirs, the Monthly says: "There is nothing to offend the modest reader, no low scenes exhibited, as is but too frequently the case in such writings, to the great reproach of most of our modern authors in this way: the design of the whole appears to be to turn vice into

²¹Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (August, 1749), 347.

ridicule, and to get the laugh on the side of virtue".²² The Monthly Review says of "The history of Jack Conner" that it "may justly be considered upon the whole, as a truly moral tale He [the author] paints the virtues . . . in their natural and attractive colours". The reviewer concludes the review with typical neoclassical praise of any type of literature - that it delights and instructs simultaneously: "Instruction and profitable entertainment are here so agreeably and nicely blended, that the one is never suffered to become tedious and irksome, nor the other to cloy or fill the mind too much".²³ The poem on Tom Jones quoted earlier also stresses the novel's morality: "Deform'd and odious [it] makes all vice appear", and near the end it is affirmed that the work is written for "The Moral good".²⁴ The author of the essay in the World, mentioned above, (#19), which condemns most romances on the grounds that they do not conform to nature, admits that he is really more concerned with those that "write below nature", because they are frequently immoral, than he is concerned with those that "write above nature", for they are at least harmless. A review of Tom Jones in the London Magazine opens with the statement that the work is "a novel, or prose epick composition, and calculated to recommend religion and virtue, to show the bad consequences of indiscretion, and to set several kinds of vice in their most deformed and shocking light".²⁵

²²Monthly Review, VI (June, 1752), 444.

²³Monthly Review, VI (June, 1752), 448.

²⁴Ladies Magazine, II (Saturday, May 4, 1751), 202.

²⁵London Magazine, XVIII (February, 1749), 51.

It is natural that fiction critics of the 1750's are especially concerned with morality because, in the first place, as both Hawkesworth and Johnson point out, the possibilities for teaching virtue by this kind of writing -- in which the reader can identify with the characters and feel for them -- seem to be greater than by the old precept method and, correspondingly, the possibilities for teaching vice are also increased. But secondly, the critics seem especially concerned with morality because of what has been happening to the understanding of nature. A more abstract or ideal nature is more easily identified with the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. The neoclassical critic knows that aesthetic and moral judgments are finally identical, but with the movement of nature toward particular, realistic nature, the identity of the True -- specific true facts -- with the Good and the Beautiful is more difficult; thus the critic, not seeing any immediate or clear moral implication of his aesthetic stance, takes a seemingly separate moral stand, because he knows that aesthetic judgments must be connected with moral ones. Johnson does this when he says: "It is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation".²⁶ If Johnson could identify nature with Truth, he would probably not have to add the seemingly moralistic qualification.

Criticism of biography in the 1750's is inseparable from criticism of the novel. In the first place these new romances were usually in the form of biography (or autobiography²⁷), as is indicated even by the

²⁶ Rambler, #44.

²⁷ Autobiography -- including the memoir -- is a species of biography.

titles - "The History of Jack Conner", "The History of Tom Jones", "Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady". In the first review of Clarissa mentioned above when the reviewer compares Clarissa with Marianne, he says: "Marianne is a kind of chronicle, in which some memorable adventures are well described. Clarissa is an history, where the events of her life follow each other in an uninterrupted succession". It is the history-like, or biographical quality of these new romances which distinguish them from the old and makes them novels.

However, biography itself, including biography criticism, was also just developing, and it is possible to say that the novel influenced the development of biography. It is perhaps more accurate to say that both forms developed simultaneously and were influenced by the same critical principles and movements. The principle of 'domesticity', so important in the development of the novel, is of equal importance to biography. A short statement in the Ladies Magazine concerning 'domesticity' is applicable both to biography and to fiction.

Stories of private Misfortune are not always impertinent: nor are they ever without their Use: Actions eminent, either Good or Ill, are not confined to the People of superior Rank; nor ought a Scene that may convey a Moral to the World, to be the less regarded, because it rises no higher than domestic Life.²⁸

The rather apologetic tone of this argument in behalf of biographies or stories of "private" or "domestic Life" is completely absent from Johnson's statements on biography (Rambler #60), which reject completely the notion of biography as the public life of a public figure. He says that "there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful". Johnson makes this extravagant and astounding

²⁸Ladies Magazine, III (January 11, 1752), 51.

statement because he believes all men to be basically alike: "We are all prompted by the same motives, all deceived by the same fallacies, all animated by hope, obstructed by dangers, entangled by desire, and seduced by pleasure". Therefore, that biography is good which is concerned with the part of a man's life which he holds in common with all men: "The business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents, which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies and display the minute details of daily life". And this domestic detail is, of course, the very thing that the critics were praising in the novel.

Johnson's argument leading up to his affirmation of biography is also applicable to novel criticism. He examines explicitly the process whereby a narrative engages the passions of a reader. (That a narrative should engage the passions of the reader he, of course, does not have to argue. He begins with what is surely accepted as true by his readers).

He says,

All joy or sorrow for the happiness or calamities of others is produced by an act of imagination . . . [which places] us . . . in the condition of him whose fortune we contemplate; so that we feel . . . whatever motions would be excited by the same good or evil happening to ourselves.

That is, in modern terminology, the reader must identify with the characters in order for his passions to be engaged. Johnson then examines the kinds of narratives in which this identification can most easily occur.

Our passions are . . . more strongly moved, in proportion as we can more readily adopt the pains or pleasure proposed to our minds, by recognizing them at once as our own, or considering them as naturally incident to our state of life.

This is the same argument used by both reviews of Clarissa to praise it, but here it is used by Johnson on behalf of biography. "Those parallel

circumstances, and kindred images, to which we readily conform our minds, are, above all other writings, to be found in narrative of the lives of particular persons". Thus Johnson can affirm biography as the most "delightful" and "useful" species of writing. "None [other than biography] can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition".²⁹

Similar praise of biography, though much less finely argued, can be found throughout the periodicals of the decade. Some of it, however, confines biography to the lives of "great Men", as does the following statement from the Ladies Magazine used to introduce a series of Lives: "Characters of Great men, when drawn by Masterly Hands, are esteemed the most instructive and entertaining Part of History".³⁰ The Monthly Review, however, in an introduction to a review of "The Life of Bernard Gilpin", after making the usual statement that "there are scarce any writings more entertaining . . . and none more useful and instructive than the lives of persons of distinguished characters and eminent virtue", then argues in behalf of domesticity.

When the lives . . . of heroes, of mighty conquerors, and eminent statesmen are exposed to view, the bulk of readers, though their admiration may be raised, yet seldom reap any solid advantage from them; but when the lives of those are set before us, as in the performance now under our consideration, who have adorned the ordinary stations of life, by a steady and uniform pursuit of virtue, there is scarce any thing that can have a more happy influence upon our minds.³¹

²⁹Rambler, #60.

³⁰Ladies Magazine, I (August 15, 1750), 328.

³¹Monthly Review, VII (July, 1752), 24.

Indicating how widespread was the influence of the principle of 'domesticity' is a review of a proposed biography of Pope, wherein Pope the man, in his private person, is considered to be a more just subject of the biography than Pope the poet. The reviewer says: "The author's [Pope's] life deserves a just volume; and the editor intends to give it. For to have been one of the first poets in the world is but his second praise. He was in a higher class. He was one of the noblest works of God. He was an honest man".³²

Thus, it can be seen that the principle of domesticity tends to set all men on an equal footing, for that part of a man's life is most important which he shares with all men. Thus, Johnson's affirmation of the value of "a judicious and faithful narrative" of almost anyone's life is not out of place in the general critical climate favouring 'domesticity' in literature.

The interest in biography and particularly those domestic aspects of biography -- which include the private and inner life of a man -- is closely related to the growing interest in psychology (mentioned earlier, p. 15 of Chapter I and p. 64 ff. of Chapter II). References to discovery of "the secret springs of action" (an interest of the "Trifler", see p. 16) occur occasionally in biography reviews.³³ The following introduction to a review of "Familiar Letters of Dr. William Sancroft", containing this phrase, indicates the psychological interest of biography (applicable also to the novel) and shows the relationship between psychological

³²London Magazine, XX (July, 1751), 321.

³³One example is found in a review of "Memoirs of the Marquis of Torcy", Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 120.

interest and moral concern.

Biographical anecdotes are, in general, the most pleasing occurrences in the whole circle of literature: they are notices which serve to fix the most useful knowledge with pleasure and utility in the mind of the reader, viz. the knowledge of the human heart. By these means we become more intimately acquainted with the secret springs of those actions, . . . ³⁴

Desire for knowledge of the human heart, or of human nature, is, of course, intimately connected with the neoclassical concern for 'nature' and for universals, human nature being perhaps the universal of primary interest. Also human nature - or psychology - is an essential element of the moral concern, for morality is the point where theology (or philosophy) impinges upon psychology. Thus, the moralist (and the literary critic of the 1750's almost invariably considers himself a moralist - because of the close relationship between aesthetic and moral judgments) is necessarily interested in psychology.

The interest in psychology, then, and the closely related emphases on 'domesticity' and realistic nature evident in biography and novel criticism of the decade are quite legitimate developments of neoclassical principles; and the novel and biography themselves may be seen as natural outgrowths of neoclassicism especially along the lines of the increasing emphases on particular realistic nature, domesticity, psychology, and the passions.

Of course not all critics of the 1750's agree with Johnson and other critics on the value of biography. Hawkesworth completely disqualifies biography as a "most pleasing narrative". He admits that biography "would always engage the passions, if it could sufficiently gratify

³⁴Literary Magazine, II (June 15, 1757), 228.

curiosity", but this it could never do:

There have been few among the whole human species whose lives would furnish a single adventure; I mean such a complication of circumstances, as hold the mind in an anxious yet pleasing suspense, and gradually unfold in the production of some unforeseen or important event; much less such a series of facts as will perpetually vary the scene, and gratify the fancy, with new views of life.³⁵

It is not surprising that Hawkesworth also fails to find the novel pleasing, for it has "less power of entertainment for it is confined within the narrower bounds of probability [and] the number of incidents is necessarily diminished".³⁶

Although Hawkesworth agrees with the other critics that the passions should be engaged, he believes that appeal to the fancy and imagination is equally important, and he seems to have lost altogether the neoclassical regard for 'nature', which is so important to the advocates of the novel and biography. He suggests that "nature is now exhausted" and that it is the function of art to appeal to the fancy and the imagination, to excite and gratify curiosity. Therefore he gives high praise to the epic poem and to the "Old Romance", both of which "captivate the fancy" and "engage the passions". And he concludes that "perhaps the most generally pleasing of all literary performances are those in which supernatural events are every moment produced by Genii and Fairies; such are the Arabian Nights' Entertainment, the Tales of the Countess d' Auvois, and many others of the same class".³⁷

³⁵Adventurer, #4.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Adventurer, #4. Here Hawkesworth takes into account a type of prose fiction, the oriental tale or pseudo-oriental tale, which became

There is little, if any, other fiction or biography criticism in the periodicals of the decade which places as much emphasis on curiosity, fancy, and imagination as does Hawkesworth's. However, these elements are not entirely neglected by other fiction critics. The first review of Clarissa mentioned above compares it with Pamela and finds it superior on a number of counts, one of which is its variety: "the author has drawn and maintained a great number of characters, and enriched this work with a variety that is wanting in Pamela". Another superior aspect is its excitement of curiosity: "The interesting descriptions are much more frequent than in Pamela; here they succeed each other in an almost uninterrupted series. The reader is allowed no interval of rest; but urged on from one event to another, his curiosity is perpetually both excited and gratified".³⁸ The review of Tom Jones in the London Magazine states:

Through the whole, the reader's attention is always kept awake by some new surprising accident, and his curiosity upon the stretch, to discover the effects of that accident; so that after one has begun to read, it is difficult to leave off before having read the whole.³⁹

very popular in England after the first English version early in the eighteenth century of the Arabian Nights, translated from Antoine Galland's French version. This popularity grew perhaps to its peak during the middle of the century - with Johnson's Rasselas and Goldsmith's Citizen of the World as examples - and then declined before the end of the century, Beckford's Vathek, 1786, being the last notable oriental tale of the century. See Martha Pike Conant, The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century, (New York, 1908). Oriental, or more properly, pseudo-oriental, tales appear in many eighteenth-century periodicals. The Adventurer contains perhaps the greatest number of any single essay periodical. Indicative perhaps of the decline of the popularity of the oriental tale is the fact that the Mirror (Edinburgh, 1779-1780), an essay periodical which, like the Adventurer, published much prose fiction, contains only one oriental tale.

³⁸Gentleman's Magazine, XIX (June, 1749), 245.

³⁹London Magazine, XVIII (February, 1749), 51.

A review of Tom Jones in the Gentleman's Magazine calls it an "ingenious work of imagination", whose "principal persons" could hardly be "more engaging or more interesting". However the rest of the criticism is concerned with how well it copies nature -- how well the "episodes [are] . . . connected with the principal action", how "equally the characters are sustained", how "naturally the incidents arise one out of another".⁴⁰

Although these critics are concerned, along with Hawkesworth, that a work of fiction excite curiosity, they do not find those narratives which are "confined within the narrow bounds of probability" (Adventurer, #4) necessarily deficient in this respect, as does Hawkesworth. But their principal concern is, of course, 'nature', rather than curiosity.

Although Hawkesworth seems completely out of step with the movements emphasizing domesticity and realistic particular nature,⁴¹ he does reflect the thinking of his age when he expresses concern about the lack of probability of these "most pleasing narratives": "It may be thought strange, that the mind should with pleasure acquiesce in the open violation of the most known and obvious truths". But he explains that "the mind is satisfied, if every event appears to have an adequate cause; and when the agency of Genii and Fairies is once admitted, no event which is deemed possible to such agents is rejected as incredible or absurd".⁴² What the story must have, according to Hawkesworth, to satisfy the desire

⁴⁰Gentleman's Magazine, XX (March, 1750), 117.

⁴¹This statement is true of Hawkesworth's fiction criticism, not necessarily of his fiction. Of Hawkesworth's fortyeight Adventure essays which contain fiction, only eleven involve fantastic occurrences and are called "Eastern Tales" by the editor; while twentyseven contain realistic domestic stories.

⁴²Adventurer, #4.

for probability, is "moral probability", by which he means - as deduced from his illustrations - psychological probability.⁴³ That is, the characters must feel and act as it is natural for real human beings to feel and act. If this "moral probability" is preserved, then "our first concession [i.e., to the supernatural agent] is abundantly rewarded by the new scenes to which we are admitted, and the unbounded prospect that is thrown open before us".⁴⁴ Thus, even though Hawkesworth rejects the contemporary emphasis on realistic nature, he cannot avoid the emphasis on realistic human nature.

One of the most prominent kinds of novel criticism of the 1750's is the fact that the novel is frequently completely ignored or rejected by the critic. There frequently appear in the periodicals of the decade such statements as the following, quoted in a review of Letters Concerning Taste, in which the author condemns the modern Englishman for a number of offenses such as irreligion, gaming, etc., among which is the offense that "instead of history, he only reads in novels".⁴⁵ Similarly a play reviewer in the Weekly Magazine says that we have "lost too much our serious cast of mind" as is indicated by "the great increase of trifling publications, and the obvious taste of the age for novels, romance, and books of mere amusement".⁴⁶ The rejection of the novel, and perhaps also biography, as unworthy of notice is probably more widespread

⁴³Another indication of the close relationship between the moral and the psychological for the critic of the 1750's.

⁴⁴Adventurer, #4.

⁴⁵Literary Magazine, II (April 15, 1757), 129.

⁴⁶Weekly Magazine, I (April 15, 1758), 27.

than is indicated by any critical comment, because there is simply so little criticism of the novel and biography in comparison to the amount on other forms of literature. The General Review's "Critic" reviews no biography or novel, and it is evident from the critical principles of the General Review, indicated in its reviews discussed in Chapter II and in the review of Elfrida (Chapter III), that the General Review could very well reject the novel and biography on the grounds of its working principles. For 'nature' according to the General Review is the more abstract nature -- Nature as already adequately painted by the classics; the universals, such as reason, 'common' sense, human nature, are found in man's past knowledge and experience and are expressed most perfectly in mankind's common heritage, which is the received tradition. Thus, for truth one goes to the received tradition rather than to the particular individual life. The General Review does not seem to see the universal as expressed in the particular. Thus it is neither interested in the particularities of science nor of individual persons.

Also since one appropriates the received tradition by means of reason, appeal to the feelings for knowledge or even for motivation is suspect. The novel and biography with their emphases on particular realistic nature, with their interest in psychology and their appeal to the passions, and with their focusing of attention on that part of life which every man has in common ('domesticity'), seem to be asking the reader to look into himself for truth rather than outward to the received tradition. And in asking this, biography and the novel are not only valueless, but immoral, according to the General Review's "Critic" as well as to others, if the General Review's review of Law's Way to Divine Knowledge is any indication. Law, in this work, rejects reason and the

received tradition as ways to divine knowledge and places this knowledge in the intuition, the feelings, the will. The General Review condemns Law's work as immoral because in it "a Foundation is laid for perpetual Disquietude".⁴⁷ The reviewer -- perhaps a rigid neoclassicist-on-the-defensive, insecure and frightened -- sees the received tradition as offering a security which is destroyed when a man must look into himself for Truth. And in his fear he fails to see the dynamic qualities in the neoclassical principles he is trying to protect, and in his efforts to hold them immobile, they become distorted.

The neoclassicist who, like Johnson, really believes in the unity of Truth, is not afraid of the 'new' truths of science or of the truths revealed by one's looking within the particular human being, because he knows these truths will not contradict, but instead be a further enhancement of, the Truth of the received tradition.

The difficulty, however, of reconciling the use of the received tradition with the exercising of original creative genius, evident in the various arguments for and against the classics illustrated in Chapter III, indicates how much easier it might be for the neoclassicist, in embracing the received tradition, which is of proven value, to reject everything else. And the fact that the novel and biography are new forms, without classical models, makes them doubly suspect to such a thinker.

It is probably an exaggeration to assume that the General Review's "Critic" -- and other critics who reject or ignore biography and the novel -- reject them with the same conscious reasoning with which the General Review

⁴⁷ See the discussion of the review, Chapter II, p.

rejects Law's Way to Divine Knowledge. Not only were biography and the novel new forms, but a very great many of both were being published, and many were of very poor quality according to anyone's standards. It is fair to say, however, that the critical stance of those like the General Review's "Critic" is opposed to the very movements or emphases - domesticity, realistic nature, psychology, and the passions - in neoclassical thinking which were essential to the development of or to the critical justification of both the novel and biography.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

By 1749 English periodical publication, which had only begun significant development in the early years of the same century, had increased tremendously, both in numbers and in kinds. Of especial significance for literary criticism are (1) the periodical essay, which had been the significant impetus in the development of periodical publication from the beginning of the century, and (2) the review, which had its beginnings as a periodical in this decade and rapidly developed in both numbers and review methods. Periodical essays not only appeared as separate publications -- essay periodicals such as the Rambler, the Adventurer, and the World -- but were also published in newspapers and magazines. The review also appeared widely in magazines as well as in separate review periodicals. Contributing to the quality of the literary criticism of the period is the fact that many of the prominent authors of the century were involved in the periodical publications of this decade.

The principal movements in literary criticism expressed in the periodicals of the decade are (1) the movement toward the particular, (2) the movement toward domesticity, and (3) the movement toward a greater emphasis on the feelings, the emotions, the passions.

The movement toward the particular is seen in the interest in science, which is concerned specifically and minutely with particular nature, and in the interest in historical accuracy. The interest in science is evident in the many reviews of scientific works found in some

of the periodicals, especially in the Monthly Review and the Literary Magazine as well as in the Gentleman's and London Magazines. These reviews, examined in Chapter II (pp. 46-8), also suggest the intimate relationship between interest in science and the interest in accuracy of historical detail. This same interest in scientific and historical accuracy is also evident in reviews of poetry and drama, as in the reviews of The Roman Father and the Triumph of Isis discussed in Chapter III (pp. 94-5) where the interest in scientific and historical truth is identified with the principle of simplicity. Simplicity is what is completely natural and also what is elegant; that is, what is absolutely appropriate, true to nature. Concern for the simple and natural defined in this way is evident throughout drama criticism, both in the concern for simple and natural scenery and stage devices and in the concern for the removal of "even each Moral, Sentimental Stroke/Where not the Character but Poet spoke". These concerns are evident in the "simplification" of Shakespeare, in Mason's effort to bring back the Greek chorus to enable the poet to let his characters speak absolutely naturally, and, throughout drama and poetry criticism, in the concern that the writer copy nature accurately, as is expressed in Warton's ridicule of the poets "who think they can form just ideas of valleys, mountains, and rivers in a garret on the Strand", quoted by Johnson in a review in the Literary Magazine.

The concern for particular, realistic nature, important as it is in poetry and drama criticism, is an overriding concern in criticism of the novel and biography. For the biography is composed, of course, of the particulars of a particular man's life. And that the novel be biography-like is a part of its very definition, as is evident in the early reviews in the Gentleman's Magazine of Clarissa, where Clarissa is

compared with the French romance, and in discussion of the novel in essays in the Rambler, the Adventurer, and the World. And wherever Fielding is mentioned, it is his ability to copy nature accurately that is praised.

The movement toward domesticity is important in the drama criticism of the decade, as is evident in Mason's confession that his one departure from the classical model in his *Elfrida* is in his emphasis on his characters' domestic lives, an emphasis characteristic of "our modern genius" (Chapter III, p. 81). Although important in drama criticism, domesticity is essential in the criticism of the novel, because, again, domesticity -- like the emphasis on the particular -- is essential to the definition of the novel, as is evidenced again in the reviews of *Clarissa* and in essays in the Rambler (#4) and in the Adventurer (#4). And it is the concept of domesticity in biography -- that is, that not a man's public life, but instead that part of his life which he holds in common with all men, is the fit subject for biography (a view set forth most explicitly in Johnson's Rambler #10) -- that makes biography a genuine form of literature and worthy of copying in fiction. Thus the development of the idea of biography as domestic rather than public is inseparable from the development of the novel.

The movement toward a greater emphasis on the feelings, the emotions, the passions, is evident throughout the criticism of the period, from comments on philosophical works like William Law's Way to Divine Knowledge, Hume's Four Dissertations, and other works discussed in Chapter II, to criticism of poetry and drama, as in the comments on Gray's Odes

or the play Douglas or the frequent praise of Shakespeare, the "pow'rful ruler of the heart" (Chapter III, p. 85). And it is their ability to touch the emotions, to engage the passions, that is the major proof of the worth of biography and the novel, as is evidenced especially in the two reviews of Clarissa and in Johnson's essays on fiction (Rambler #4) and on biography (#60), wherein the fact is stressed that the reader can more easily identify with the characters than in other genres and thus more easily and deeply be moved.

These three movements - toward the particular, toward domesticity, toward the passions - are closely related to each other. The growing interest in psychology, for example, is a scientific interest - and interest in particulars of realistic nature; it is also an interest in human nature, that part of life held in common by all; and it is closely related to an interest in the passions. Hume in his Four Dissertations, the author of Letters Concerning Taste, Burke in his work on the sublime and the beautiful, and the reviewers of all of these - as is evident in the discussion in Chapter II - are all interested in psychology, with varying degrees of emphasis on each of the three movements.

These three movements are also dependent upon each other. The emphasis on domesticity invites an emphasis on the particularities of private life; it invites the presentation of the minutiae required by realistic nature. The amount of minutiae and the accuracy of detail is particularly emphasized in the two reviews of Clarissa as contributing to the portrayal of Clarissa as a person with whom the reader can readily identify. Johnson in Rambler #4 also points out that the writer of the novel must take great pains to be absolutely accurate in detail because, since he is writing of what everyone experiences, every reader becomes a

critic and can judge of the truth of all the particulars.

Secondly, an appeal to the passions invites domesticity; appeal to the passions requires the audience to identify with characters in literature, as Mason pointed out in his remarks on Elfrida; thus the characters' lives must invite identification: either they must be private personages or those parts of their lives which are private, or domestic must be emphasized, as Johnson argues in Rambler #60. Also an appeal to the passions requires, according to the critics of the decade, a realistic presentation of nature. This requirement is obvious in biography and novel criticism; and in criticism of poetry and drama the dependency of the passions upon nature is frequently stressed - from the reviewer of Dyer's Georgic, the Fleece, in the Literary Magazine to the drama critic in the Ladies Magazine who says "Garriick, like Nature, moves the Heart". (See Chapter III, p. 98).

It is essential to an understanding of the literary criticism of the period to see that these three movements are natural outgrowths of important neoclassical principles already recognized by English writers. The neoclassical idea of universals is clearly present in each movement. The idea of a universal human nature is essential to the emphasis on domesticity, the emphasis on that part of life held in common by all men. The emphasis on the passions, the feelings, is also grounded in the belief in a universal human nature; the belief in common feelings is consistent with the belief in common sense. (See particularly the examination of the criticism of Law's work, p. 51ff). The emphasis on the particular is also consistent with the neoclassical idea of universals, for the universal is expressed most perfectly in the particular. This paradox is especially clear in criticism, like that of the novel, which holds

that the more accurate the detail of a private life, the more universal it becomes.

These three movements are outgrowths not only of the neoclassical universal, but also of the neoclassical emphasis on Nature and Truth, discussed at particular length in Chapter III (p. 96ff). The neoclassical rule that art should copy nature is taken toward its logical conclusion, and what is True must also be historically and scientifically true.

These three movements are also closely related to the neoclassical belief in the underlying unity of the Good with the True and the Beautiful and the resulting emphasis on morality pervasive throughout the criticism of the period. Literature is most morally effective if it moves its readers. That the passions are the springs of morality is a neoclassical principle that receives great emphasis in the 1750's. This emphasis is seen in drama criticism, as in that of the play Douglas or in criticism of Shakespeare (Chapter III, p. 84), and particularly in criticism of the novel. For literature to move the passions, the audience must identify with the characters, a process examined explicitly by Johnson in Rambler #60; therefore, the characters' private lives (domesticity) must be presented realistically (particular nature).

The neoclassical idea of universals includes -- as a most important part -- the common heritage of mankind, the received tradition, which contains a distillation of the Truth, embodied particularly in the Greek and Roman classics. Many neoclassicists do not see the three movements just described as in any way contradictory to mankind's common heritage. However, as is evident in the literary criticism of the decade, there is some difficulty in reconciling a proper use of the classics with the expression of original creative genius (involving an expression of the

genius's feelings). This difficulty is seen particularly in Shakespeare criticism, but also in criticism of contemporary works by the uneducated, discussed in Chapter III, (pp 76-7). Some critics, as a result of this difficulty, reject the classics altogether -- like the poet who says proudly: "I ne'er was on Parnassus bred".

Other critics of the 1750's, like the "Critic" of the General Review, in their concern to preserve the heritage, which is of proven value, object: (1) to the increasing emphasis on feeling and the passions because the classics are appropriated by reason and by means of education; (2) to the idea that truth can be found by looking inward to the feelings or to a particular individual life and experience (as in the novel and biography) rather than outward to mankind's common experience distilled in our heritage; (3) to whatever appears to be new, such as scientific enquiry, or the novel and biography as new literary forms, because the Truth is already embodied in the received tradition. These three objections are made, or implied, by the General Review's "Critic" in his reviews of Law's Way to Divine Knowledge and of Mason's Elfrida as well as in his other reviews discussed in Chapter II and in his rejection of science and of biography and the novel. In making these objections the General Review's "Critic" and those of similar persuasion reject; thus, most of the aspects of the three important movements in literary criticism evident in the periodicals of the 1750's.

It may be said in conclusion that although these three movements -- toward realistic nature, toward domesticity, toward the passions -- are evident in criticism of all types of works, philosophy, drama, and poetry, these movements are absolutely essential in the criticism of the novel and of biography, because the very development of the novel and biography is

intimately related to these movements.

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