

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MEMOIRS

AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
SOME SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
MEMOIRS AND RODERICK RANDOM

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INTRODUCTION

In the mid-eighteenth century memoirs were very popular. This is attested to by their frequent appearance in contemporary book lists and in the number of editions printed of each work. Between January 1746 and December 1750 over forty works purporting to be memoirs were given in the Gentleman's Magazine's monthly listings.

An examination of the publishing history up until approximately 1750 of a few representative memoirs demonstrates their evident popularity. Ludlow's Memoirs first published in 1698-9 came out in four more editions (1720-1, two in 1751, 1771) and a French translation. The Memoirs of Sir James Melvil of Halhill appeared in 1683, but went through three editions by 1752. Hamilton's account of amorous intrigue, the Memoirs of the Life of Grammont, was published in Boyer's translation in 1714, reprinted the same year and republished at least three more times, in 1719, 1753 and 1760; Walpole's private edition was printed in 1773 and publicly published by Dodsley in 1783.

The evident popularity of the genre at this time raises the possibility of relationships with an early novel such as Roderick Random.

The examination is necessarily limited in scope. The conventional historical memoir has been emphasised. The private adventure memoir has been treated to some extent; but the associated type, the memoir of intrigue, of which Grammont is a good example, has been omitted.

Even though the memoir was of French origin, the writer has concentrated upon English memoirs in the main. The strengths of the available collections restricted the field, yet English memoirs are sufficiently individualistic in their approach to warrant a separate

treatment. In recognition of the debt of later English authors, particularly Hervey, to the French memoirists particular prominence has been given to the Memoirs of the Duke of Saint-Simon. If there seems to be a disproportionate emphasis upon Hervey, this is because he unites and typifies many of the characteristics of other writers.

It was not felt necessary to define the memoir here as tentative definitions will naturally emerge in the course of the thesis.

Smollett, like other eighteenth-century writers of fiction (Defoe and Cleland for example), dubs his early works as memoirs. Although the idea for this thesis partly sprang from a desire to see whether there was any substance in this usage, he was selected to represent the novel primarily because of the factual element in his early novels. Defoe would have been more suitable, but J. C. Major has already shown Defoe's debt in narrative technique and the treatment of historical events to the genre. Criticism of early Smollett works has tended to stress his debt to the picaresque novel; this essay attempts to see if other factors should also be considered. Roderick Random has been chosen for its obvious predisposition to similarities with the memoir - the use of autobiographical experience and a "narrator agent". Occasional reference is made to Peregrine Pickle.

POINT OF VIEW IN THE MEMOIR

When Smollett discussed the function of the central character in the novel, he chose a metaphor derived from the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur to describe the relationship between the hero and the plot. The "principal personage" must "unwind the clue of the labyrinth".¹ This image, which was an elaboration of the more common metaphor of the "thread" of a narrative, was also employed by eighteenth-century memoirists in a similar sense. It was a favourite expression with both Colley Cibber and his literary protégée, Laetitia Pilkington.

Cibber, after digressing in his Apology, obligingly provided a recapitulation to assist the reader's memory: "Lest therefore the frequent digressions that have broke in upon it may have entangled his memory, I must beg leave to throw together the heads of what I have already given him, that he may again recover the clue of my discourse".² Mrs. Pilkington used the expression twice in similar circumstances after returning from digressions to the main course of her narrative: "'Tis now, I think, full time for me to take up my Clue, and go on with my Memoirs"³ and "But once more to gather up my Clue".⁴

¹Smollett, Count Fathom, p. 3.

²Cibber, p. 154.

³Pilkington, III, 81.

⁴Pilkington, I, 127.

In both writers the clue that threads its way through the particular work is a chronological account of the writer's life. In Cibber this serves as a basis for a broader treatment of the history of the stage during his lifetime; the digressions treat related subjects, but Cibber always returns to his chronological framework. In the same way, Smollett's heroes' actions form the substantial framework of the novels; but the metaphor can be expanded beyond this meaning to include the means of narration. In Roderick Random Smollett employed a first person narrative technique where the hero both relates the narrative and provides the material for the narration. There are shifts to other narrators, but their accounts are still transmitted by Roderick, so that there is supposedly a unified point of view in the work. Peregrine Pickle and Ferdinand Fathom have third person narrators, but this aspect in itself does not necessarily account for the fluidity of the narrative stance or point of view, which often moves away from that of the particular hero. In the memoir on the other hand, there is a more consistent relationship between the substance of the narration and the narrator, whose life at once furnishes the broad outline or clue and the historical materials. Like the fictional narrator of Roderick Random, he may present an apparent variety of informational sources for his accumulated experience; but the relation of his experience is his own and reflects his own viewpoint, his personality and his relationship to events.

Swift defined the memoir genre and indicated its origin in his introduction to Temple's Memoirs Part III: "'Tis to the French

(if I mistake not) we chiefly owe that manner of Writing; and Sir William Temple is not only the first, but I think the only English-man (at least of any Consequence) who ever attempted it. The best French Memoirs are writ by such Persons as were the Principal Actors in those Transactions they pretend to relate, whether of Wars or Negotiations."⁵

Details of birth appear to have been considered important by the more noble writers, probably because they enhanced the writer's credentials, for the period before the assumption of public office was passed over as quickly as possible. The usually garrulous Saint-Simon was typical of most memoirists in the way he lightly skimmed over the details of his childhood and adolescence. The avid royalist, Beresby, departed from the norm and approached proper autobiographical concerns by his inclusion of a full account of his early life and education only to suffer at the hands of his eighteenth-century editor who deleted this portion as irrelevant to the more public concerns of the work: "Sir JOHN having very minutely acquainted us with his Birth, Education and Travels, which could neither affect the Reader, nor be admitted as part of what we promise to print of him, we shall set out from the Year 1658."⁶ Another exception is the Memoirs of Sir James Melvil of Halhill, which commences with the period of Melville's youth. But the exception is only apparent, for the young Melville began his long and close association with the intrigues and courts of princes as a page to Mary Queen of Scots when

⁵ Temple, p. v.

⁶ Beresby, p. 1.

he was only fourteen.

The nature of his public office or position at court was critical for the memoirist; this gave him the opportunity of witnessing affairs of historical importance or scenes of royal intimacy. Hervey, as Vice Chamberlain under George II, was ideally placed. His duties towards and constant attendance upon the royal family made eavesdropping upon scenes such as the following private interview between the Princess Royal, soon to be married to the Prince of Orange, and George II either easy or unavoidable:

A little while after this intended marriage was made public, and nothing but a few forms remaining to be adjusted for the completion of it, I saw her walking in the garden at Richmond tête-a-tête with her father a considerable time, her hand constantly in his, he speaking with great earnestness and seeming affection, and she listening with great emotion and attention, the tears falling so fast all the while that her other hand went every moment to her cheek to wipe them away. At the conclusion of the conversation he embraced her, whilst she kissed his hand with as much seeming fondness and respect as the Prince of Orange could have kissed hers.⁷

More important for the historically-oriented reader was the position Hervey occupied as the link between Walpole's whig government and the monarch by virtue of his friendship with the Queen who, as Hervey and Walpole both knew, dominated George II. It was futile to approach the King directly, so the Queen was used as an intermediary. She also served as a useful source of information on the King's thoughts about matters of state. Hervey detailed one of the methods by which he was able to at once influence the Queen's thoughts and sound her for information:

⁷Hervey, p. 59.

This summer Lord Hervey had more frequent opportunities than any other person about the Court of learning the Queen's sentiments on these **affaires**, and conveying to her his own. Wednesdays and Saturdays, which were the King's days for hunting, he had her to himself for four or five hours, her Majesty always hunting in a chaise, and as she neither saw nor cared to see much of the chase, she had undertaken to mount Lord Hervey the whole summer (who loved hunting as little as she did), so that he might ride constantly by the side of her chaise, and entertain her whilst other people were entertaining themselves with hearing dogs bark and seeing crowds gallop.⁸

In the same fashion, Cibber's long career upon the stage, first as an actor and then as actor-manager, provided him with the personal experience necessary for his Apology, an amiable mixture of stage history, gossip and egotism, which often parallels its progenitor, the political memoir: "If I have any particular qualification for this task, more than another, it is that I have been an ocular witness of the several facts that are to fill up the rest of my volume; and am, perhaps, the only person living (however unworthy) from whom the same materials can be collected."⁹

The paradoxical nature of the memoirist's life, subordinated to events yet essential to their description, is also evident in the conclusions of the **memoir**. For example, William Temple's Memoirs of What Past in Christendom and Memoirs Part III, which begin with Temple's return to public life, conclude upon his retirement from the Privy Council.¹⁰ Temple believed that he was sufficiently qualified to write only of that period:

The confidence of the King my Master, and of his Chief Ministers, as well as that of others abroad, gave me the advantage to discern and to

⁸ Hervey, p. 65.

⁹ Cibber, p. 184.

¹⁰ As Memoirs Part I only consists of letters concerning Temple's early negotiations with the Dutch, the work has not been included.

observe the true Springs and Motions of both, which were often mistaken in Court, and Parliament, and thereby fasten'd many Suspicions, Confidences, Applauses, Reproaches, upon Persons, and at times where they were very undeserved. Twenty years of my Life I pass'd in Publick Thoughts and Business from the Thirty Second to the Fifty Second Year of my Age ... All the rest of my Age before, and since that Period, I have taken no more notice of what pass'd upon the Publick Scene, than an Old man uses to do of what is acted on a Theatre where he gets as easie a Seat as he can, entertains himself with what passes upon the Stage, not caring who the Actors are, or what the Plot, nor whether he goes out before the Play be done. Therefore you must expect nothing from me out of the compass of that time, nor any thing of that it self with much application or care, further than of Truth.¹¹

The Nemoirs of Saint-Simon conclude with the death of the Regent, with whom the author had been upon friendly terms; but in effect, as Saint-Simon realized, the work ended with his retirement from the government. The disgruntled author complained that this which was forced upon him by the triumph of the bourgeois Dubois and the growing egalitarianism of the court, would naturally affect the quality of the memoirs:

After this event I began insensibly to withdraw from public affairs. . . . The year 1723 commenced and found me in this spirit. It is at the end of this year I have determined to end those memoirs and the details of it will not be so full or so abundant as of preceding years.

.....
Acting thus, it is easy to see that I was mixed up in nothing, and what I shall have to relate now will have less of the singularity and instructiveness of good and faithful memoirs, than of the dryness and sterility of the gazettes.¹²

Often the writer's retirement was forced by the death of the monarch upon whom he had been dependent. Hervey's Memoirs finish abruptly after the death of Queen Caroline; although Hervey was to live on for some time in a position of less importance, his intimate association with the court had ended. Few courtiers were as lucky as Cary or

¹¹ Temple, Memoirs of What Past in Christendom, pp. v-vii.

¹² Saint-Simon, III, 367-369.

Melville, who kept themselves in favour through several reigns. Cary, by astute management, was able to continue his career under James I after the death of Elizabeth, even though he had engaged in fighting against the border Scots, and still keep himself in favour with Charles I.

Those memoirs which are primarily concerned with the justification of the **narrator's** behaviour or of a court are very closely linked to the career of the writer. The avowed intention of the Duchess of Marlborough was to outline the course of her relationship with Anne. She concluded: "Thus, my lord, I have given you a short history of my favour with my royal mistress, from its earliest rise to it's [sic] irrecoverable fall."¹³ Within this period, which concluded in 1710, she has not recorded a continuous historical narrative, but has concentrated upon a vindication of her own character. It was this which prompted her to begin the Account: "My chief aim (if I have any acquaintance with my own heart) has been both in publick and private life, to deserve approbation; but I have never been without an earnest desire to have it too, both living and dead, from the wise and virtuous."¹⁴

The use of the author's personal experience was not simply to give the account a formal structure, but to guarantee the memoirs' authenticity. The memoirist's position as eye-witness assured the reader of the truth of the narration; the writer was in possession of the necessary material and (because he had experienced it at first

¹³Marlborough, p. 270.

¹⁴Marlborough, p. 5.

hand) he knew it to be true. Yet in many memoirs the consistent use of the author's private experience alone throughout the course of the memoir was unattainable. It was impossible to expect one man to have a direct knowledge of all aspects of a situation; even Hervey's area of personal experience had to be supplemented by information gathered from others. Memoirs have always served to some degree as histories of the recent past, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth **centuries** **this** aspect received great emphasis. **Although the basic structure was formed** from a segment of the life of the author, the scope of the memoir was often broadened to include all the events that had some relevance to the author's experience or even to all the major events which had taken place within the circumscribed period. Thus, the concerns of the memoir forced the writer to expand his vision beyond the boundaries limited by direct personal experience to include the secondary experience of others.

Edmund Ludlow, whose memoirs range over a vast amount of material, "the most remarkable transactions that passed during the whole time England was governed without a King,"¹⁵ included details of events which occurred in England when he was resident in Ireland and Switzerland. He declared at the outset of his work that he had no intention of limiting his field of view to his own experience, but that he would depend upon reliable witnesses for information which he had not gathered at first hand:

And hoping that my retirement may protect me from the rage and malice of

¹⁵Ludlow, III, iii.

my enemies, I cannot think it a mis-spending of some part of my leisure, to employ it in setting down the most remarkable counsels and actions of the parties engaged in the late civil war which spread itself through the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland: Wherein I shall not strictly confine myself to a relation of such things only in which I was personally concerned, but also give the best account I can of such other memorable occurrences of those times as I have learned from persons well informed, and of unsuspected fidelity.¹⁶

The other Civil War memoirists, Clarendon and Holles, are similar to Ludlow. Probably all three writers were more concerned with presenting an overall description in vindication of their party's position than in giving a more limited personal view of what they alone had experienced.

This tendency may have been more pronounced in these propagandists, but it was also present in other political memoirs. Saint-Simon devoted whole chapters to events in Spain. Admittedly these served as background material for the reader's comprehension of Louis XIV's later concern with the Spanish Succession. Saint-Simon was also to travel much later to Spain as the French ambassador for the conclusion of a marriage treaty between France and Spain, so that these chapters were also relevant to the author's own experience. As the author was not present at the Spanish court at this time, he was forced to rely upon the testimony of others, which he freely acknowledged: "I learned all this from every one in Spain; and moreover I asked the Marquis de Villena himself to give me the full details; and he, who was all uprightness and truth, and who had conceived some little friendship for me, related with pleasure all I have written."¹⁷ In another

¹⁶Ludlow, I, 1.

¹⁷Saint-Simon, III, 113.

instance he admitted: "I must not be proud; and must admit that I knew nothing of all this, save at secondhand."¹⁸

Temple also took the trouble to inform the reader that his information was, of necessity, from second-hand sources, when he was removed from the government: "And though the rest of the Council were generally of the Contrary Opinion, yet the King fell in with these four, and concluded the Thing; against the Duke's Will and his Friends, as I have been told: For during all these transactions I was in the country, with my thoughts and Preparations wholly turn'd upon my Spanish Embassy."¹⁹

Despite the problems caused by the nature of the material with which the memoirist dealt, a point of view dependent upon personal experience was still the norm of most memoirs. Consequently the author was not obliged to mention his presence as an eye-witness to events, when it was obvious to the reader that the information was from first hand. After Burnet's elevation to a bishopric he was able to attend the debates in the House of Lords; the reports of these debates were therefore obviously his own, so it was not necessary to mention this. Melville, after stating his qualifications for writing the memoirs in his prefatory address, never obtruded into the narrative to assure the reader of his reliability as a narrator, because this was understood. Even Ludlow, who in effect claimed that his work was more of a history than a memoir, did not mention his presence at the House of Commons, except when he took

¹⁸Saint-Simon, III, 70.

¹⁹Temple, Memoirs, Part III, pp. 115-116

part in debates, yet it is obvious to the reader that events such as Cromwell's assumption of power must have been personally observed by Ludlow, a prominent member of Parliament: "Maj.-Gen. Lambert kneeling, presented him with a sword in the scabbard, representing the civil sword; which Cromwell accepting, put off his own: intimating thereby, that he would no longer rule by the military sword, though like a false hypocrite he designed nothing more."²⁰

It only became necessary for the writer to mention his actual observation of an event when it was evident that much of the other material included in the memoir was derived from other sources. For instance, Saint-Simon, who employed a great variety of sources which range from common court gossip to the Dauphin, often distinguished those events he has himself seen by mentioning his presence as a witness.

I was at the palace on Tuesday, March 30th, and after supper I saw Madame de Soubise arrive, leading the Comtesse de Furstemberg, both of whom posted themselves at the door of the King's cabinet. . . . I approached in order to witness the scene. Madame de Soubise appeared scarcely able to contain herself, and the Comtesse seemed furious. As the King passed, they stopped him. Madame de Soubise said two words in a low tone. The Comtesse in a louder strain demanded justice against the Cardinal de Bouillon, who, she said, not content in his pride and ambition with disregarding the orders of the King, had calumniated her and Cardinal de Furstemberg in the most atrocious manner, and had not even spared Madame de Soubise herself. The King replied to her with much politeness, assured her she should be contented, and passed on.²¹

When the author treated material of great importance, it was essential to ensure its credibility by stating the source. If the author himself was a witness, then the reader would be to some degree assured of its veracity. Hence the memoirist might emphasise his own

²⁰Ludlow, II, 40.

²¹Saint-Simon, I, 162-163.

presence in situations where doubt could exist over the actual nature of events. Burnet felt it necessary to give the reader a voucher for the truth of his account of King William's death by stating that he did not move from the presence of the dying King after he had been called to the bedside.²² **One needs only to examine Burnet's treatment of the circumstances surrounding the death of Charles II and his speculations about the nature of the King's religion to see what could happen in the absence of first-hand verification.**²³

The memoirist, to substitute for the implicit guarantee of veracity provided by his own experience, had to provide either a witness known to be of unimpeachable integrity or give an estimate of the reliability of the source.

To a royalist such as Reresby it was unthinkable that the word of a king should be doubted, so he confidently allowed James II's version of the interview with the Duke of Monmouth to stand without a qualifying comment:

When his Grace came to Town, the King, at his own request, saw him at Whitehall, where he expressed some Detestation of his Attempt; threw the Blame on the Earl of Argyle, and Ferguson, who had stirred him up to it; disclaimed all Title to the Crown, and said he was put upon assuming the Stile of King, with a view that the Quality would the sooner come in to him; all this I heard the King say, but what he farther confessed, was not then known.²⁴

Reresby does not appear to have realized that a king could sometimes have ample political reasons for at least distorting the facts, if not for lying.

²²Burnet, III, 334.

²³Burnet, II, 226 ff.

²⁴Reresby, p. 121.

The Duchess of Marlborough felt confident enough of Anne's truthfulness to boast of her reliability as a source for an anecdote about Queen Mary's harsh treatment of the Princess when Anne was still recovering from giving birth to a still born child:

She came attended by the ladies DERBY and SCARBOROUGH. I am sure it will be necessary to have a good voucher to persuade your lordship of the truth of what I am going to relate. The PRINCESS herself told me, that the QUEEN never asked her how she did, nor expressed the least concern for her condition, nor so much as took her by the hand. The salutation was this. . .²⁵

James Melville forestalled any criticism of his inclusion of matters which he was too young to learn of first hand by emphasising the impeccability of his authority:

It may appear impertinent for me to write thus much of the affairs of Dutchland, being myself but young for the time, and not present in the French Army. But afterward, when I was in Germany, I had this account from the good Elector Palatine; so that nonne could attain to more certain information therof.²⁶

Lord Hervey, who was very exact in accounting for the derivation of his material, sometimes allowed the testimony of Walpole to pass on the merits of its bearer:

Yet all this while the King, besides his ordinary letters by the post, never failed sending a courier once a week with a letter of sometimes sixty pages, and never less than forty, filled with an hourly account of everything he saw, heard, thought, or did, and crammed with minute trifling circumstances, not only unworthy of a man to write, but even of a woman to read, most of which I saw, and almost all them heard reported by Sir Robert, to whose perusal few were not committed.²⁷

But at other times, particularly when the anecdote had the appearance of fiction, he expressed his scepticism about the veracity of Walpole.

²⁵Marlborough, p. 70.

²⁶Melville, p. 26.

²⁷Hervey, pp. 132-133.

"Sir Robert Walpole told me one day that the King, speaking to him of his son soon after his arrival, said with an air of contempt and satisfaction: 'I think this is not a son I need be much afraid of'. But this relation I look upon as apocryphal and give it as such."²⁸

And again: "I relate this conversation just as Sir Robert Walpole told it to me, and as he said the Queen told it to him; but I am apt to believe either he embellished in repeating this incident, or she bragged in reporting it."²⁹

If the ~~broadness of the field of view of the political memoirist~~ was caused by the public nature of the writer's life, the difficulty of the subject, and the demands of his readers for a historical narrative, then we would expect to find a more limited field of view in an allied form where these factors are absent. The recollections of adventurers, which were classed in the eighteenth century as belonging to the genre of memoirs, were not intended to supply the reader with the facts of history and the lives of their subjects usually had little to do with major European events. Instead ~~private memoirs were preoccupied with~~ only one of the aspects of the public memoir, the exotic and ~~unfam-~~iliar. In the latter the reader delved into the often seamy details of court life - ~~private accounts dealt with strange adventures in~~ settings foreign to most readers. Amongst the works which enjoyed great popularity were Drury's account of his long captivity amongst the natives of Madagascar, Falconer's various adventures in the West Indies, and Bonneval's memoirs, which dealt with his service to the Turks. Freed

²⁸Hervey, p. 50.

²⁹Hervey, p. 159.

from the necessity of providing an extensive historical coverage, the writer could concentrate solely upon the depiction of the events of his life as they appeared to him.

Occasionally an adventurer such as Bonneval, who did take part in some of the major European battles of his time, lapsed into a broader view; but at the time he would be conscious of the impropriety of this device: "The action began at day-break, by attacking the village of Neerwinden. But as I was in the horse, and the foot only were concerned in that action, I shall say nothing of it; for I will not speak of any thing but what I have seen, and what I have had some share in."³⁰ But such occasions are exceptional, because the writer usually emphasised the quality of an actual personal experience at the expense of a more superficial comprehensive view to give the reader his own impression of events. This narrower and more consistent point of view can best be seen in the adventurer's descriptions of battles. Here the writer, unlike his cousins the political and military memoirists, is not concerned with giving information about the general movements of armies for the edification of future military historians, but relates instead how the battle appeared to him. The confusion, the sense of personal isolation, the ignorance of any experience wider than the meaningless view of the individual which are recurring elements in the battle descriptions of the adventurers are very much akin to the experience of Tolstoy's Regimental Commander in War and Peace, who was unable to tell amid the confusion of battle who had attacked him or what the results of his

³⁰Bonneval, I, 12.

attack had been.

Edward Coxere, a seventeenth-century sailor, concentrated almost entirely upon his part in a battle with some Spanish ships. A few introductory remarks were necessary to tell the reader how the fight began, but after that the description is confined to what Coxere experienced himself.

We sailing along the coast of Spain near Malaga, in the night we saw a ship, with whom we kept company till day. He would fain a shifted from us, but we were unwilling he should; so at last he endeavours to outsail us, we the like, to keep company with him, which we did. We found him to be a Spanish man-of-war looking out to take our Englishmen. We plied our great guns at him, which proved unpleasant to him. After firing many guns we got near him. I being quartered between decks, orders was given that none should enter but from the upper deck, at which I was troubled because I was not to enter. I, being greedy at the work, run aft into the gun-room and took a pistol in my hand, and with it I got upon the upper deck contrary to orders, we being then so near the Spaniard that I got out of our main-shrouds and got hold of his bowsprit and entered over among the Spaniards, who were forced to run down in hold and become our prisoners.

I soon got to the great cabin. I not meeting anything to purpose, I got between decks, where I possessed myself with a chest and clothes, which I had great need of; yet I was not satisfied, expected better purchase, but it fell not in my way, though to some it did at that time, who met with a parcel of gold. I took the Dominie his coat from his back, which was he that read Mass to them; had I searched him nearer, I had met with a parcel of money.³¹

Robert Drury surpasses Coxere's rough prose with his vivid accounts of struggle against the natives of Madagascar. His restricted angle of vision actually becomes a narrative asset. **He relates every-**thing exactly as he saw it with no pauses for suppositions about the causes of events or for retrospective reflections to disturb the immediacy of the relation:

But this vain motion of being safe and secure too quickly vanished; for as soon as they missed us in the morning, they pursued us like so many

³¹Coxere, p. 68.

greyhounds; and now before we got within a mile of Manderra river overtook us. Thereupon they began to butcher our men resting under the trees, striking their lances into their sides and throats. Though I was one of those who could not travel well, yet there were twenty behind me; the woman, whose life was preserved in our ship, was next to me. I seeing them kill our people in this barbarous manner, threw off my coat and waistcoat, and trusted to my heels, for the foremost of our people having passed the river, and I not being far off took courage; but hearing the report of a gun, I looked back, and saw the poor woman fall, and the negroes sticking their lances in her sides. My turn was next, for the same negroes pursued me, and before I was got to the brink of the river they fired a gun at me; but I jumped in.³²

The same demand made upon the political memoirist for a continuous account of a historical process is also partly responsible for another basic difference in the point of view between the private and public memoir. The political memoirist's outlook upon the past is essentially retrospective, for the author gives the version of events which he holds at the time of composition and this later view may not necessarily coincide exactly with his immediate impressions at the time of the events.

~~Some changes of interpretation are caused by the writer's personal involvement with events, but others are caused by the~~ accumulation of further material from other sources. The private memoirist is in a much more fixed situation and is often closer to the diarist than the conventional memoirist in his exact presentation of past impressions. In fact, Falconer's account purports to use excerpts from a journal, although this could be an imitation of Robinson Crusoe. Coxere is closer to the public memoir in that his work is written from a later standpoint presenting details as the author remembered them.

Most public figures wrote their memoirs at an advanced age,

³²Drury, p. 48.

after they had retired from public life. Sometimes, as in the case of Ludlow and De Retz, there was a considerable period between retirement or exile, and composition. Ludlow's memoirs were published thirty-eight years after the Restoration. De Retz's memoirs were begun sixteen years after the date upon which they close.³³

Other writers in this category include: Bodley, Cary, Clarendon, Lovat, the Duchess of Marlborough, Melville and Saint-Simon.

Reresby, Temple, and Hervey are all exceptions to this general rule. The Memoirs of Sir John Reresby abruptly conclude with the author's reception by King William, which took place some time after April 20, 1689,³⁴ the last date which appears in the margin. Reresby died suddenly on May 12, 1689, so either he performed the near impossible and wrote the complete work within three weeks or else the work ~~could have been constructed continuously in diary fashion over the preceding period.~~ This appears the more likely possibility from the exactitude of the dates which appear in the margin.

The difference between the two parts of Temple's memoirs, Memoirs of What Past in Christendom and Memoirs, Part III, clearly shows the advantage of a retrospective view for the political memoirist. The former work was composed four years after the conclusion of peace in 1679, which it describes. ~~Although~~ the date given in Memoirs, Part III is even closer to the events depicted, the delayed publication and Swift's interest in the work almost certainly indicate that it underwent considerable revision. Its straightforward treatment of the subject,

³³Littérature française, I, 402

³⁴Dictionary of National Biography, XVI, 917.

clarity and emphasis upon character motivation can be contrasted with the overall confusion of Memoirs of What Past in Christendom, which is marred especially by a plethora of military and diplomatic detail and a lack of discrimination between the important and the trivial.

It is Hervey who most clearly typifies the characteristics of the political memoirist whose point of view is not basically retrospective. The reader can determine from the text not only the approximate date of portions of the work, but also the fragmentary method of writing which Hervey appears to have employed. Sometimes Hervey related his act of writing to a known date. For example, when discussing the identity of an author of a letter he stated: "Whether the letter of recantation (very unreasonably so christened) was written by Mr. Dodington or Lord Chesterfield time may perhaps discover; but as I am now writing in the interval between this incident and the meeting of Parliament this truth is as yet dormant."³⁵

His imprecise use of the word "now" to indicate the time of writing, which could easily be misread to mean a later date, can demonstrate that one passage was composed years before a later section. We find that Mrs. Howard, who seemed to Hervey's contemporaries to be the King's mistress, was supposed to have "laid the foundation of the interest (such as it is) which she is now possessed of"; yet we are later given an account of her disgrace.³⁶ Some of Hervey's failings illustrate well why the memoirist usually preferred to use hindsight

³⁵Hervey, p. 96

³⁶Hervey, pp. 40, 118.

when dealing with historical processes. Because of the proximity of the dates of the event and composition, he sometimes did not possess a complete knowledge of all aspects of his subject. When he wrote of Mrs. Howard's parting conversation with the Queen in 1734, he stated: "What she said to the Queen I never could learn". Had he allowed a year to elapse before writing of this matter, he would have been in a position to provide a complete account **and been able to preserve** the continuity of the work, for in 1735 he interrogated the Queen about this matter.³⁷

Burnet faced a similar problem at the close of his History. He admitted that he was unable to give the reader the causes for the constant prorogations of Parliament during the negotiations that preceded the Treaty of Utrecht: "What occasioned all these delays is yet a secret to me; so I can write nothing of it".³⁸ All he could do, without access to the secrets of diplomacy, which only appear with the passage of time, was to guess at the reasons and to provide the reader with journalistic impressions in place of a critical historical examination.

For much the same reason Hervey often appears to have been unable to give precise reasons for the behaviour of his characters. Alternative opinions are given for the motivation of those in power, occasionally with the addition of his own view. Even when he confined himself to his own version of a person's behaviour, his opinion is

³⁷Hervey, pp. 118, 135.

³⁸Burnet, IV, 317.

only expressed as a hypothesis: "The maxim the King seemed to have laid down to govern his conduct towards this Prince, and the opinion he seemed to desire tacitly to inculcate, was that the Prince of Orange was a nothing till he had married his daughter, and that being her husband made him everything."³⁹

Hervey also provides an example of the way in which a man's views are liable to change in the course of time. At one time he dismisses the King's letters to ~~Caroline~~ as inconsequential trivia and yet later he praises them as amorous masterpieces.⁴⁰ There could be no conflict of opinion like this in a memoir with a retrospective point of view.

Unlike the adventurer, the writer of the memoir did not pretend to give a contemporaneous version of past events which would only restrict his angle of view; instead he unequivocally viewed the past from his standpoint in the present. Saint-Simon, for example, made it clear that he was writing his memoirs well after he first began to collect his notes by giving the anterior date, 1694, and by his frequent references to the boy who was later to become Louis XV as "the present King."

Cibber's insistence that his only source was his memory assured the reader that they were reading a retrospective account. In this respect Cibber was in a superior position to someone like Saint-Simon, who relied upon notes, which were likely to influence his later views. "From this time to the year 1712, my memory (from which

³⁹Hervey, p. 66.

⁴⁰Hervey, pp. 132-133, 194, 233.

depository alone, every article of what I write is collected) has nothing worth mentioning, till the first acting of the tragedy of Cato."⁴¹ As well as providing the place and date of composition, Cibber in an aside gives us an example of how his judgement of the past has been influenced by another's opinion which he has adopted as his own: "And this very morning, where I am now writing at the Bath, November 11, 1738, the same words were said of her, by a lady of condition, whose better judgement of her personal merit, in that light, has embolden'd me to repeat them."⁴²

The real benefit of hindsight is that it broadens the writer's point of view almost to omniscience. As he is in possession of a great deal of knowledge acquired over a period after an event occurred, the writer can give a comprehensive outline of the birth, growth and fruition of the phenomenon with which he is concerned. Like the historian, he can reveal what he imagines to be the causes of actions; but in order to make his reader aware of the significance of minor details, his technique becomes markedly different from that of the private writer whose simpler presentation was especially useful for the creation of suspense in tense situations, such as Falconer's detailed step-by-step account of his near execution. The memoirist was forced to upset the time scheme of the work and anticipate the course of his narrative, so that there is little suspense either in the progression of events or the revelation of character. For example, the wily Lord Lovat had to give the reader in advance the most important details of his life to ensure that the significance of a

⁴¹Cibber, p. 234.

⁴²Cibber, p. 158.

letter which he addressed to Mary of Modena would be realized by the reader:

Lord Lovat, agreeably to the advice of the cardinal, wrote a letter to the queen, possibly somewhat more spirited than the cardinal desired. It was in reality this fatal letter, that so incensed the queen against him, that she has not yet forgiven it, notwithstanding the penitence the author has performed of thirty-two days in a dark and unwholesome dungeon; of three years imprisonment in the castle of Angouleme; and of seven years imprisonment in the city of Saumur. This unfortunate letter therefore being the immediate cause of all the calamities that afterwards overtook lord Lovat, it is proper that the substance of it should be related in this place.⁴³

The Duchess of Marlborough employed her later more comprehensive knowledge to explain the full significance, which had escaped her earlier, of an uncharitable remark made by Rochester on the subject of Anne's settlement:

I sent to speak with my lord ROCHESTER, and asked his opinion, whether the PRINCESS ought to be satisfied, or whether it was reasonable she should try to get more. (I did not then know how much his heart was bent on making his court to the QUEEN.) His answer to me was, That he thought, not only that the PRINCESS ought to be satisfied with 50,000l. but that she ought to have taken it in any way the KING and QUEEN pleased. Which made me reflect that he would not have liked that advice in the case of his own 40000l. a year from the Post-office settled on him and his son.⁴⁴

Temple dwelt upon an event of no great apparent significance when it occurred, because he realized at the time of writing that it was to be the cause of a matter of great importance. He also acknowledged that he owed much of his information upon this subject to the help of others:

Thus ended his Mystical Journey, which I have the rather unveil'd, because, perhaps, no other could do it, nor I without so many several Lights from so many several Hands, and because, tho' it brought forth

⁴³ Lovat, pp. 269--270.

⁴⁴ Marlborough, p. 35.

no present Fruits, yet Seeds were then scattered, out of which sprung afterwards some very great Events.⁴⁵

Similarly, Saint-Simon spent a considerable time describing the birth of the third child of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The ~~status~~ of the child at birth as the third son of the grandson of the King should not have warranted this detailed account under normal circumstances, but this child was destined to be the only surviving prince on the death of Louis XIV. So obviously Saint-Simon's treatment was the result of a retrospective view; it also anticipated by quite some time the terrible tragedies that were to strike the French royal family.

This memoirist also could not resist giving anticipatory warnings of the downfall of people whom he disliked. He was violently opposed to the Maréchal de Villeroy in the council of the Regent mainly because of that politician's alignment with the natural sons of Louis XIV. A typical instance of anticipation occurred when he was discussing the Maréchal's behaviour in the council. Saint-Simon noted: "As for the Maréchal, his absurdities met with their just reward, but at a date I have not yet come to."⁴⁶

The most frequent type of anticipation in political memoirs is that where the writer uses his later knowledge of a man's complete character to explain that person's past actions, the motives of which were probably hidden from the writer at that time and which would certainly not be perceived by the reader without the aid of the writer's

⁴⁵ Temple, Memoirs of What Past in Christendom, p. 83.

⁴⁶ Saint-Simon, III, 280.

hindsight. The memoirist could not allow the slow revelation of character manifested in a course of events, because, particularly in affairs of state, a politician was liable to obscure, if not mask, his true motives. Burnet's preface to his treatment of the reign of James II foretells the events and covers in advance James's personal characteristics which were largely responsible for the tragedy, but which were hidden from the English in 1685. This statement, at least to the eighteenth-century reader, may not have **supplied new knowledge, but it heightened** the significance of the details which followed. James's actions were then seen in **perspective:**

I am now to prosecute this work, and to give the relation of an inglorious and unprosperous reign, that was begun with great advantages; but these were so poorly managed, and so ill improved, that bad designs were ill-laid, and worse conducted; and all came, in conclusion, to one of the strangest catastrophes that is in any history. A great king, with strong armies, and mighty fleets, a vast treasure, and powerful allies, fell all at once; and his whole strength, like a spider's web, was so irrecoverably broken with a touch, that he was never able to retrieve what, for want both of judgement and heart, he threw up in a day.⁴⁷

He had also prefaced his account of the preceding reign with a more complete character of Charles II.⁴⁸

The most obvious use of the writer's near omniscience is found in the denunciation of characters whose hypocrisy masked their real intent. Ludlow, unlike many of his contemporaries, saw Cromwell as a masterly hypocrite, who succeeded in duping both the Parliament and the people. He had to show Cromwell's climb to the summit in what he thought were its true colours and not as it appeared to the majority of

⁴⁷Burnet, II, 237.

⁴⁸Burnet, I, 99 ff.

his fellow members of Parliament, so he relied heavily upon commentary. Although Ludlow did consistently oppose Cromwell, it is doubtful whether he then knew the exact direction of Cromwell's actions and difficult not to believe that he is using hindsight. Even in the unlikely event that Ludlow was then completely aware of Cromwell's plans his treatment of Cromwell still illustrates the tendency to explain events by reference to the protagonist's character.

Cromwell's earlier political manoeuvres received the following comment from Ludlow:

Yet, now the bargain for the people's liberty being driven on by himself, he opposed those who laboured to obstruct it, pretending his so doing to be only in order to keep the army in subjection to the parliament; who, being very desirous to have this spirit suppressed in the army by any means, not only approved what he had done, but gave him the thanks of the house for the same.⁴⁹

Volume II opens with a prognostication of what was to come, when the effects of the Parliamentary victory were to be undone by the supposed ambition of Cromwell. The inclusion of this prophecy, when all appears to be going well for the Parliamentary side, helps to heighten the magnitude of Cromwell's evil.

Thus the enemy, by the blessing of God upon the counsels of the parliament, and endeavours of their armies, was every where dispersed and conquered, and the nation likely to attain in a short time that measure of happiness which human things are capable of; when, by the ambition of one man, the hopes and expectations of all good men were disappointed, and the people robbed of that liberty which they contended for at the expence of so much blood and treasure.⁵⁰

When Ludlow described Cromwell's assumption of supreme power, he accused the General of acting hypocritically by satisfying his

⁴⁹Ludlow, I, 193

⁵⁰Ludlow, II, 11.

personal ambition at the expense of the nation; for, although this office of High Constable was supposedly for the good of the country, Ludlow imagined that the post was merely a means for the later use of arbitrary power:

The perfidious Cromwel, having forgot his most solemn professions and former vows, as well as the blood and treasure that had been spent in this contest, thought it high time to take off the mask; and resolved to sacrifice all our victories and deliverances to his pride and ambition, under colour of taking upon him the office as it were of a High Constable, in order to keep the peace of the nation, and to restrain men from cutting one another's throats.⁵¹

Sometimes the converse occurred, when a person's behaviour pleasantly surprised the author, in which case the technique is identical. Burnet noted that the fears of the English that Anne's husband would be converted to Catholicism were belied by later experience:

The marriage that was now made with the brother of Denmark did not at all please the nation, for we knew that the proposition came from France: so it was apprehended that both courts reckoned they were sure that he would change his religion; in which we have seen, since that time, that our fears were ill grounded.⁵²

While a writer's subjective view of a series of historical events is determined in its extent by his own direct experience and the knowledge which he acquires later from the experience of others, its quality is affected by his moral and intellectual outlook and his emotions. The memoirist records events as they appear to him, but this description is not necessarily an exact transcription of what actually occurred. The mind of the writer is not a perfect mirror reflecting exactly everything observed; assuming, that is, that there is no interference between the

⁵¹Ludlow, II, 32.

⁵²Burnet, II, 180.

event and the perceiver. He may observe a man's behaviour, but his understanding of this may be distorted by personal prejudice, so that the writer misrepresents the other's motives. This problem of distortion must beset all writers who are concerned with representing actuality, but it particularly affects the memoirist whose life is spent in the bitter and factious atmosphere of politics.

When George Orwell wrote Homage to Catalonia, he, unlike the eighteenth century memoirist, was fully aware of this problem. In many ways his situation in 1938 paralleled that of an early memoirist, particularly that of a biased Civil War author, such as Ludlow. His position as a combatant in the Spanish Civil War was at once an advantage and a handicap. His proximity to the fighting ensured the directness of firsthand reporting, but it also restricted his range of knowledge by denying him access to written history. Most importantly, his own role in the fighting meant that his version of events could be further distorted by his partisan bias:

I have tried to write objectively about the Barcelona fighting, though, obviously, no one can be completely objective on a question of this kind. One is practically obliged to take sides, and it must be clear enough which side I am on. Again, I must inevitably have made mistakes of fact, not only here but in other parts of this narrative. It is very difficult to write accurately about the Spanish war, because of the lack of non-propagandist documents. I warn everyone against my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes. Still, I have done my best to be honest.⁵³

The eighteenth-century memoirist appeared to side-step this bias, as it detracted from his genre's reputation for truth; instead he emphasised his position as a privileged witness. Apologists in particular would have been defeating their purpose by raising doubts about their reliability as narrators. The critics were not so silent and both Johnson

⁵³Orwell, p. 153.

and Walpole realized that the personality of the author played a large part in determining the slant of the narrative. Johnson made the clearer statement of the problem, so it is worth quoting at length the relevant portions of his "Essay upon the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough."

We cannot but read such Narratives with uncommon Curiosity, because we consider the Writer as indubitably possessed of the Ability to give us just Representations, and do not always reflect, that, very often, proportionate to the Opportunities of knowing the Truth, are the Temptations to disguise it.

.....
It is however to be remembered that the Parent of all Memoirs, is the Ambition of being distinguished from the Herd of Mankind, and the fear of either Infamy or Oblivion, Passions which cannot but have some degree of influence and which may at least affect the Writer's Choice of Facts, though they may not prevail upon him to advance known Falsehoods.

He may aggravate or extenuate particular Circumstances, though he preserves the grand Transaction; as the general likeness may be preserved in painting, though a Blemish is hid or a Beauty improved. . .

The Man who knows not the truth cannot, and he who knows it will not tell it.⁵⁴

The Duchess made it clear from the onset of her work that she was primarily concerned with her own vindication, which of course also included a desire for fame and Johnson was correct in realizing that this tendency would affect the narrative.

The more usual characteristic of the memoirist's highly personal point of view is the suppression of material, or, as Johnson expresses it, the "Choice of Facts".⁵⁵ The Duchess of Marlborough gives only her side of the quarrel with Anne, in which she blames everything upon the machinations of the ungrateful low born Masham. D.A. Green feels that she may **have given only** a limited account of her last interview with Anne and that the real reason for the dismissal was suppressed by Sarah. Green reaches

⁵⁴Gentleman's Magazine, XII, 128.

⁵⁵Ibid.

this conclusion after considering the disparity between the amount of the interview which is reported and what must have been spoken in an hour.⁵⁶ Even if we ignore this analysis, it is possible to see that the author did suppress the part she played in causing the breach. In a letter, which is quoted in the Conduct, we can see that Anne was in fact not always the aggressor and could be conciliatory. Anne's account of Sarah's behaviour, which is not denied, gives the reader some idea of the feminine tantrums which the Queen was subjected to:

Saturday Night.

'My dear Mrs. FREEMAN, I cannot go to bed without renewing a request that I have often made, that you banish all unkind and unjust thoughts of your poor, unfortunate, faithful MORLEY, which I saw by the glimpse I had of you yesterday you were full of. Indeed I do not deserve them . . . Though we have the misfortune to differ in some things, I will never be the same to my dear dear MRS. FREEMAN, who I do assure once more, I am more tenderly and sincerely hers than it is possible ever to express.⁵⁷

At about this time the Duchess was writing long letters to the Queen setting out her case. One of them she described as written with her "usual plainness and zeal".⁵⁸ This phrase could simply mean that Sarah was a devoted but candid servant of the Queen, but as a description of all her letters it is a deliberate understatement. If the letter which Green publishes in his Appendix III is representative of Sarah's correspondence, then plainness and zeal are euphemisms for abuse and threats. For example, Anne, who had been shown some scurrilous ballads by Sarah which attack the relationship between the Queen and Lady Masham, was

⁵⁶Green, pp. 154-155.

⁵⁷Marlborough, pp. 202-203.

⁵⁸Marlborough, p. 224.

accused of lesbianism: "For sure there can be no great reputation in a thing so strange & unaccountable, to say no more of it, nor can I think the having no inclination for any but of one's own sex is enough to maintain such a character as I wish may still be yours." Amongst other things, she is also accused of lack of justice, wisdom and constancy - Sarah threatens her with the fate of James II or worse: "Tis certain your people will not long bear patiently the ills that arise from such a passion, which if it be not better governed for the future must prove fatal to your Majesty & them selves." As for Lady Masham, Sarah reminds Anne that this "chambermaid" was taken "out of a garret" and "from a broom", and that should Anne insist upon her absolute dependence on Abigail, she would risk her favourite's death, presumably by hanging and quartering. Sarah tartly observes: "What can the consequence of that be but bringing all your business into confusion & exposing her charming person to be pull'd to pieces."

Johnson also thought that the memoirist was likely to alter the significance of his actions by exaggerating the worth of his better conduct and diminishing the enormity of his misdemeanours.⁵⁹ Lord Lovat is a prominent example of this method of self-vindication. He portrays himself as a loyal servant of his king (usually the Old Pretender), who has been betrayed by the perfidy of others. At the outset of his career he engaged in plotting against William of Orange and was foolish enough to swallow the bait which Lord Murray, a servant of the government, had laid to determine his loyalty. In his description of the incident Lovat is very careful to emphasise the treachery of Murray who betrayed the trust

⁵⁹Gentleman's Magazine, XII, 128.

of friendship but he carefully refrains from any presentation of Murray's real motive:

Simon, after so many protestations of loyalty, gave into the snare that was spread for him, and returned to his clan to raise recruits.

.....
[after the discovery of Murray's intentions] He did not fail to be extremely, disgusted at having suffered himself to be over-reached by lord Murray whose treachery he conceived to be of a very infamous nature.⁶⁰

He also minimised the part which he played in the confinement and rape of the dowager Lady Lovat. According to the Dictionary of National Biography the lady was forcibly married to Lovat, who had bagpipes played in the room to drown her screams.⁶¹ Lovat asserts that the charge of rape was simply a fabrication of the lady's father, the Marquis of Athol, and her brother, the Earl of Tullibardin. He offers various reasons, none of them very convincing, for the unlikelihood of such an action, concluding with:

Meanwhile the whole country knew, that the master of Lovat, at the age of about twenty years, well educated, at the head of an ancient house, and of a brave and respectable clan, might have aspired to any match in the kingdom. . . He had no reason therefore to commit the smallest violence upon a widow, who was old enough to be his mother, dwarfish in her person and deformed in her shape, and with no other fortune than a jointure of two hundred and fifty pounds a year.⁶²

He excuses her confinement and the capture of the two persons who were protecting her on the grounds that these actions were necessary to protect his property.

Lovat is also extremely ambiguous about his later relations with the government of Queen Anne. According to Burnet, he was responsible for discovering information against the Jacobites; at least he seems

⁶⁰Lovat, pp. 15-16.

⁶¹Dictionary of National Biography, VII, 657.

⁶²Lovat, p. 62.

to have professed loyalty to both sides. Yet the memoirs give the reader the impression that he was unswervingly loyal to the Jacobite cause once he had arrived in France and that he was undermined not by his suspicious actions, but by the hatred and jealousy of others.

In the Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby the author is concerned primarily with the vindication of his wife's behaviour before marriage and a similar element of distortion is present in the narrative. Digby acknowledged there was a large amount of speculation and rumour surrounding the behaviour of Venetia Stanley. Aubrey quotes Digby as saying, presumably with reference to his wife, "that a handsome lusty man that was discreet might make a virtuose wife out of a brothell-house."⁶³ Aubrey also describes her as "That celebrated Beautie and Courtezane, Mrs. Venetia Stanley, whom Richard Earle of Dorset kept as his Concubine, and had children by her."⁶⁴ Later accounts identify the Earl's brother as Venetia's lover.

What is apparent from all this is that Venetia had committed a grave indiscretion by Jacobean standards. Yet Digby minimises her behaviour in nearly marrying "Mardontius" by saying that she had admitted him "To a nearer familiarity than, in terms or rigour, was fit for her, or than her affection did really call him unto." He carefully avoids any reference to her physical behaviour by asserting that "Her soul was pure and her mind the same that he ever believed it to be" and excuses her mistakes by attributing them to "The unjustness of fortune, or, at the worst, a little indulgency of a gentle nature which sprung from some

⁶³Aubrey, p. 98.

⁶⁴Ibid.

indiscretion, or rather want of experience."⁶⁵ Digby over idealizes his relationship with Venetia by representing it as an eternal bond, when it appears to have been just as subject to change as other human ties; certainly, it seems hard to believe that Venetia was not more involved with her lover than Digby represents, and he himself fell in love with a lady at the court of Spain.

The memoirist can also distort the behaviour of characters against whom he is prejudiced. It is difficult enough for an objective observer to account for the motives of a man's actions, but when a person allows his preconceptions to interfere with his observations or is swayed by his hatred of someone to misinterpret all his actions, it becomes virtually impossible for the reader to determine the truth without resorting to an external control such as another memoir or a contemporary biography. Ludlow's treatment of Cromwell has been noted earlier; he is described as a man whose only concern is his own aggrandisement and who toys with the idea of monarchy for his own glorification. To Ludlow, Cromwell was ruled by ambition. Yet a contemporary historian, Maurice Ashley, denies that Cromwell was interested in the crown for the sake of ambition and contends that "It is only in the last hundred years that he has been given the honour due to him in English history."⁶⁶ We do not have to look further than Ludlow's politics to find the reason for Ludlow's prejudice. As a firm republican, Ludlow saw Cromwell only as a betrayer of a cause which would have succeeded had it not been for the interference of Cromwell. He consequently misconstrued Cromwell's

⁶⁵Digby, p. 100.

⁶⁶Ashley, p. 104.

search for stability into a furthering of personal ambition.

Holles, who also hated Cromwell, allowed his prejudice to influence his judgement to such a degree that he used the evidence of unreliable witnesses to accuse Cromwell of cowardice. On the other hand, Clarendon, whose political position was similar to that of Holles, could not deny his bravery: "In a word, as he had all the wickednesses against which damnation is denounced and for which hell-fire is prepared, so he had some virtues which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated: and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave bad man."⁶⁷ Obviously, other more personal factors influenced Holles' more jaundiced account.

From this evidence it should be clear that the writer is not simply a passive recorder who notes exactly the manner in which incidents occurred or the precise motivations of the people whom he observed. How he represents events is determined very much by what he is at the time of writing. Personal factors will alter a man's view of the past towards what he would like to think it actually was, but they can also distort his view of the present. **A clear distinction therefore exists between this function of the writer's point of view and the writer's field of vision. The primary function of the field of vision is to relate the writer to events. This does entail a personal view point, but there is no evidence of personality; the person exists as a narrative focus only. The unbidden intrusion of the personality into the narration is unfortunate for the reader who is seeking objective truth, but for others it provides some psychological interest.**

⁶⁷Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, VI, 97.

An examination of a particular writer's view of events will reveal something of the character which is responsible for the distortions which occur. The insights gained from such an examination may not be very profound; the detection of the suppression of material may only reveal that the writer loved fame more than truth, yet it can also uncover the duplicity and hypocrisy of Lovat or the malice of the Duchess of Marlborough. The extent of character analysis is limited to some degree by the nature of the subject. We suspect that Ludlow's prejudices are basically political in origin, but we cannot be sure; those of Holles probably are not. In Digby's work politics is a peripheral concern and the attitudes the author exhibits in the narrative enable the reader to assume the existence of the tensions which underlay Digby's relationship with his wife.

The essential problem of the effect of personality upon the perception and representation of events is best summed up by Horace Walpole's uncharitable comment upon the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough:

One sees exactly how Europe and the backstairs took their places in her imagination and in her narrative. The revolution left no impression upon her mind but of Queen Mary turning up bed-cloaths; and the Protestant Hero, of but a selfish glutton who devoured a dish of peas from his Sister-in-law. In fact, events passing through the medium of our passions must strike different beholders in very different lights.⁶⁵

II

SOME ASPECTS OF POINT OF VIEW IN THE EARLY NOVELS OF SMOLLETT

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO RODERICK RANDOM

Smollett, in adopting a first person point of view in Roderick Random, may have been merely following the convention of the picaresque novel and the particular example of Le Sage's Gil Blas, but it seems equally probable that the choice was deliberate. Smollett was anxious to "secure a favourable prepossession" for his hero and in all likelihood he realized that one sure method to lessen the distance between reader and character was to use the first person.

Having selected Roderick to act as a "narrator agent" (the term is Booth's), Smollett had to maintain a consistent and realistic approach to this type of point of view to preserve the readers' "willing suspension of disbelief." The credibility of the fiction that the hero was actually narrating his own experiences had to be upheld. As we have seen from the memoir, the adoption of a personal view point imposes limitations upon what can be depicted within the work, for the author's basic material is formed only from what his narrator can be expected to have experienced. Smollett's maintenance of this narrative stance is one aspect of this chapter.

The other major aspect is an investigation of the temporal point of view of Smollett's narrator to see whether Smollett adopted the reflective retrospective point of view of the memoir or continued with

the tradition of the adventurers, where the narrator exists primarily as a relator of events.

One simple method of ensuring narrative credibility was to adopt the practice of memoirists and to give the work some appearance of being a memoir. But, as we have seen, the actual practice of these writers was flexible and depended to a large degree upon circumstances. Smollett, therefore, could only apply what would seem to be the ideal criteria of the genre and even then he changed some of these to suit his purposes.

Smollett, by his rigorous restriction of his hero's angle of vision, adhered more strictly than the historical memoirists to the narrative ideal of the genre. The reader is given only that which Roderick has directly experienced or with which he has been closely associated, so that the point of view of the novel approximates to that found in the private accounts. Smollett could not afford to give his narrator pretensions to omniscience.

The most obvious manifestation of this narrow field of vision is the multiplicity of adventures and locations in which Roderick becomes involved. If Smollett intended an all-embracing universal satire upon "the sordid and vicious disposition of the world" and "the selfishness, envy, malice, and base indifference of mankind",¹ a comprehensive view of all man's ills would have seemed well suited to his purpose. He could only reconcile the problem of linking a limited point of view to a discursive subject by using the well-worn vehicle of the traveller, so Roderick becomes subjected to more accumulated misfortune than any mortal

¹Smollett, p. xvii.

could reasonably be expected to bear. In his journeys in England, Europe, and on the high seas he is frequently duped, robbed, shot at, and beaten close to the point of death.

Roderick's presence at most of the incidents described in the novel also provides the work with an underlying unity of the kind given by the life of the author in the memoir. Roderick's life is the "clue" which leads the reader through an otherwise incomprehensible diversity of incident.

Although Roderick is present at an astonishing number of incidents, Smollett would have had to sacrifice completely the credibility of his protagonist by endowing him with supernatural omniscience to have enabled him to personally observe all the events that take place in the course of the novel. Forced by circumstances, like the memoirist, to depend upon material supplied by others, Roderick, still following the practice of the memoirist, always acknowledges his source of information. Events are all reported in their chronological order, but those from obviously secondary sources are provided with an aside to quell the reader's possible scepticism.

In accounts of the dealings of other characters at which it was impossible for the narrator to be present, Smollett had to represent Roderick as having learnt the details later from one of the principals, yet at the same time give the reader an account of the incident in the relevant portion of the narrative's chronological sequence. For example, the reader is given the details of the argument between the Welshman, Morgan, and the tyrannic Captain Oakhum over the size of the ship's sick

list, although Roderick then knew nothing of the cause of the commotion. In other words, the order of the narrative is not necessarily the order in which the narrator can be supposed to have perceived events. For narrative continuity the author has to adhere to the actual chronological sequence, but to maintain the credibility of his narrative technique he also has to give the reader the means by which his narrator acquired the information. In this case he overcame the inherent clumsiness of this procedure by combining the presentation of the means of information with a description of Morgan's humorous behaviour:

He perceiving our amazement, told us he would explain the mystery, but at the same time bid us take notice that he had lived poy, patchelor, married man, and widower, almost forty years, and in all that time there was no man nor mother's son in the whole world who durst use him so ill as Captain Oagum had done. Then he acquainted us with the dialogue that passed between them, as I have already related it.²

Smollett may have derived this device from his own study of the conventions of the memoir, but it is also possible that the practice of another novelist served as an intermediate source. Defoe, for example, frequently employed supposedly secondary sources of information in those of his novels which utilized a first person point of view; although his handling of this device is clumsier than Smollett's. During Moll Flanders' description of the lengthy negotiations between her "governess" and a gentleman whom Moll had robbed, Moll intrudes three times at the commencement of the anecdote and again at the conclusion to remind the reader of her secondary status in acquiring this material. Although the main body of the story is free from narrative impediments, Defoe must

²Smollett, p. 183.

have considered the obvious interruptions at the beginning worth the sacrifice of narrative flow for the sake of scrupulously maintaining the illusion of the reality of the narrator and her experience.

Smollett's predecessors were very concerned with representing fiction as fact. Defoe and Prévost, especially, often went to great lengths to assert the veracity of their accounts by constructing elaborate pedigrees for the origin of the narrative. This is how Defoe introduced Memoirs of a Cavalier:

As an evidence that't is very probable these Memorials were written many years ago, the persons now concerned in the publication assure the reader that they have had them in their possession finished, as they now appear, above twenty years; that they were so long ago found by great accident, among other valuable papers, in the closet of an eminent public minister, of no less figure than one of King William's secretaries of state.

As it is not proper to trace them any farther, so neither is there any need to trace them at all, to give reputation to the story related, seeing the actions here mentioned have a sufficient sanction from all the histories of the times to which they relate.³

A. D. McKillop asserts that: "Throughout Defoe's fiction the position that the story is true is substantially maintained. He is always ready to trade on the supposed superiority of fact to fiction."⁴ Defoe used several means to support this illusion, among them the use of circumstantial detail and real events and locations, but he also relied heavily upon the seeming naturalness of his narrative method.

Both Defoe and Prévost, whose Mémoires d'un homme de qualité enjoyed considerable popularity in England, accepted as their basis the

³Defoe, p. XXV

⁴McKillop, p. 39.

restricted vision of the memoir. But in order to circumvent the limitations imposed by this device upon the extent of material that was able to be told, they developed subsidiary techniques, which Smollett was later to copy. They also exploited the inherent weaknesses of this restricted mode of vision for the sake of **greater credibility; this was** something which the memoirists never had cause to do.

Another method of overcoming the limitations of the narrator's confined outlook upon events was to resort to the old dramatic technique of eavesdropping. This was a favourite device of Prévost and Smollett also found this device useful for the presentation of material which would have had to be denied to his narrator. When the eavesdropping is of a passive nature (such as Roderick's observance of the reconciliation between the Irish captain and the apothecary's daughter), or still retains the dramatic trappings of its origin (as in the hero's concealment in Narcissa's garden to discover her private thoughts), the device jars the modern reader with its patent artifice. Smollett could, however, redeem the technique when he incorporates the device into a two-way situation. In the episode in an English inn where Roderick and Strap discover a highwayman and the innkeeper's daughter in the next room, he obtains a comic effect by describing the reactions of the observers to their eavesdropping.

The use of this device persisted into Peregrine Pickle, even though Smollett had by then adopted **an omniscient narrative technique**. There is some pretense to the fiction that the author is compiling the work from materials provided by Peregrine, but the narrator's field

of view is often omniscient. It therefore seems superfluous to provide a scene such as that where Peregrine remains hidden in a closet for the duration of an interview between Cadwallader, who is disguised as a fortune teller, and a lady of a somewhat wanton disposition.

Cadwallader Crabtree with his pretended deafness is a refinement upon the eavesdropping device. His caustic tongue wins him entry to society gatherings, where he acts as a kind of hidden microphone carefully recording all the secret matters which are openly discussed in his presence. But his real importance is not so much as a narrative, but as a satiric device; he provides a useful method of exposing and ridiculing the affectations of polite society.

Another method of disguising authorial omniscience and ensuring the credibility of the narrator was to demonstrate the narrator's fallibility in areas, such as the determination of the motives of other characters, where it would be natural to expect that the truth would be difficult to ascertain. The narrator could not be expected to attain to an absolute certainty about the exact nature of all the events and characters with which he is concerned. The writer accordingly stressed the ambiguity of the narrator's point of view. Roxana, for example, never really knows the identity of the masked stranger who danced with her at the ball at her house and she can never rid herself of the suspicion that it was the King, partly because of the flattering remarks made by the bystanders at that time. Moll Flanders, after robbing a child wandering about the streets unescorted while wearing jewellery, commented:

This string of beads was worth about twelve or fourteen pounds. I suppose it might have been formerly the mother's, for it was too big for the child's wear, but that, perhaps, the vanity of the mother to

have her child look fine at the dancing school had mader her let the child wear it; and no doubt the child had a maid sent to take care of it, but she, like a careless jade, was taken up perhaps with some fellow that had met her, and so the poor baby wandered till it fell into my hands.⁵

While Defoe's usual purpose in demonstrating his narrator's ignorance is simply to preserve the reader's credulity, he could capitalize upon the human predicament of a person's real ignorance of the thoughts and feelings of others to give a more ironic turn to the behaviour of his protagonists. Moll Flanders, for example, would have saved herself from ruin had she been a little more perceptive in her dealings with the man who first seduced her: "On the other hand, if I had known his thoughts and how hard he supposed I would be to be gained, I might have made my own terms, and if I had not capitulated for an immediate marriage, I might for a maintenance till marriage and might have had what I would."⁶

But Smollett goes beyond Defoe's practice to exploit the satiric possibilities of this literary convention. Roderick could well be truly ignorant in determining the real motives of others, but the straight-faced manner in which he presents alternative reasons for a character's behaviour often appears to be a device for producing an ironic compounding of human villainy. There is still an element of the original intention in Roderick's speculations about the motives which induced his grandfather to adopt him, when he became orphaned shortly after birth, for Roderick could not be expected to have any idea of

⁵Defoe, p. 172.

⁶Defoe, p. 27.

the old man's intentions; but Smollett, having satisfied his reader's doubts, then uses the occasion to suggest the old man's real motive: "Whether this hard hearted judge felt any remorse for his cruel treatment of his son and daughter, or (which is more probable) was afraid his character would suffer in the neighbourhood, he professed great sorrow for his conduct to my father."⁷ The satiric intent is clearer, when Roderick attributes to unworthy motives his cousins' change in their behaviour towards him from the most supercilious contempt: "The reader will easily perceive that this condescension either flowed from the hope of making my poetical capacity subservient to their malice, or, at least, of screening themselves from the lash of my resentment, which they had effectually provoked."⁸

Smollett had some success in fusing the narrative conventions of satire and realism in controlling Roderick's field of vision. However in departing from the realistic norms of his predecessors, possibly derived from the memoir, Smollett tended to strengthen the satiric impact of Roderick Random at the expense of the reader's sympathy for the hero.

The narrator is supposedly relating the account some time after his marriage to Narcissa. This allowed for a great interval between the date of events, particularly the events of his youth, and the purported date of composition, which an author acquainted with the development of the memoir could have employed to advantage, for Roderick's point of view

⁷Smollett, p. 24.

⁸Smollett, p. 41.

would be that of a man modified by his past experience. With our modern views on psychological change we would expect some difference in his attitudes to his past actions. But instead everything is narrated exactly as it was supposed to have occurred, with the complete preservation of all his past feelings, in the undistorted contemporaneous narrative technique of memoirs of adventurers, which was in turn derived from the journal.

The result of this is a disturbing inconsistency in the point of view of the narrator. Roderick's sexual peccadilloes as a young man are not irreconcilable with his later devotion of the pure Narcissa. This is only the manifestation of the eighteenth-century's double standard; but we would expect at least that his account of such adventures might be tinged with irony or some self-conscious indication of the comic absurdity of his past and present behaviour. Instead we have a pious apostrophe to marriage: "If there be such a thing as true happiness on earth I enjoy it. The impetuous transports of my passion are now settled and mellowed into endearing fondness and tranquillity of love, rooted by that intimate connexion and interchange of hearts which nought but virtuous wedlock can produce."⁹ This later attitude does not affect his feelings towards his past escapades in any way. So that, although he asserts the superiority of a marital relationship, he can describe with relish his past indiscriminate lovemaking. Only once does he ever express any comment which could be directly attributed to his later standpoint upon his past conduct and this is negated by his self-congratulation

⁹Smollett, p. 468.

and his confession that the object of his lust existed in his mind as a kind of substitute for Narcissa:

I must own, to my shame, that I suffered myself to be overcome by my passion, and with great eagerness seized the occasion when I understood that the amiable Nanette was to be my bed-fellow. In vain did my reason suggest the respect that I owed to my dear mistress Narcissa; the idea of that lovely charmer rather increased than allayed the ferment of my spirits, and the young paysanne had no reason to complain of my remembrance.¹⁰

There is one striking deviation from the viewpoint which is contemporaneous with the events of the narrative, the Carthage episode. This account is clearly retrospective. Not only does Roderick employ material from later sources (for example, the reaction of the ministry to the action), but the conscious irony indicates a viewpoint that is removed in time from the battle. Roderick's implicit retrospective comment here upon the conduct of others is at odds with the author's usual practice of inserting only the reflections which Roderick made at the time of the incidents to which they relate. We are always learning of his past opinions, but almost never of his maturer thoughts.

Another cause of weakness in the point of view occurs when some of Roderick's contemporaneous comments do not concur with his later behaviour. Early in his career Roderick felt that he had profited by his experiences and accordingly changed his mode of living:

I was no longer a pert, unthinking coxcomb, giddy with popular applause, and elevated with the extravagance of hope: my misfortunes had taught me how little the caresses of the world during a man's prosperity are to be valued by him, and how seriously and expeditiously he ought to set about making himself independent of them. My present appearance, therefore, was the least of my care, which was wholly engrossed in laying up a stock of instruction that might secure me against the caprice of fortune for the future.¹¹

¹⁰Smollett, p. 265.

¹¹Smollett, p. 50.

yet the later course of the novel shows only too well that Roderick had not learnt anything from his past afflictions. His pride will involve him in all kinds of predicaments and he will demonstrate that he is only too willing to cultivate the good opinion of polite society. This particular comment represents an authorial intrusion in which Smollett reveals his intentions toward his central character rather than a specimen of the narrator's self-description. Smollett meant Roderick to change in accordance with his experience, but this required a corresponding development in his hero's behaviour to match this pronouncement. Had Smollett envisaged Roderick as an entirely independent character with his own definite point of view then this comment would have been accompanied by some qualification whereby the narrator would have recognised the inconsistency between his pious intentions and his later behaviour.

The use of the contemporaneous narrative technique is linked to Roderick's resilience to change, both are essential elements in maintaining the satiric device of the naive hero. The use of Roderick as a good-natured naive dupe, despite his adventures as a man of the world, persists until late in the work. Only by employing a direct account free of apparent authorial interference or later hindsight by the victim could Smollett develop a situation which relied upon dramatic irony for its effect. Any anticipation of the outcome, in the manner of the memoir, which did not seek to disguise the gullibility of the protagonist would have destroyed the tension between the honest but blind narrator and the villain. This type of narration where everything is set down exactly as it has occurred allowed the narrator to achieve an apparently unconscious irony; when the account becomes retrospective this is no longer possible

and the narrator instead of passively reflecting events shows evidence of a more fixed point of view. The difference between the two modes can be seen in Chapter forty-five of Roderick Random. The first part of this chapter is essentially Roderick's reflections on his past behaviour at the playhouse, but the emphasis then changes to focus upon the prostitute masquerading as a fine lady and once more we are back to an exact presentation of Roderick's past thoughts and the gradual revelation that this woman is not what she appears to be. Here the retrospective mode can be seen as being relevant to the self-examination of the narrator's character and behaviour, where the other is most suitable for developing an attack against a society which gives the appearance of virtue, but is undermined by corruption. In choosing to concentrate upon this latter aspect, Smollett really did not accomplish the further development of the character of his narrator. Roderick retains his good-natured naivety and ignorance of the corruption of society despite his past experiences. There is little active interaction between the environment and Roderick's personality.

Smollett's avoidance of a retrospective narrative technique is surprising when we consider its common use by preceding writers, including his declared model Le Sage. Moll Flanders, Roxana and Gil Blas all view the past from their standpoint in the present. The attitudes which they display when reviewing their past behaviour are the result of a mixture of their personality and their accumulated experience and are sometimes demonstrably different from those they held in the past. Like the memoirist and the autobiographer, they fuse the past with the present.

Defoe's two heroines give a continuous narration of events that maintains the illusion of an unfolding story and, at the same time, provide the reader with some indication of the author's moral attitudes towards these events. This second aspect was complicated by the very actions of the two characters which, even more so than Roderick's, were of an immoral and sometimes criminal nature. But Moll underwent a religious conversion towards the end of her life and Roxana, after "a dreadful Course of Calamities,"¹² repented for her past misdemeanours, so that the reviews which they conduct of their past disorders are from the viewpoint of reformed sinners. Where Moll once enjoyed her life of fleshly delights and easy rewards, she now looks upon her past life with contempt:

It was now that for the first time I felt any real signs of repentance. I now began to look back upon my past life with abhorrence, and having a kind of view into the other side of time, the things of life, as I believe they do with everybody at such a time, began to look with a different aspect and quite another shape than they did before.¹³

Roxana also recounted the change that had occurred in her attitudes; her feelings towards her actions were not the same as those she enjoyed in the past:

Since this, and when I have look'd back upon these things with Eyes unpossess'd with Crime, when the wicked Part has appear'd in its clearer Light, and I have seen it in its own natural Colours; when no more blinded with the glittering Appearances, which at that time deluded me, and, as in like Cases, if I may guess at others by myself too much possess'd the Mind; I say, since this, I have often wonder'd.¹⁴

¹²Defoe, Roxana, p. 329.

¹³Defoe, Moll Flanders, pp. 253-254.

¹⁴Defoe, Roxana, p. 79.

Defoe made the supposedly more recent moral standpoint of his narrators evident by two means: lengthy reflective comment which follows an episode and the insertion of a short qualifying comment within the narrative.

After describing the conclusion of her affair with her "gentleman", which began innocently enough with a kind of platonic friendship, Moll Flanders reflects:

And here I cannot but reflect upon the unhappy consequence of too great freedoms between persons stated as we were, upon the pretence of innocent intentions, love of friendship, and the like; for the flesh has generally so great a share in those friendships that it is great odds but inclination prevails at last over the most solemn resolutions and that vice breaks in at the breaches of decency, which really innocent friendship ought to preserve with the greatest strictness.¹⁵

When she relates the circumstances which began this liaison, she neatly interpolates a short phrase which expresses her abhorrence of her past action:

It was one night that we were in bed together, warm and merry, and having drank, I think, a little more both of us than usual, though not in the least to disorder us, when, after some other follies which I cannot name, and being clasped close in his arms, I told him (I repeat it with shame and horror of soul) that I could find in my heart to discharge him of his engagement for one night and no more.¹⁶

Gil Blas is more of a mixture of consistent past and present attitudes. The narrator, like Roderick, can give a past commentary upon his actions, but, unlike Roderick, he also presents self-criticism which is the result of his cumulated experience.

Gil Blas is at his least sympathetic when he is pandering his way to power at the court. His first notable action there is to procure

¹⁵Defoe, Moll Flanders, pp. 112-113.

¹⁶Defoe, p. 104.

a mistress for the prince, the heir to the throne; unfortunately, she turns out to be a woman of the town. While describing his motives for this affair Gil Blas also points out the immorality of these considerations, which was not then apparent to him: "I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office; the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great prince!"¹⁷ His rise to power also blinded him to the needs of his poor parents, whom he treated in a particularly callous fashion: "In a word, I became so vain and haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas' poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as enquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Asturias!"¹⁸

The retrospective point of view was valuable for further strengthening the bond between the narrator and the reader. By discussing in a candid manner his past shortcomings the narrator appeared to be taking the reader into his confidence. The role of the confidant placed the reader in a position of active sympathy for the narrator. Although this is no longer of such importance, the dichotomy between the two selves of the narrator contributed to maintaining reader sympathy when the hero was engaged in reprehensible actions. Moll's repentant attitude no doubt enabled readers to forestall overt moral aversion to her actions which would have been transposed into a distaste for her as a fictional character. A **self-aware** attitude in Smollett's protagonist would have

¹⁷Le Sage, III, 143.

¹⁸Le Sage, III, 191.

removed some of the ambiguity which surrounds some of Roderick's more reprehensible actions and at the same time added a richer dimension to the character.

III

THE RELATIVE ROLES OF SELF AND CIRCUMSTANCE

In Chapter I it was shown that the use of hindsight differentiated the memoir from a related biographical form, the diary; this chapter will attempt to show that the memoir differs from another retrospectively narrated type of biography, the autobiography, in that the two forms place an emphasis upon opposing factors in the relationship of the self to its surrounding circumstances.

The memoirist is usually the "principal personage" of his work, but more by default than by intention. Because the political memoirist describes a group of people which is subject to a great amount of change caused either by death or political movement, it is difficult for one character to predominate or preoccupy the author throughout the course of an account. Even a figure as powerful and as autocratic as Louis XIV does not dominate personally above all others in Saint-Simon's Memoirs. Instead his court, not his person, is the more predominant feature of the work. This pattern is true also in the more confined group of characters whom Hervey deals with, where it is difficult to find any one figure who clearly overshadows the others.

Despite the advantageous position that the memoirist enjoyed to exploit the reader's interest in his own life, he tried to obscure, or at least minimize, any manifestations of his personality or private life by emphasising historical events and the private behaviour of

those in power.

There were, nevertheless, complaints about the egotism which was supposed to be evident in some memoirs. Hervey complained, without good cause, about Burnet's History of His Own Time and, with more reason, about Mémoires du cardinal de Retz. But, as Swift observed in his introduction to Temple's Memoirs Part III, a writer was quite at liberty to describe the part he played in important events:

Those Memoirs [Memoirs of What Past in Christendom] therefore are Properly a Relation of a General Treaty of Peace, wherein the Author had the Principal, as well as the most Honourable part, in Quality of Mediator; so that the frequent Mention of himself, seems not only excusable but necessary. The same may be offer'd in Defence of the following papers; because, during the greatest part of the Period they treat of, the Author was in chief Confidence with the King his master.

To have omitted such material would have been to destroy the integrity of a memoir, for it was expected of a writer that he reveal all the information about events which was available to him.

James Melville's Memoirs ostensibly belonged to the same general class as Herbert's - the preceptive autobiography which passed on the experience of the subject for the benefit of others - in both cases the descendants of the author. Melville hoped that his life would be a beneficial surrogate enabling his son to avoid similar mistakes in conduct: "Hoping that thou wilt be so wise as to help thy self in time by my faults, and not to wait upon the hurtful experience of the common sort, seeing no man shew the right way better than he who hath oft-times chanced upon by-roads."¹

But the divergence in approach between Herbert and Melville is essentially the difference between the memoir and the autobiography. Where Herbert concentrated upon the man and only related events to this

¹Melville, p. xiii.

being, Melville dwelt primarily upon the events of his life, "the hard accidents". His self is only loosely related to these events; they could have happened to anyone, and it is the atrocity of the actual event which is normally stressed, not Melville's reaction to it.

As this memoir progresses it becomes obvious to the reader that the acknowledged preceptive aim is a secondary consideration, if it is one at all, and that the acts of butchery and corruption, the murderous intrigues are all intended to illustrate Melville's dominant concern, the behaviour of courts and princes. Here again there is a fundamental difference with Herbert. Personal information is given, not to deliberately show the forces which affected and shaped the writer's personality, but to highlight the behaviour of others. Melville declares: "Neither would I blot paper with this much concerning my particular, were it not to declare the strange practices of princes in matters of state."² This was probably the motive also for his account of another "hard accident" which befell him as the result of James I's unscrupulous abuse of the lives of his servants. James, who put the benefit of the state before the welfare of a private citizen, insisted that the elderly Melville disturb his well-earned retirement to undertake a very important and, as it turned out, hazardous, diplomatic mission:

This commission was to me very unpleasant, for I had taken my leave of the court, as being wearied with the many alterations I had seen, both at home and in foreign courts, having got great trouble and damage to myself for other mens causes. Therefore I had determined to be no more concerned in publick affairs, but to lead a quiet, contemplative life the rest of my days. This desire of my prince and master was like to put me from this resolution. In this perplexity I had recourse by

²Melville, p. 214.

humble prayer to God, so to direct my actings as they might tend to his glory and to the weal of my prince and country, And thereafter, according to my dutiful obedience, I went unto his Majesty.³

But it was impossible for the memoirist to isolate segments of his own experience without unconsciously infusing his emotional attitudes. So that, while the personal quandary posed by the selfish demands of James was relevant to the intention of this memoir and concurred with the ostensible demands of the genre, Melville's solution to his dilemma, the recourse to prayer, was not. **That Melville, like all memoirists who wrote with the ideal of objectivity in mind, would suppress all manifestations of the personality is more evident in another portion of self-analysis. Here he gave his reasons for continuing in the service of Mary Queen of Scots in answer to the political memoirist's constant need for self-justification:**

But I found the Queen my sovereign so urgent, and of herself well inclined, and endowed with so many princely virtues that I could not find in my heart to leave her, requiring so earnestly my help and assistance, to draw the hearts of her subjects to her, which were alienated upon account of difference of religion. I knew she stood in need to gain friends, and that it was much her interest to keep correspondence with the Queen of England; so that I resolved rather to serve her my native Queen for little profit, than any other prince in Europe for great advantage.⁴

The Memoirs of Denzil Lord Holles exhibit an even greater reticence on the part of the author to discuss personal details, or even his political actions. The intentions of Holles and Ludlow were more specifically political than Melville's and this helped to minimise even further the place of the author's personality. Holles intended to relate the means by which the Parliament became destroyed by the infamous

³Melville, pp. 266-267.

⁴Melville, p. 85.

Cromwell (pp 2-3) and how the nation was corrupted by the abuses of those in power. Although, (as the Dedication recognises), Holles was prominent in the proceedings of Parliament during the period covered by the memoirs, there is virtually no indication in the work that he ever did anything beyond attending the debates, except when the charges of his enemies made it necessary for him to justify his actions. There is no evidence of his importance as a leader in the house and he barely mentions that he was one of the eleven members expelled in 1647. Although Holles is reticent about his actions, he does not stifle his feelings towards his adversaries. The work is pervaded with an abrasively indignant tone which betrays Holles' open contempt for his enemies.

The great issues of the Civil War cast even deeper shadows over the author's personal history in Edmund Ludlow's Memoirs. We have already seen, in Chapter I, that Ludlow intended a general view of the immediate past and the emphasis upon providing a historical narrative can be seen in the handling of the battles in which Ludlow was engaged. In describing major actions he gave only the movements of the armies. It is only in the description of events which concerned his troops alone, such as the siege at Wardour Castle or his near capture at Salisbury, that particular details of the action as he experienced it are given; yet his emotional responses to these actions are minimised. In the following passage, there is no mention of his feelings; although the situation he was involved in was highly dangerous, all we are given is an uninterrupted understated narrative of action:

We followed them close in the rear; and though they made many shot at me, yet I received no wound in the whole action. About a hundred of them ran through Winchester gate to their main body, and about twice

that number fled up a street called Endless-street; whom I pursuing, my horse fell backwards with me, by a check I gave him; but my own men being in my rear, I soon recovered on horseback, and continued the pursuit, till I found the enemy to make a stand.⁵

Ludlow's political activities receive a similar treatment.

There is emotion in the narrative, as in Holles' case, but little of his passing feelings. It must have taken great courage to shout out in single dissent to Cromwell in an otherwise grateful Parliament and Ludlow must have been aware of the risks involved in such a demonstration of political integrity, yet all he says of this incident is as follows: "Whereunto, though single, I gave as loud a No as I could, being fully convinced that he had acted in this manner for no other end but to advance his own passion and power into the room of right and reason."⁶

Like Melville, Ludlow could not repress his desire for self-justification. This, and a confidence in the rightness of his own cause, led Ludlow to make his principles, which appear to have dominated his behaviour, quite clear to the reader. He carefully elaborated the four reasons for his refusal to support the civil power of Cromwell (II, 43-44), but the reader is left suspecting that other more personal forces might also have influenced him, forces which might have been acknowledged by a candid autobiographer.

Here it is worth comparing these two political memoirists, whose private concerns were swamped in the massive events of the age, with a true autobiographer of the Civil War period, Lady Anne Halkett. By contrast she gives a detailed account of her own personal history with its

⁵Ludlow, I, 120.

⁶Ludlow, I, 193.

daily occurrences. She is direct and honest in fully discussing her feelings and actions. Nor is she afraid to undertake self analysis. For example, she tells how she countered a **quary whether she were married** from "C.B.", her former suitor, with the following piece of casuistry: "I said nothing a little while, for I hated lying, and I saw there might be some inconvenience to tell the truth, and (Lord pardon the equivocation!) I sayd I am (outt aloud, and secrettly said nott)."7

Historical events are only of minor importance and are given prominence only when they directly affect her own actions; she assisted in the Duke of York's escape and organised a hospital for the wounded after the Battle of Dunbar. Her reaction to an event is emphasised, not the event itself. In the following extract the battle is barely mentioned and the writer concentrates instead upon her own dejection, so that we see the effect of history upon the lives of ordinary people:

After the King had been invited to severall places and entertained suitably to what could bee expected, his Mat^{tie} returned againe to Dunfermeline, having ordered ye forces to march; and one morning came letters from ye army lying att Dunbar that they had so surrounded the enemy that there was noe possibility for them to escape, w^{ch} news gave great joy and much security. But the sad effects made us see how little confidence should bee placed in any thing butt God, who in his justice thought fitt to punish this kingdome and bring itt under subjection to an Usurper, because they paid nott that subjection that was due to there lawfull King. The unexpected defeat w^{ch} the King's army had at Dunbar putt every one to new thoughts how to dispose of themselves, and none was more perplexed than I where to goe or what to doe.⁸

In the Memoirs of Temple we return to the usual manner of the memoir form, where the private life of the narrator is everywhere

⁷Halkett, p. 99.

⁸Halkett, pp. 61-62.

subordinate to historical events. Accordingly, Memoirs Part III closes with the rejection of the political life and the return to the private self whose world is more properly the concern of the autobiography:

AND so I take leave of all those Airy Visions which have so long busied my Head about Mending the World; and at the same Time, of all those shining Toys or Follies that employ the Thoughts of Busie Men: And shall turn mine wholly to Mend my self; and, as far as consists with a private Condition, still pursuing that old and excellent Counsel of PYTHAGORAS, that we are, with all the Gares and Endeavours of our Lives, to avoid Diseases in the Body, Pertubations in the Mind, Luxury in Dyet, Factions in the House, and Seditions in the State.⁹

Like Temple, Saint-Simon was aware of the limits of the memoir upon self description. By placing constant checks upon himself he attempted to give a history of his own time rather than a chronicle of his private feelings and actions; but his involvement in the affairs of the court of Versailles, particularly during the Regency, was such that in spite of the controls, his sentiments occasionally seeped into the narrative. Consequently, Saint-Simon was trapped in the same dilemma as Temple, aware that the intrusion of personal feeling would only distract the reader, yet unable to describe certain events dispassionately. But this duality of the memoir, its combination of historical detail and personal reminiscence is part of the appeal of the genre. Saint-Simon's predicament is obvious in the description of the death of the Dauphin and Dauphine. This was a tragedy for France and a personal loss for the

⁹Temple, p. 173.

author, who lost both a **friend** and a political protector:

These "Memoirs" are not written to describe my private sentiments. But in reading them, -if, long after me, they shall ever appear, -my state and that of Madame de Saint-Simon will only too keenly be felt. I will content myself with saying, that the first days after the Dauphin's death scarcely appeared to us more than moments; that I wished to quit all, to withdraw from the Court and the world, and that I was only hindered by the wisdom, conduct, and power over me of Madame de Saint-Simon, who yet had much trouble to subdue my sorrowful desires.¹⁰

When Saint-Simon described his greatest triumph, the disgrace of the Duc du Maine, he ignored his past restraint and presented the reader with all the intensity of emotion which he had then experienced in a rhetorical set piece **that** marked the climax of the memoirs. Saint-Simon had engineered this political coup which was supposed to counter all the injustices and misery **that** had occurred under Louis XIV:

Contained in this manner, attentive in devouring the aspect of all, alive to everything, and to myself, motionless, glued to my chair, all my body fixed, penetrated with the most acute and most sensible pleasure that joy could impart, with the most charming anxiety, with an enjoyment, so perseveringly and so immoderately hoped for, I sweated with agony at the captivity of my transport, and this agony was of a voluptuousness such as I had never felt before, --such as I have never felt since. How inferior are the pleasures of the senses to those of the mind!¹¹

Of all the memoirists discussed so far, Hervey exhibits the greatest reluctance to enter upon personal matters, but he also is sometimes contradicted by his own practice. In an attempt to minimise the effect his personality might have upon the reader, he referred to himself, when he was acting in an official role, in the third person. In most cases the first person occurs only in narrative intrusions. Perhaps Hervey hoped that, by separating the functions of narrator and actor, the narrator would appear to be no more than a mechanical device

¹⁰Saint-Simon, II, 215.

¹¹Saint-Simon, III, 153.

and the actor, divested of his main claim to the reader's sympathy, simply another character of no special importance. He failed to see any reason for writing his own autobiography and considered that the attraction of writers towards the memoir genre was the product of vanity. Instead, Hervey compared himself to the ancient dramatic chorus in his passivity and aloofness from the actions of the account and in his dual role of spectator and commentator:

As to the disagreeable egotisms with which almost all memoir writers so tiresomely abound, I shall endeavour to steer as clear of them as I can, and whenever I must give into them I shall have recourse to the old refuge of speaking always of myself in the third person, in order to make them less glaring and to prevent the natural imputation of pursuing the thread of my history of others only from a foolish vanity and impertinent desire of troubling the world with my own, which, indeed, would be of as little use to me as to my readers, and conduce no more to my profit than to their entertainment. I leave those ecclesiastical heroes of their own romances, Retz and Burnet, to aim at that useless imaginary glory of being thought to influence, every considerable event they relate; and I very freely declare that my part in this drama was only that of the Chorus's in the ancient plays, who, by constantly being on the stage, saw everything that was done, and made their own comments upon the scene, without mixing in the action or making any considerable figure in the performance.¹²

As might be expected, this distancing device sometimes proves a little confusing to the reader, especially when Hervey commits absurdities like the following: "I cannot resist giving here, by way of specimen, an account of one conversation between her and him and Lord Hervey, whilst the circumstances of it are yet fresh in his memory."¹³

Another device Hervey employed to give his work the appearance of great objectivity was to always quote the opinions of others before his own; this contributed further to reducing his status to the level of

¹²Hervey, I, 3.

¹³Hervey, p. 160.

the other persons in the work. He also hid his opinions behind such formulas as: "I shall now recount the different opinions there were on these facts."¹⁴

Despite his rigorous approach to this problem, Hervey displays some inconsistencies in his attitudes. For example, **although he did not** give the grounds of his quarrel with the Prince of Wales, the reader can only infer that it concerned rivalry over the enjoyment of the favours of Miss Vane. He did describe his later liaison with this mistress, when the affair was of no great historical relevance.

Neither could he suppress his feelings about the cruel illness and death of his friend Queen Caroline; she was also important politically to Hervey and Walpole. Significantly, he lost control of his technique here by attributing emotions to the impersonal "I", who before this has appeared only as a manipulator of the narrative: "I must now as well as I can connect the particulars of a diary of the most melancholy fortnight I ever passed in my life, not only from the inquietude of my own mind, but from the scene of distress all around me."¹⁵

The peculiar self abnegating quality of the memoir may become more obvious when these works are contrasted with an ostensible memoir, Herbert's autobiographical Life. Like the memoirists he had a clear conception of the limits of his form - he rigorously excluded any material which seemed more suited to the memoir.

Herbert proposed from the outset to provide as complete a description as possible of his whole being, neglecting nothing which

¹⁴Hervey, p. 92.

¹⁵Hervey, p. 312.

might contribute to fixing his personality. Consequently seemingly trivial details **such as his weight, body and breath odour, pulse rate and height** are included as relevant to his description of himself. Such minute particularity of self portraiture is never evident in the memoir. He unabashedly recounted his sexual behaviour, which was the very area **most avoided by the memoirists, when it concerned themselves.** He wryly noted the beneficial effect which marriage had upon his studies: "And now, having a due remedy for that lasciviousness to which youth is naturally inclined, I followed my book more closely than ever." He also acknowledged his later infidelity, although he was careful to provide the extenuating circumstances - his wife's refusal to travel to France with him and "circumstances which would have operated, I doubt, upon the chastest of mankind."¹⁶

All these candid revelations were to serve a preceptive purpose as a guide to his posterity, who would inherit his basic dispositions. Here we can note the difference between Herbert and Melville, for Melville saw the similarity of experience as the primary factor. But Herbert makes it clear that the general circumstances of a life are subordinated to the basic self, the "natural inclinations and humours" and that the choice of life can be quite different from that of the reader without invalidating the moral guidance of the autobiography. Consequently there is an exact converse of the memoirist's position:

I do believe that if all my ancestors had set down their lives in writing, and left them to posterity, many documents necessary to be known of those who both participate of their natural inclinations and humours, must in all probability run a not much different course, might have been given for their instruction; and certainly it will be found much better for

¹⁶Herbert, p. 148.

men to guide themselves by such observations as their father, grandfather, and great grandfather might have delivered to them, than by those vulgar rules and examples, which cannot in all points so exactly agree unto them. Therefore, whether their life were private, and contained only precepts necessary to treat with their children, servants, tenants, kinsmen, and neighbours, or employed abroad in the university, or study of the law, or in the court, or in the camp their heirs might have benefited themselves more by them than by any else; for which reason I have thought fit to relate to my posterity those passages of my life, which I conceive may best declare me, and be most useful to them.

Historical details are only mentioned when, as an essential part of his experience, they could illuminate his character. Certainly his aim was not to recount history; he left that to another projected work, presumably a memoir. He wrote of events in France: "I conceive a narration of them may be worth the seeing, to them who have it not from a better hand; I shall only therefore relate here, as they come into my memory, certain little passages, which may serve in some part to declare the history of my life."¹⁸ And again, when he adopted the opposite approach to the memoirist: "And now I shall mention some particular passages concerning myself, without entering yet any way into the whole frame and content of my negotiation, reserving them as I said before, to a particular treatise."¹⁹

The intention, then, in memoirs was to limit the disclosure of the writer's self to an account of those transactions in which he was engaged. ~~However~~ some writers excluded even these. In practice, because of the author's commitment to the events described, the memoirist's

¹⁷Herbert, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸Herbert, p. 139.

¹⁹Herbert, p. 142.

emotional attitudes sometimes intruded. And although private concerns such as friendship or marriage were glossed over or intended to be excluded, few memoirists were able to attain Burnet's rigorous control over the circumstances of his narration. **Burnet was able to carefully distinguish these friendships and private principles which directly affected his public behaviour from his more private and domestic concerns.**

In attempting to attain some degree of historical objectivity, the memoirist set the limits of autobiographical description at accounts of his reactions to events. With such restrictions upon the revelation of the workings of the inner self, character revealing personal detail could only seep into the narrative by accident. Even in the eighteenth century the reading public suspected the objectivity of memoirs and today it is those authors such as Holles, Temple, Saint-Simon and Hervey, who either occasionally abandoned the pose of objectivity or allowed their personal selves to intrude, who hold the greatest interest. It must be borne in mind that such autobiographical manifestations were contrary to the main intention of the memoir; consequently memoirs could not serve as a model to be imitated in this respect by any other literary form which sought to emphasise the development of the individual human self.

In general, the private memoirs are closely allied to the public memoir in their treatment of the relationship between self and circumstance. The primary interest in these accounts lies in the nature of the adventures which the narrators had experienced. The writer usually shows no inclination to explore the motives for his actions or

his reactions to events. Drury, for example, occasionally dismissed his actions as the result of inexperience, but he does not comment upon the strange emotions he must have had as a slave amongst the tribes of Madagascar. In some accounts, a stereotyped superficial description of emotions is given. Falconer falls back upon the device of the narrator's inability to describe strong feelings when he writes of his near execution. But while his account of his feelings may be vague, his description of what was actually happening at that time is exact:

They ty'd me to a wither'd Tree that stood at the Mouth of the Huts; then I began to understand what they meant, for I could perceive they were bringing Boughs of green Wood in order to burn me. This Sight made my Courage fail me, and it was impossible to express my Despair and Horror. I found now that the last Day of my Life was come, (for it was impossible to foresee any Thing to the contrary.) My last Recourse was to the Maker and Giver of all good things, for I had try'd all other Means in vain; as also had my poor Wife, whose Rage and Despair overcame her; and she was carry'd away by the Women in the utmost Agony. After my Wife was gone, they set fire to the Wood which enclos'd me; which being green and wet with the late Rain, was a great while in burning; all the while it was a kindling, some of the Indians jump'd round me, and danc'd after their barbarous Manner.²⁰

Bonneval also sought refuge in the inexpressible in his florid yet superficial descriptions of the emotions he purports to have experienced while courting his wife:

It is impossible for me to express the sweetness of those interviews we had daily together. Soft raptures, ravishing bliss, and precious moments, such were the delights wherein my time slipped away, during my stay at Venice, after the arrival of this enchanting creature. These promises were uttered by a mouth too lovely, not to be believed sincere: and some confused glances, which were darted me every instant, from her languishing and bewitching eyes, made me hasten my designs.²¹

It was left to Gibber to break the convention of the memoir

²⁰Falconer, p. 204.

²¹Bonneval, II, 14.

by exploiting its autobiographical potential. He cleverly fused the demands of both the memoir and the autobiography with the result that his Apology is both a history of the stage and of his own life. He proposed to give the reader an account of the development of the stage during the period when he was associated with it and to vindicate his own behaviour in the government of theatrical affairs; but he also intended to provide his audience with a view of his own personality, which had ~~heretofore~~ **been** masked by the public actions of Cibber the actor.

One of the main purposes of the Apology was the revival of past experiences in an attempt to preserve the most pleasant reminiscences of his life: "To this hour my memory runs o'er that pleasing prospect of life past, with little less delight than when I was first in the real possession of it."²² Although he referred to the work as "memoirs" and frequently compared the management of the stage to the government, he never let the reader forget the prominent position which the development of his self enjoyed:

Having given you the state of the theatre, at my first admission to it; I am now drawing towards the several revolutions it suffer'd in my own time. But (as you find by the setting out of my history) that I always intended myself the heroe of it, it may be necessary to let you know me, in my obscurity, as well as in my higher light, when I became one of the theatrical triumvirate.²³

He employed similar techniques to Herbert's in order to present his life, such as the depiction of domestic details and glimpses of the state of his emotions; but his continual dialogue with the reader, in which he discusses both the problems associated with the composition of

²²Cibber, p. 228.

²³Cibber, p. 96.

the Apology and his own behaviour, effectively builds up a relationship between author and reader which does more to establish his personality with the reader than these other more common techniques. Intimacy with the reader was easily established by asking such questions as : "But what think you, sir, of - matrimony?"²⁴ or by playfully forestalling the complaints of an imaginary critic with: "Well, and what then? What's all this idle prate, you may say, to the matter in hand? Why, I say, your question is a little too critical; and if you won't give an author leave, now and then, to embellish his work, by a natural reflexion, you are an ungentle reader."²⁵ Cibber was well aware that the actual process of narration could reveal to the reader the writer's essential characteristics and he unashamedly revelled in the possibilities provided by the course of his account to indulge in his favourite vice of vanity. No man appeared to get greater relish talking about himself than Cibber:

I now begin to doubt that the *Gayeté du Coeur*, in which I first undertook this work, may have drawn me into a more laborious amusement than I shall know how to away with. For though I cannot say I have yet jaded my vanity, it is not impossible but, by this time, the most candid of my readers may want a little breath; especially, when they consider, that all this load I have heap'd upon their patience contains but seven years of the forty-three I pass'd upon the stage; the history of which period I have enjoyn'd myself to transmit to the judgement (or oblivion) of posterity.²⁶

The same chatty, familiar, narrative stance was employed by Mrs. Pilkington in her Memoirs, but the subject of this account was more oriented towards autobiography than was Cibber's.

²⁴Cibber, p. 97.

²⁵Cibber, p. 279.

²⁶Cibber, p. 154.

It is obvious to the reader of the novels of Smollett that Smollett allowed his narrators ample scope for expressing their inner feelings and describing their personalities. Roderick Random, for example, soars in transports of love, is tortured with jealousy over the conduct of his Narcissa, enraged and disappointed by the villains of the world and is often found maliciously plotting schemes of revenge against his persecutors. The reader has only to glance at the synopsis in the table of contents of the first two novels to realize that the character of the narrator plays a far more important part in this form than **in the** memoir. Upon deeper examination, however, affinities between the two forms can be recognised in the relationship between character and events, the control of authorial tone, and the quality of the emotions which are expressed.

Roderick, in particular, suffers very much from the type of stereotyped reaction found in the private memoirists. Bonneval's effusions over the charms of his wife and his worship of her as a semi-divine being closely resemble Roderick's praises of the "adorable Narcissa". But this may be a case of the private memoirist, fictionalising his experience or at least being influenced by the mannerisms of current fiction and romance. Although Smollett's heroes do share something of the exaggerated simplicity of emotion experienced by Falconer, both Peregrine and Roderick are more complex and more articulate (there is no hiding behind stock formulas) than this. Instead, Roderick, with his sea adventures and travels amongst the lower orders, sometimes greatly resembles the character of Coxere in his youth, or that of Drury, particularly when Smollett describes the effect of hardship upon his hero. The

narrative then loses much of its exaggeration, giving the stark outline of Roderick's grief in a similar manner to Coxere's and Drury's simple and direct reactions to experience; but Smollett can never match their talent for understatement. Examples of this type of emotional experience and description are found in those passages describing Roderick's capture and imprisonment by the press gang, the theft of his money by a French friar, and the effects of imprisonment upon him.

The essential similarity between Smollett and the memoir lies in the relative importance of the circumstance of the narrators. In the memoir this took the form of the subordination of the narrator to historical events with only an incidental treatment of the personality. In Roderick Random the hero's presence is often superfluous in that he does not serve as an active participant in the action of the novel. In these cases Roderick, like Hervey, is playing the part of the chorus who, detached from the actual event, can observe and comment upon the scene. Smollett's account of Oakhum's inhuman sick inspection is a good example of this technique. Roderick takes no part in this event, but remains as a spectator while the captain and the surgeon examine and punish the sick sailors. Despite his passivity, Roderick's narration of the event is barbed with irony and contempt for the cruelty of the two officers. There are other episodes also where Roderick is reduced to this state of the critical observer. Examples are: the adventure at the ordinary where Strap upsets a porringer of soup; his first encounter with the club at an ordinary; his sojourn in the Marshalsea prison. But, **if the memoir had any effect at all upon Smollett, the subordination of the hero to circumstances is most obvious, as we would expect, in the**

Carthagena episode, where Smollett relied directly upon his own experience for material for the novel. Here his intention was very close to that of the memoirists, for he was attempting to present his readers with a documentary view of historical events. Apart from one battle scene and the description of Roderick's illness (which may also have had its counterpart in Smollett's experience and which also served to underline the horrors of the expedition resulting from the incompetence of the commanders), **the author gives little of Roderick's past reactions to the battle.**

Instead, in the manner of the military memoir, we are provided with an overall view of the actions with astringently ironic commentary as accompaniment.

We should also consider the overall balance between circumstances and the hero's self in Roderick Random and the nature of Roderick's character. It is apparent from the author's preface that Smollett was very much concerned with attacking the ills of society over a wide front. When he is concerned in the Preface with the subject of the work, he uses very broad encompassing terms such as "the vicissitudes of life", "the follies of ordinary life" and "the sordid and vicious disposition of the world". What occurs in the novel follows this intention, but the resulting extensiveness of treatment and plethora of characters each embodying one undesirable attribute or another means that the interest of the reader is diverted away from Roderick to the colourful scenes which surround him. Even the geographical scope of the work is vast. The novel covers Scotland, England, portions of Europe, the Atlantic, the West Indies and South America. Each of these locations contains a number of self contained episodes each with its own particular interest. Among

the principal objects of Smollett's satirical journey are lust, greed, selfishness, inhumanity, corruption, hypocrisy and homosexuality. It is the ridiculous embodiments of these vices, their vulgar antics and the tawdry settings in which we find them that hold our attention, not the reactions of the hero. What we are exposed to is a kind of fools' gallery displaying all the human vices, rather than a detailed portrait of one figure.

In addition to castigating the vices of society which caused Smollett to emphasise events at the expense of the revelation of his protagonist's character, Smollett was also concerned with providing a documentary-type account of the "mean scenes" of life. He excused this aspect, which apparently contrasted sharply with the memoir whose popularity rested upon its ability to provide the middle class with a description of the unknown court life, as follows:

And though I foresee that some people will be offended at the mean scenes in which he is involved, I persuade myself the judicious will not only perceive the necessity of describing those situations to which he must of course be confined, in his low state, but also find entertainment in viewing those parts of life where the humours and passions are undisguised by affectation, ceremony, or education, and the whimsical peculiarities of disposition appear as nature has implanted them.²⁷

But in effect the two forms were similar. Both described areas of life which were largely unknown to the author's contemporary audience. Although this was not so true of memoirs, which were eagerly read by the upper classes as well (note Horace Walpole's gossipy interest in the form). Both forms also attempted to describe the basic human processes of their characters. The picaresque novel, according to Smollett, could deal with

²⁷Smollett, p. xvii.

open displays of human passions and with human subjects unalloyed by the illnesses of fashionable society. Yet one of the attractions of the memoir was in ripping aside this curtain of "affectation, ceremony" and "education" to reveal the nakedness of the great; and the discovery by the reader of the vices of rulers may have had more fascination than the viciousness of Smollett's fictitious desperadoes.

The ambiguity and inconsistency surrounding Roderick's character also contributes to the imbalance between circumstances and the hero's self. There are at least two versions of the protagonist in Roderick Random. One is the downtrodden yet resilient young man who is capable of great friendship towards his fellows, undying and faithful love for Narcissa, great affection for his relatives and humanitarian acts to the oppressed. The other, and the more dominant, is a brash upstart, unforgiving in his detailed and carefully plotted revenges, vicious and debauched.

The first of these versions could be likened in its blandness to the essentially neutral presentation of the narrator's self in the memoir, where there is just sufficient human interest to ensure that the reader does **not** get oppressed by historical facts. The life is the way out of the maze. But Smollett is not so neutral, for he deliberately tried to heighten the reader's sympathy towards the narrator as a means to increase the didactic moral effect of the satire:

The reader gratifies his curiosity in pursuing the adventures of a person in whose favour he is prepossessed; he espouses his cause, he sympathizes with him in distress; his indignation is heated against the authors of his calamity; the humane passions are inflamed; the contrast between dejected virtue and insulting vice appears with greater aggravation; and every impression having a double force upon the imagination, the memory retains the circumstance, and the heart improves by the example.²⁸

²⁸Smollett, p. XV

The less attractive characteristics of Roderick could stem, as has been suggested by Paulson, from "dropping a poetic convention into the realistic world of the novel", by using Roderick as a personification of the scourge of satire.²⁹ But they could also result from authorial intrusions into the character of Roderick. The reader of the novel, unlike that of the memoir, has two sets of attitudes to contend with; those of the protagonists (here the narrator), and the author. It may be that some of Roderick's more distasteful actions are rather manifestations of Smollett's own rage against the world than consciously-wrought elements of his hero's character. We are reminded of Holles' outpourings against Cromwell which have something of the same viciousness about them, but there is no attempt in the memoirs to overtly compensate for this authorial tone by the creation of a sympathetic central character-narrator.

This duality of the hero is another reason why there is no organic development of his character which could unify the episodes, so that the reader is thrown back further upon the circumstances of the narrative. Here we can contrast Cibber's adroit handling of his Apology where the progress of the work brought a closer proximity between the reader and the narrator's personality. Roderick instead is essentially **static**. **Once beyond the opening chapters we learn little about him. Nor despite protestations about the effects of hardship does he alter significantly in his behaviour, inconsistent as it is. Much of the reader's dissatisfaction with Roderick might have disappeared had Smollett cultivated the link between reader and self-conscious narrator in the**

²⁹ JEGP, LIX, 391.

fashion of Cibber by allowing the narrator to discuss more openly his "present" attitudes towards his past behaviour. Perhaps such a method of infusing the narration with more personality might have meant sacrificing the racy readable style, but Smollett was tied too closely to the traditional narrative patterns of Le Sage to adapt to this new semi-autobiographic manifestation of the memoir.

IV

CHARACTER IN THE MEMOIR AND IN SMOLLETT

The most prominent aspect of the memoir form is its preoccupation with the delineation of human characters. With the exception of A Short History of the Life of Major John Bernardi, which was a self-justificatory piece intended to rouse public sympathy for the author's imprisonment, all the historical memoirs examined demonstrated this interest. While none approached the number of descriptions provided in Volume I and II of Memoirs of Charles Lewis, Baron de Pollnitz, where each major personage in the courts of Europe was described, other writers all gave numerous portraits of their contemporaries. Even a writer as self-centred as Cibber could devote a large portion of his work to the delineation of others. He assigned nearly two chapters to a close study of those actors who were prominent when he first came to the stage. A more or less detailed account of fourteen actors and actresses is given here, quite apart from characterisations of later performers. Amongst other memoirists who are representative of the form in this respect are Clarendon, who included characters of all his friends and the most powerful of his fellow politicians; Lovat, whose seven subjects range in importance from Nathaniel Hooke to the Marquis de Torcy; and Hervey, who described all the more influential politicians and the royal family of his time.

This interest in character delineation was a result of the

serious intent of the form, the presentation of an eye-witness account of the mechanisms of history. The personalities of the political protagonists were seen as a central cause of historical action. Their personalities affected both their rise to and exercise of power. Using the raw material provided by the memoirist, the reader could piece together the pattern of historical cause and effect and so trace the modifying influence of personality upon events. Dr. Johnson in his review of the Duchess of Marlborough's Account praised the work for providing the reader with a description of the personalities of the chief politicians of the times which would serve as the basis for a psychologically-oriented study of history: "By the Perusal of the Account, the Enquirer into Human Nature may obtain an intimate Acquaintance with the character of those whose Names have crowded the latest Histories, and discover the Relation between their Minds and their actions. The Historian may trace the progress of great **Transactions**, and discover the secret Causes of important Events."¹ The importance with which memoirists themselves regarded this relationship between character and personal power and its role as a historical determinant is evident in the comments which they make upon their subjects. Hervey, most notably, considered Queen Caroline to be the sole source of power in the court of George II and that all political actions emanated from her influence upon the king. Accordingly the account to a large degree is concerned with a delineation of her character and an examination of her relationship with George II:

But as soon as ever the Prince became King, the whole world began to find out that her will was the sole spring on which every movement in the Court turned; and though his Majesty lost no opportunity to declare that the

¹Gentleman's Magazine, XII, 129.

Queen never meddled with his business, yet nobody was simple enough to believe it; and few besides himself would have been simple enough to hope or imagine it could be believed, since everybody who knew there was such a woman as the Queen, knew she not only meddled with business, but directed everything that came under that name, either at home or abroad. Her power was unrivalled and unbounded. How dearly she earned it will be the subject of future consideration in these papers.²

Burnet censured the Dutch politician De Wit for exclusively basing his political calculations upon an estimate of the national self interest of a country and totally excluding any consideration of a prince's character and the personal forces which influenced him as a modifying factor in national policy.

He knew nothing of modern history, nor of the state of courts, and was eminently defective in all points of form. But he laid down this for a maxim, that all princes and states followed their own interest; so, by observing what their true interests were, he thought he could without great intelligence calculate what they were about. He did not consider how far passions, amours, humours, and opinions wrought on the world, chiefly on princes.³

Burnet felt that the events of James II's reign were principally the result of the influence of "passions, amours, humours and opinions" upon the King, who allowed himself to be so dominated by others that he ignored the national interest.

And thus I have given the fullest and most particular account that I could gather of all that passed during this weak, inactive, violent, and superstitious reign; in which all regard to the affairs of Europe seemed to be laid aside, and nothing was thought on but the spiteful humours of a vengeful Italian lady, and the ill-laid, and worse-managed, projects of some hot meddling priests, whose learning and politics were of a piece - the one exposing them to contempt, and the other to ruin; involving in it a Prince, who, if it had not been for his being delivered up to such counsels, might have made a better figure in history; but they managed both themselves and him so ill, that a reign, whose rise was bright and prosperous, was soon set in darkness and disgrace.⁴

²Hervey, pp. 44-45.

³Burnet, I, 245.

⁴Burnet, II, 467.

It was claimed that in order to completely understand a person's character a complete knowledge of all his behaviour was required, for a trivial detail might denote effectively the real substance of the personality; hence Saint-Simon's self-conscious preoccupation with trifles. The adaptor of the French edition of Sully which Charlotte Lennox used for her translation stated the case for the all-inclusiveness of the form as follows:

The Memoirs of Sully take their value, perhaps their greatest value, from the innumerable recitals of a private kind, which scarcely belong to the province of history; this is the particular advantage of memoirs, they admit all subjects, however numerous, and all incidents however various, which one can desire to insert; and they are not subject to the burthen imposed upon history, of continuing the narrative through dry generalities, with which even the writer finds himself disgusted.

To obtain a complete knowledge of any prince, it is necessary that the picture of his private life be set to view, together with his public conduct; he must be shown with his courtiers and domestics, in those moments when he is little observed: his character must be fixed by his letters and conversation; the passions are better displayed by a single word related as it was spoke, than by all the art which a historian can use. This idea of memoirs is quite answered by those of Sully; so that no man, till he has perused them, can have a just conception of Henry IV.⁵

Although there is little evidence from the memoirists themselves on **this point, curiosity in the reader seeking historical truth often served as a disguise for a semi-prurient interest in the more intimate** details of the private lives of the great. Readers were also reticent in their reasons for enjoying such accounts. The writer just quoted contrasts unfavourably the dry generalities of history with the course of the memoir which was lightened by entertaining anecdotes of sometimes scurrilous royal behaviour.

It is hard to tell whether Shenstone's desire for more details

⁵Sully, I, ii.

of the private life of Lord Bolingbroke can be attributed to an eagerness to relate the public and private lives of a statesman, or, more simply, to an inquisitiveness into the intimate details of a man's life. "The Memoirs of Ld Bolingbroke's Life abound too much with Politicks for me; I believe The World also would be as well pleas'd with y^e more domestick Incidents relating to so great a Man."⁶ The same curiosity about the intimacies and personal lives of the governing still exists today; only now the mass media supply the reading public with their morsels. One suspects, arguing from modern experience, that the more private these details were, particularly if they concerned abnormal or sexual behaviour, the more acceptable they would be to the audience. Saint-Simon, who often describes in great depth the most personal and salacious aspects of his subjects' lives, especially the manner of their deaths and their sexual habits (his treatment of Vendôme's perversities in particular), is a little too anxious to declare that all his revelations are in the interest of historical truth and are relevant to an understanding of the main events of the time. Twice when dealing with the behaviour of the Duchesse de Berry he repeated this assertion. He declared: "I must disguise nothing more, especially as what I am relating belongs to history; and never in these "Memoirs" have I introduced details upon gallantry except such as were necessary to the proper comprehension of important or interesting matters to which they are related."⁷ Yet the reader's interest in the author's account of her scandalous life tends to be in the salacity of the details chronicled and

⁶Shenstone, p. 357.

⁷Saint-Simon, III, 206.

any historical relevance now appears vague. Saint-Simon hinted at incest with her father, the Duc d'Orleans, but he also described her drinking bouts (where she used to drink herself sick), her affairs (particularly her liaison with Rion, whom she shared with her attendant), her impiety (the fiasco that occurred when the church refused her the last rites with Rion and his mistress present) and her behaviour in the face of death. He concluded: "Drunkenness, filthy conversation, debauchery of the vilest kind, and impiety were her diversions, varied, as has been seen, by occasional religious fits. Her indecency in everything, language, acts, behaviour, passed all bounds."⁸

Hervey recognised this prurient and prying curiosity of the reader as part of the memoir's attraction, but asserted that the reader in his case would have to be prepared for some distasteful revelations:

I am determined to report everything just as it is, or at least just as it appears to me; and those who have the curiosity to see courts and courtiers dissected must bear with the dirt they find, laying open such minds with as little nicety and as much patience, as in the dissection of their bodies, if they wanted to see that operation, they must submit to the stench.⁹

The impression Hervey gives is that of a court divided within itself by broils, of the King infatuated with the Queen and yet spending his time in Germany with mistresses, of the King's stubbornness, the Prince of Wales' fickleness, and of the terrible enmity that existed between the Queen and the Prince.

Hervey is merciless in dealing with human failings. He exposes George II's contradictory behaviour towards the Queen upon her deathbed, when the King alternately showed great concern and equally great callousness.

⁸ Saint-Simon, III, 220.

⁹ Hervey, II, 347.

After describing the King's tender praises of the Queen, Hervey provided examples of his brutal behaviour to his wife in her sickness. Hervey introduced this passage as follows:

These were the terms in which he was for ever now talking of the Queen, and in which he likewise talked to her; and yet so unaccountable were the sudden sallies of his temper, and so little was he able or willing to command them that in the midst of all this flow of tenderness he hardly ever went into her room ~~that he did not~~, even in this moving situation, snub her for something or other she said or did.¹⁰

Or take his scathing outline of the Prince of Wales' character which began:

"The Prince's character at his first coming over, though little more respectable, seemed much more amiable than it was upon his opening himself and being better known. For though there appeared nothing in him to be admired, yet there seemed nothing in him to be hated - neither nothing great nor nothing vicious."¹¹

Other memoirs which dealt with court life also detailed royal weaknesses or glimpses of the intimate life of the great. Melville wrote of Mary Queen of Scots' intrigues amongst the plotting murderous court of Scotland **and later of James I's unfortunate weakness for favourites.** Robert Cary, in addition to discussing his friendship with Queen Elizabeth, gave a very detailed account of the last days in her life which included the controversial question of her settling the succession upon James.¹²

Amongst the later memoirists, probably the most notable in this respect is the Duchess of Marlborough, who regaled the reader with unsavoury details of the monarchs under whom she served. Among the more

¹⁰ Hervey, p. 346.

¹¹ Hervey, p. 51.

¹² This scene was first published by Birch in 1749 ten years before the appearance of the complete Memoirs.

controversial sections in these memoirs were the description of Mary's apparently heartless behaviour after the flight of James, particularly the incident with the bed clothes, Mary's cruel ostracism of Anne, William's bad manners, and the development of Anne's relationship with Mrs. Masham; but the most private disclosure of all was the publication of Anne's letters to the Duchess which created the impression of Anne as a weak, overdependent and doting woman.

This aspect of the public memoir reached its fullest development in the off-shoots from the form, the memoirs of rakes and demi-mondes. The revelations of Laetitia Pilkington, Constantia Phillips and Lady Vane were extremely popular upon publication. What is interesting for our purpose is that many of these accounts of private individuals bordered upon fiction. Cleland complained in 1751 of the number of works which although masquerading as truthful accounts, were really fiction: "How many productions do we see continually foisted upon the public, under the sanction of deceitful title pages."¹³ Reviews of such works as the Apology for the Life of Bampfylde Moore Carew, the life of a rogue whose adventurous journeys and experiences as a gypsy smacked more of the picaresque novel than of fact, and Memoirs of the Bashaw Count Bonneval were filled with uncertainty about the veracity of the authors:

Therefore we shall only add that the book is not a mere romance; as there really is in being such a person as Bampfylde Moore Carew, a noted beggar in the west of England, but how far his exploits may be heightened in the colouring thrown on them by his ingenious biographer, we cannot pretend to say.¹³

Whether the genuine production of Count Bonneval's pen, or father'd upon him by some literary artist in France, we cannot absolutely assure our-

¹³Monthly Review, IV, 355.

¹⁴Monthly Review, I, 457.

selves. Many things in the book bear a genuine aspect, while some particulars on the other hand, carry the face of romance.¹⁵

The early novels of Smollett also existed in this strange hinterland between fact and fiction. Although the emphasis in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle was upon the fictional, enough factual material was included, particularly the Carthage episode in Roderick Random and Lady Vane's memoirs in Peregrine Pickle, to **make it difficult for the reader to distinguish** between actual events and characters and the invention of the author. Smollett **claimed** in the Preface to Roderick Random that: "Every diligent reader will, at first sight, perceive I have not deviated from nature in the facts, which are all true in the main, although the circumstances are altered and disguised, to avoid personal satire"¹⁶ could have been taken to apply to the novel as a whole instead of only to certain sections, with the result that the reader would identify Smollett with Roderick. Acting on this assumption an eighteenth century reader would probably have classed the work as another, albeit more satirical, adventure memoir.

In the field of character-portrayal both the memoirists and Smollett owed a common debt to the tradition of the ancient Theophrastian character. Characters, as originally written by Theophrastus, were short, pithy descriptions of an individual who typified a whole class of men, a sum of general qualities. Theophrastus' characters relied upon externally-observed behaviour for their material. Benjamin Boyce in The Polemic Character 1640-1661 has outlined the growth of the character in **seventeenth-century England, which resulted in the development of**

¹⁵Monthly Review, III, 220.

¹⁶Smollett, p. xvii.

a number of types of character. Amongst them were portrait characters and precept characters. **The character writer's technique also broadened** to include both externally-observed behaviour and subjective character-analysis. The memoir essentially belonged to the later tradition, while Smollett drew more upon the earlier technique of Theophrastus. Both forms agreed in their use of individuals as manifestations or representatives of general classes or failings of mankind.

Although the memoirist's constant use of the character-revealing anecdote would indicate that **the memoirist was attempting to present each subject as a** unique human individual, **he also tended to place** the subject within a general category. Thus kings and chief ministers never enjoy in the memoirs an existence which is completely separate from their office; the reader is always conscious that the person in question is a king or politician first and a man second. This means that **a tension occurs** in memoirs between an appearance of naturalistic character-description, observed external human behaviour, and the existence of a stereotyped pattern against which the qualities of the individual are subjectively analysed and assessed. Within the character **of a** personage, and a lengthy memoir would contain many of these set pieces, the memoirist attempted to combine individual characteristics with the general norms common to the ideal type. Boyce has also noted the development in the portrait character of the mid-seventeenth century of embodying the traditional ideas of the qualities of a good king within individual character-descriptions of Charles I and Cromwell.¹⁷ This tendency still persisted in the later memoirs and if we examine the various characters

¹⁷Boyce, pp. 48-52.

provided of the kings, we should be able to note some similarities between the qualities of those subjects which the memoirist favoured and, in the case of kings with whom the memoirist disagrees, some evidence of ideal qualities being used as a measuring stick.

Saint-Simon's description of the Dauphin (Louis XV's father), who died while still a young man, is a good example of the panegyric character which outlines the virtues of a perfect prince, **and is useful as a means** of comparison with other subjects. The main qualities possessed by the Dauphin were as follows: expertise at human relations, being affable, humble and gentle; devoted to his duties and studies, yet not a recluse; a conscientious performance of all his princely tasks; high intelligence with great judgement; able to distinguish good advice and act upon it; sincere and patient with all; religious and somewhat austere in the manner of his life; selfless in his pursuit of the good; possessing purity of purpose; generous to his subjects and totally concerned with their welfare.¹⁸

The character of William III provided by Burnet shares many of these qualities, but Burnet provided some qualifications and some additional virtues. Like the Dauphin, William was considered by the author to be one of the best princes that his country had had. William shared with the French Prince piety and a temperate existence, the ability to subject his passions to the common good, high intelligence, serious behaviour and devotion to duty, sound judgement, and good intentions. He was also a man of great courage and disliked flattery. William's chief faults, and these were his failings as a prince rather than as a man, were that he did not pay enough attention to his advisers, disliked criticism, was too dependent

¹⁸ Saint-Simon, pp. 218-220.

upon his favourites and was extremely mean (compare the Dauphin's generous behaviour).¹⁹

More individual in its treatment than both of the above characters was Temple's outline of Charles II, which began with an actual anecdote of the King's behaviour to Temple. Here qualities which would be admirable in an ordinary man are seen as **unsuitable for a king and as responsible for** the spoiling of his reign. But Charles also possessed the kingly virtues of affability, generosity to his subjects, intellect and judgement, lack of pride and a distaste for flattery. It is worth quoting the character in full, because within its brief span it **typifies** not only the content of the royal portrait-character, but also the incisive, compressed style of the character.

The King said, go, get you gone to Sheen, we shall have no good of you till you have been there; and when you have rested your self, come up again. I never saw him in better humour, nor ever knew a more agreeable conversation when he was so; and where he was pleased to be familiar, great quickness of Conception, great pleasantness of Wit, with great variety of Knowledge, more observation and truer Judgement of Men than one would have imagined by so careless and easie a manner as was natural to him in all he said or did; From his own Temper he desired nothing but to be easie himself, and that every Body else should be so; and would have been glad to see the least of his Subjects pleased, and to refuse no Man what he asked. But this softness of Temper made him apt to fall into the Perswasions of whoever had his Kindness and Confidence for the time, how different soever from the Opinions he was of before; and he was very easie to change Hands, when those he employed seemed to have engaged him in any Difficulties; so as nothing look'd steady in the Conduct of his Affairs, nor aim'd at any certain end. Yet sure no Prince has more Qualities to make him loved, with a great many to make him esteemed, and all without a grain of Pride or Vanity in his whole Constitution; nor can he suffer Flattery in any kind, growing uneasy upon the first Approaches of it, and turning it off to something else. But this Humour has made him lose many Occasions of Glory to himself, and Greatness to his Crown, which the Conjunctions of his Reign

¹⁹Burnet, III, 335-339.

conspired to put into his Head, and have made way for the aspiring Thoughts and Designs of a Neighbour Prince, which would not have appeared, or could not have succeeded in the World without the Applications and Arts implored to manage this easy and inglorious Humour of the King's.²⁰

Burnet's description of Charles only agrees with that of Temple in mentioning his irresolution, but states that he was lazy, absolute, cruel unforgiving and unjust, corrupted in his youth, and **ill intentioned against the state and church.**

But for a character which reveals a complete lack of princely virtues, the author significantly states that in one aspect the subject "often condescended below the character of a Prince", Hervey's denunciation of the Prince of Wales is outstanding. Hervey stigmatised him as lacking in any of the qualities of greatness; deficient in intellect and judgement, false, yet extraordinarily stubborn and handicapped by his one virtue, **and benevolent** familiarity with others. Clearly, Hervey is using the familiar ideal character of a prince as a set of standards with which to belabour Frederick.

Had he one grain of merit at the bottom of his heart, one should have had compassion for him in the situation to which his poor miserable head soon reduced him, for his case, in short, was this: he had a father that abhorred him, a mother that despised and neglected him, a sister that betrayed him, a brother set up to pique, and a set of servants that neither were of use to him, nor were capable of being of use to him nor desirous of being so.²¹

The characteristics of a successful chief minister also appear to have been embodied in a stereotype. Both Hervey and Saint-Simon offer characters of statesmen that have qualities in common with each other and with the ideal character of the prince. Saint-Simon's portrait of the Duc d'Orleans makes more concessions to his subject's individuality than does Hervey's introductory character of Walpole. The Duc d'Orleans is

²⁰ Temple, Memoirs of What Past in Christendom, pp. 273-275.

²¹ Hervey, p. 52.

represented as a man of great knowledge, high intellectual qualities, humane and forgiving, humble and not over-ambitious, with a love of freedom and noble actions. Unfortunately he was marred by an education which fitted him for debauchery, atheism and idleness. He was also irresolute and could not avoid embroiling people with one another. Hervey's treatment of Walpole inclines to unqualified praise for the man's public and private qualities; so Walpole emerges as the perfect politician and manipulator of people. Hervey's character still has affinities with the seventeenth-century characters which related to general types, not individual men; for Walpole, although presented in a favourable light, resembles the satiric character by Butler of the Modern Politician in his crafty pragmatism and pursuit of ambition.

There never was any Minister to whom access was so easy and so frequent, nor whose answers were more explicit. He knew how to oblige when he bestowed, and not to shock when he denied; to govern without oppressing, and conquer without triumph. He pursued his ambition without curbing his pleasures, and his pleasures without neglecting his business; he did the latter with ease, and indulged himself in the other without giving scandal or offence. In private life, and to all who had any dependence upon him, he was kind and indulgent; he was generous without ostentation, and an economist without penuriousness; not insolent in success, nor irresolute in distress; faithful to his friends, and not inveterate to his foes.²²

The tension mentioned earlier between the general character attempting to conform to the stereotype and the individual characteristics which appear in the narration is obvious in Hervey. Walpole's behaviour elsewhere in the memoirs sometimes does not conform to the character above. One of Walpole's habits, for example, was, as Hervey later describes it: "An affectation of too much familiarity with people of the highest rank and a very coarse manner of being familiar."²³ His indiscretion in

²²Hervey, I, 25-26.

²³Hervey, p. 242.

discussing quite openly the relationship of the Princess Emily and the Duke of Newcastle in what must have been a crude but amusing parallel with the behaviour of dogs earned him a formal rebuke from the Duke of Grafton. Hervey's introduction to this anecdote very nearly contradicts the general assertions of his formal character: "Sir Robert Walpole, will all his dexterity on some occasions, and his knowledge of those he had to deal with, sometimes made as gross mistakes as if his natural sagacity had given him no share of the first of these qualities, nor his long experience any **proficiency** in the last."²⁴

The political memoirists closely followed the convention of the character form as they were developed during the seventeenth century. The greater dependence upon subjective analysis in the place of examples of actual behaviour was mirrored in the memoirist's characters. Although many did include illustrative anecdotes (Saint-Simon's and Temple's use of the introductory example has been noted), the more flexible anecdote tended to take its place as a separate feature within the chronological sequence of the narration. The primary emphasis was upon providing a subjective analysis. A memoirist like Hervey could exclude all reference to the subject's acts from the character and present a character that was totally dependent upon the memoirist's own psychological insight. Even though the memoirist did not display the wit of the seventeenth-century character writers, they still retained the highly condensed style, sometimes compressed almost to the point of being epigrammatical. In short, the character provided the memoirist with the means for a brief, incisively-depicted summation of a man's personality within a popular form. But

²⁴Hervey, p. 242.

this dependence upon a form which denied both the individuality of the subject and the means of treatment by attempting to force both into a stereotype was probably one of the reasons for the decline of the memoir after the mid-eighteenth century.

The character influenced Smollett in two directions. The tradition of the character provided him with a number of stock satirical figures and it also contributed to his peculiar technique of characterisation, the reliance upon outward manifestations of behaviour. There are also stylistic resemblances between some of the seventeenth century character writers and Smollett. Because of the different approach of Smollett to the character, it seems reasonable to suppose that he was influenced directly by this form and not by the memoirs' use of the character. It appears that the character was more the common ancestor of both forms.

The characters of Overbury, Earle and Butler all furnish examples of generalised types which Smollett has also employed. Butler's Traveller and Overbury's Affectate Traveller both have traits which are shared by some of Smollett's minor characters. The group which Roderick meets at an ordinary comprises two Englishmen masquerading as foreigners by wearing foreign fashions in the manner of Overbury's type. They converse almost entirely in French and are seemingly unable to exclude foreign terms from their speech. Butler describes this distinguishing peculiarity which was also common to both of the earlier characters as follows: "He has worn his own Language to Rags, and patched it up with Scraps and Ends of foreign - This serves him for Wit."²⁵ Both characters pose as experts in foreign politics and Overbury's impoverished traveller, like Smollett's

²⁵Butler, p. 145.

fiddler and dancer, spends his evenings expounding upon these matters as an ordinary. The other dominant feature of the traveller character, which these two figures from Roderick Random and the physician, whom Peregrine Pickle encounters in Paris, possess is a contempt for anything which belongs to their native country: "He preferreth all countries before his own."²⁶

Overbury's character of a sailor also has some resemblance to Smollett's nautical figures in "the new confusion" of the sailor's language, but not in the sailor's drunkenness. The most interesting aspect of this character is Overbury's account of the sailor's approach to horse riding which foreshadows Trunnion's adventures on horseback tacking against the wind: "Upon any but a wooden horse he cannot ride, and if the wind blow against him, he dare not: he swarves up to his seat as to a saile-yard, and cannot sit unlesse he beare a flag-staffe; if ever he be broken to the saddle, 'tis but a voyage still, for he mistakes the bridle for a bowlin, and is ever turning his horse-taile."²⁷

Smollett's squire in Roderick Random appears to be a composite of the Rude man and the Bumpkin or Country Squire of Butler. He shares the former's brutishness of behaviour - Narcissa refers to him as the "Savage" and Roderick dubs him "Bruin"; the latter's rusticity, narrow conversation, interests and unsophisticated means of entertainment: "The top of his entertainment is horrible strong Beer, [Smollett's figure used wine] which he pours into his Guests (as the Dutch did Water into our Merchants, when they tortured them at Amboyna) till they confess they

²⁶Overbury, p. 59.

²⁷Overbury, p. 76.

can drink no more; and then he triumphs over them as subdued and vanquished, no less by the Strength of his Brain, than his Drink."²⁸

Other characters which bear some resemblances to Smollett's minor figures are: Butler's Fantastic, Pedant and Prater; Overbury's Braggadachio Welshman and Soldier. While characters provided Smollett with some of his material, they were also important for establishing a precedent whereby an individual figure could embody a general human type, which could be recognised as a distinguishing feature common to a large number of individual humans. Both the seventeenth-century character and the figure in the early Smollett novel were delineated solely in terms of this characteristic. A cowardly braggart soldier in Roderick Random, for example, has his oaths, boasting and confusion in the event of danger highlighted. His singing in the stage coach and his behaviour towards one of the female passengers are ancillary to his more obvious traits. What we see is a satirical attack upon one figure who represents a whole class of men. We can note the link with the use of the character embodying a recognisable ideal type in the memoir. There the type was **built upon** the features held to be typical of a good prince and statesman, here the generalising concerns humbler human types such as the pedant, the cuckold, the mean, the malicious, the braggart and the vixen.

Another feature of the characters, adhered to more closely by Smollett in Roderick Random than by the memoirists (with their greater concessions to individuality and realism), is the clear demarcation of most characters into those which are totally good and those which are all evil.

²⁸Butler, pp. 91-92.

On one side are the ideal characters such as Narcissa, the two comic figures of Strap and Morgan, Thomson, Mrs. Sagely, Melapoyn, Rattlin and, most notably, Tom Bowling; on the other side are MacShane, Oakhum, Crampley, Crab, Melinda, Gawky, Captain Weazel and the numerous hypocrites, bullies, thieves, loose women and sadists whom Roderick encounters.

One other use of characters in which the memoir and Smollett both have some measure of agreement is in their ability to exemplify the nature of the society to which they belong. Smollett's bombardment of the reader in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle with a great number of figures all betraying one vice or another is one method of creating the impression of a society which was essentially callous, self-interested and corrupt. Smollett had indicated in the preface to Roderick Random that the object of his attack was "the sordid and vicious disposition of the world" and, while the first novel concentrated upon the lower orders of society, Peregrine Pickle completed the range by unmasking the failings of the members of the upper classes.

Memoirists like Hervey and Saint-Simon who gave an overall view of life at court, instead of concentrating upon the events of a few years or the actions of the King and a few politically important personages, also used particular people to represent the general tone and behaviour of the court. This is the aim behind Hervey's exact delineation of all the foibles and quarrels of his main characters; behind the mask of the rulers was a human being and the court was just as subject to dissensions, scandals and the effects of human failings as society in general. Saint-Simon was more explicit in his purpose in delineating certain characters. This was his motive in presenting the vile characteristics of the Princess

d'Harcourt: "The Princess d'Harcourt was a sort of personage whom it is good to make known, in order better to lay bare a Court which did not scruple to receive such as she."²⁹ The same reason probably dictated his inclusion of all the undesirable habits of the Duc de Vendôme, another popular figure at the court. The Duke appears as a truly Theophrastian figure, single minded in the pursuit of his vices and capable of the most outrageous behaviour in public.

Finally, another possible influence of the character upon Smollett may be detected in his method of delineating character by emphasising the external features of his protagonists; their behaviour, speech, mannerisms, appearance and dress. L. M. Ellison considers that in the case of Smollett's nautical figures the Elizabethan Comedy of Humours with its direct expression of character by behaviour and appearance was responsible for Smollett's typical mode of characterisation. He notes: "The comic seamen for whom Smollett is famous- Commodore Trunnion, Jack Hatchway, Lieutenant Bowling, and Tom Pipes - live in the reader's imagination primarily as accumulations of the outward marks of manner and speech."³⁰ But this method may also have been suggested to Smollett by reading the Theophrastian character. Theophrastus relied heavily upon physical evidence for his material. His character of the Penurious, for example, consists of a series of miserly acts common to this type with a short note on his threadbare coat. The Vain follows the same pattern, has his dress emphasised more and Theophrastus also includes something of his mode of speech. After the development of subjective analysis and convoluted wit in the seventeenth century, Overbury was able to define

³⁰PMLA, XLIV, 853.

the character as a form which employed many effects: "It is a quicke and soft touch of many strings, all shutting up in one musical close: it is wits descant on any plaine song."³¹ But the characters of this author, Earle and Butler still depended on graphic physical description for some of their impact and Smollett appears to follow them closely in this aspect.

³¹Overbury, p. 169.

CONCLUSION

Although affinities have been noted between the memoir and Smollett's early novel, it has proved difficult to relate these exactly, because of the large number of possible sources which could have affected both forms. For example, it is quite feasible that the character could have influenced both forms individually. Greater definition of the relationships could probably be obtained by studying the links between **the** seventeenth-century picaresque novel and the early memoir. By the mid-eighteenth century Smollett was already writing within a tradition, so an examination of the predecessors of Gil Blas might **be more fruitful.**

The establishment of influence was also made more difficult by the likelihood of early fiction having also had an effect upon the memoir. This reverse effect may have been slight amongst historical memoirs, but it does appear to have been more evident in the private memoirs of the adventurers.

Because of these factors it has been thought wiser to look instead for tentative links between the forms and not be disappointed with the absence of any conclusive evidence of borrowing or direct influence. Thus at the most general level one can state that while the memoir provided only a limited model for imitation by the new form, it should not be ignored as it formed part of the literary background, together with other prose forms, poetry and the drama, from which the novel emerged.

Smollett does not appear to have been in such debt to the memoir as his predecessor Defoe, who exploited its narrative

possibilities further. Smollett did to some extent write within the narrative conventions derived from the memoir and claimed that he had kept close to a natural version of events. But, unlike Defoe, he did not capitalise upon a retrospective stance or endow his narrator with a consistent and characteristic tone, so that Roderick Random does not have a fixed and distinguishable point of view. Smollett's own dissatisfaction with this type of narration is evident in his use of other modes in later novels and one cannot help suspecting that its use in Roderick Random was only a hasty adoption of a popular device.

The memoirists and Smollett all appear to have deliberately emphasised external factors at the expense of allowing a full development of the narrator's character. In the memoir this was seen as an unnecessary intrusion. The narrator's formal function in both Roderick Random and the memoir is to provide a unifying structure and narrative focus for the events. Hervey's image of the chorus is equally appropriate. Partly this is the result of the writer's attempt to cater to the reader's interest in strange social situations, historical events (all areas common to both forms) and, in Smollett's case, to rough-and-tumble adventures; but it also owes something to that interest in the cataloguing of human types, the area in which there is the greatest similarity between Smollett and the memoirist. There are stylistic differences in the treatment of the character, but the conception of mankind composed of a variety of more-or-less fixed types determined by heredity and social position remains the same.

What also emerged from this study was the distinction between the memoir and other "autobiographic" forms. The memoir is a first-person

account by a participant of historical events or a politically-important social milieu. It is distinguished from the diary which could also fit the above description and was often the basis for memoirs, by its retrospective point of view reflecting its composition at a date much later than the events described. The autobiography differs from the memoir in its emphasis upon the description of the growth of the individual human self.

Nevertheless the memoir does sometimes retain these characteristics of its near cousins, particularly the immediacy of the diary and the personal slant of the autobiography and these qualities add to its interest. No matter how hard the memoirist tries, many of the works still bear their maker's personal quirkiness and it is this which, added to the rich mixture of intrigue, power games, gossip and eye witness accounts of historical events, makes the memoirs of such figures as Melville, Cary, Holles, the Duchess of Marlborough and Lord Hervey such fascinating reading.

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