The View of Eighteenth Century Society in THE NOVELS OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT

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SUMMARY

The five novels of Tobias Smollett are the greatest achievement of a man whose literary output, like that of many of his contemporaries, was prodigious both in quantity and variety. Despite an improvement in recent years (most remarkably in P-G Boucé's Les Romans de Smollett : 1971), Smollett's fiction remains comparatively neglected by students of English literature. Whilst literary historians perpetuate old errors and misconceptions of the nature of Smollett's work, other critics create new myths, both social and literary - of Radical Dr. Smollett or Smollett the Picaresque Novelist, for example. The picaresque nature of Smollett's fiction has long been a stumbling block for critics who either regard the term as meaning no more than episodic and roguish, or who, correctly rejecting such a facile and misleading approach, decide that we cannot under any circumstances describe Smollett's novels as "picaresque". By examining Spanish picaresque fiction both as a literary form and as a social document, we find that its particularly successful fusion of form and content lead to a powerful and important vision of a society during a period of fundamental social change. Turning again to Smollett's work we see that the author adopts the literary structure of the Spanish "novelas picarescas" not (as some critics appear to believe) because he was unable to think of anything better, but in the belief that the picaresque novel form was uniquely appropriate as a means of translating his pessimistic vision of eighteenth century society into fictional terms.

Writing during a period which saw the traditional social, economic and political influence of the landed gentry decline as the commercial interests of the bourgeoisie gained in importance, Smollett was personally in a perplexing social position. Though concerned to uphold his status as a "gentleman", which separated him from his social inferiors, he was also - as a younger son - obliged to earn his own living away from the privileged atmosphere of the country estate. It is both from his personal experience and from his distaste for a society which placed money above morality, that Smollett's advocacy of the values of the landed gentry, and his distaste for those of the newly rich middle classes derive. Though he could not remain unaffected by his years of historical, social and political writing, Smollett's defence of an (idealized) traditional, land-based society remains paramount throughout his fiction. Though he abandoned the picaresque novel form after Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, his work reflects an attempt to find a new fictional form for his conservative vision which - after partially unsuccessful attempts in Ferdinand Count Fathom and Sir Launcelot Greaves - he finally achieved in his last, best and most humane novel Humphry Clinker. It is both Smollett's literary achievement and the nature of his social vision which are discussed here.

Contents

	Bibliographical Note	v
	Introduction	1
1:	Smollett and the Picaresque Novel	8
2:	"Roderick Random"	68
3:	"Peregrine Pickle"	148
4:	"Ferdinand Count Fathom" and "Sir Launcelot Greaves"	205
5:	"Humphry Clinker"	266
	Afterword	348
	Notes	362
	Bibliography	380

Bibliographical Note

The best modern edition of Smollett's novels is that published by the Oxford University Press in their Oxford English Novels series, and this I have followed throughout. The series does not yet include *Roderick Random*, however, and Smollett's first novel therefore presents something of an editorial problem. In accordance with my decision to use good modern editions wherever possible, I have chosen to make reference to *Roderick Random* in the Shakespeare Head Press edition. This version (based on the 1775 (Lintot) edition and checked against the fifth edition of 1760 - which includes the "Apologue", omitted in the first edition) is still not completely satisfactory, suffering as it does from some (generally minor) omissions. Where I have felt it necessary, I have not hesitated to repair such omissions by reference to the first edition, but have included a note to that effect in the text. I have also used the Shakespeare Head Press edition when quoting from *The History of an Atom*. In accordance with modern practice, I have modernized the spelling of proper names at all times except in quotations; thus Oaghum or Oakhum, used indiscriminately in early editions, is always spelt Oakum, and similarly Don Rodriguez becomes Don Rodrigo.

Note

After a first full reference to each source, I have used the following abbreviated titles for works cited frequently:

Roderick Random	-	*Random*
Peregrine Pickle	-	*Pickle*
Ferdinand Count Fathom	-	*Fathom*
Sir Launcelot Greaves	-	*Greaves*
Humphry Clinker	-	*Clinker*
The History of an Atom	-	*Atom*
Travels through France and Italy	-	*Travels*
The Present State of All Nations	-	*Present State*
The Continuation of the Complete History of England	-	*Continuation*
The Letters of Tobias Smollett	-	*Letters*
Boswell's *Life of Johnson*	-	*Life*

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Introduction

Tobias George Smollett was born in 1721, and christened in March of that year in the parish church of Cardross, Dumbartonshire, the younger son of a younger son of a leading member of the Scottish lowland gentry. These facts, bare as they are, deserve close consideration, for they helped shape not only social and moral views which Smollett retained throughout his life, but also the greatest achievement of an industrious and varied career - his five novels.

Until his death, Smollett retained a powerful and not misplaced sense of pride in his ancestors. The family's long record of public service in the law and army culminated in the career of the novelist's grandfather, James Smollett, who distinguished himself both during the Revolution of 1688 (William III bestowed a knighthood on him a decade later) and also by his tenure of public office in Scotland. The exact particulars of Smollett's birth are all important. His birth gave him, firstly, a place in a socially privileged class - the gentry. The distinction of being a "gentleman", and Smollett's awareness of his rank, find repeated expression throughout the author's life, both in his correspondence and in his fiction. Yet Smollett's position as a younger son was less fortunate. Though his social rank was enviable enough in the eighteenth century, it was less economically privileged than we might at first assume. In an age when landownership gave not only social prestige but also economic (and to some extent political) power,

the junior members of the gentry were denied the security which a landed estate conferred on its owner and on his heir. Though brought up as members of families which, not least in lowland Scotland, dominated in the neighbourhood, they were nonetheless forced to make a living in the highly competitive world of the church, the army, or one of the newly-important professions - the law or medicine. It was a world in which failure might entail not only financial hardship, but more unpalatably, loss of status also.

If this was generally true for all junior members of the gentry, it was particularly true for Smollett. Not only was he the younger son of a younger son, but his father, Archibald, had imprudently married for love, without Sir James's consent. His bride - Smollett's mother - was a gentlewoman, Barbara Cunningham, who, though a "woman of distinguished understanding, taste and elegance",[1] possessed no fortune. Smollett was, in fact, doubly unfortunate, for Archibald died shortly after Tobias' birth, leaving him with no income and few prospects. Thus almost from birth, Smollett was destined to face a double problem: he was both obliged to earn his living (he was working in Glasgow at least as early as November 1735), and to do so in such a manner as would enable him to retain his rank as gentleman.

The importance of this latter stimulus to Smollett's fiction, we shall see later, but we can immediately appreciate the significance that he attached both to ancestry and to social status throughout his life. In a letter probably written to his cousin James, a Commissary of Edinburgh and Sheriff-Depute

of Dumbartonshire, in 1756, Smollett speculates that their ancestors were originally Normans - Malet or Molet - followers of William the Conqueror, and he later enquires whether James has any anecdotes about "our little Family", in consequence of having heard that Smolletts had been freeholders in Dumbartonshire four hundred years previously.[2] Smollett's interest in his family's past and in their social rank, is not solely of an antiquarian nature. It is by tracing such ancestry that he lays inviolable claim to the title of esquire or gentleman which, he writes in The Present State of all Nations, "is limited to persons of a certain rank, such as the sons of barons, and gentlemen whose ancestors have been always free and borne a coat of arms".[3] In a characteristically forthright letter, intended to be sent to Alexander Hume Campbell,[4] Smollett makes the strongest claims to his right to be treated as a gentleman. Apostrophizing Hume Campbell, the twin-brother of the Earl of Marchmont, Smollett asks by what right the lawyer dared abuse the character of one who "as well as yourself, is a gentleman by birth, education, and profession" (Letters, p. 23). Smollett was, as much of his writing shows us, a sensitive man, but (as here) he appears to have been especially defensive in matters concerning his social rank. It is not improbable that a personal experience of his wife's prompted the testy observation, in Travels through France and Italy that the Florentines "will not, without great reluctance, admit into their assemblies any lady of another country, whose noblesse is not ascertained by a title. This reserve is in some measure excusable among a people who are extremely

ignorant of foreign customs, and who know that in their own country, every person, even the most insignificant, who has any pretensions to family, either inherits, or assumes the title of *principe*, *conte*, or *marchese*",[5] a remark which, in other forms, is repeated in both the *Travels* and *Ferdinand Count Fathom*.

Yet however much Smollett claimed, and felt himself, to be a gentleman, he recognised that he lacked all of those privileges which landownership in itself conferred. In a letter to William Huggins, at whose estate at Nether Wallop in Hampshire he was often a guest, Smollett feelingly contrasts the life of a landowner to that of a writer, to which Huggins aspired: "Alas! why should a man who can live in Ease and Tranquility, exercising the Virtues of Benevolence, and full-filling all the Duties of social Life, torment himself with troubles over Schemes of literary ambition ....For my part, I long eagerly for some quiet, obscure Retreat, where, as from a safe and happy Harbour, I may look back with self gratulation, upon that stormy Sea of Criticism in which my little Bark has been so long and so violently tossed and afflicted" (*Letters*, p. 95). What is interesting here is less that Smollett wishes to be rid of the intense criticism to which his editorship of the *Critical Review* subjected him in 1760, but that, even at such a moment, he envies Huggins not merely "Ease and Tranquility", but his opportunity of "exercising the Virtues of Benevolence, and full-filling all the Duties of social Life". This letter is a key to the social values of the whole of Smollett's fiction. His belief in the importance of the relationship between landowner and tenant, and

the homogeneous society it presupposes, dominates the social vision of his novels.

Nor is it a coincidence that this reciprocal relationship was even stronger in lowland Scotland than in the remainder of Great Britain. Although only Roderick Random and Humphry Clinker actually contain descriptions of Scotland, the fact of Smollett's Scottish birth is also important for the anti-metropolitan tone it brings to his novels. Throughout his life, at first instinctively and later more consciously, Smollett adopted the attitudes and values of the parliamentary country party. The country party gained support primarily from small landowners who were resentful both of the increasing wealth and influence of the middle-classes, and of governmental policies which seemed to attack the accepted basis of social and political influence - landownership - in favour of the commercial interests of the City. Not surprisingly, the feelings of such landowners were strongest in the poorer regions of the country, in those areas least aided by population growth and the expansion of trade. Of Smollett's five novels, four (Ferdinand Count Fathom, concerning a foreign servant, is the exception) have central characters who come from peripheral regions of Great Britain. Roderick Random is a Scot, both Peregrine Pickle and Launcelot Greaves come from rural areas of Yorkshire, and Matthew Bramble owns an estate in Wales. Not only is their place of origin, and social status, particularly important to them, but all four are opposed (often virulently) to urban, and especially metropolitan, society. In all five of Smollett's novels, the immorality of the capital and

the chain of political corruption centring around the court attract criticism from Smollett's characters, and through them, from the author himself.

As a result of his personal experience and his belief in the ethos of the country party, Smollett transforms the relationship between landowner and tenant in a society which acknowledges social and economic power as vested primarily in landownership, into an ideal which expresses itself above all in an image of paternalism. We do not only think, in this context, of Smollett's principal characters, who know (or discover) the moral and social value of a country life. Smollett too, the landowner manqué, deserves attention. When he introduces himself into his final novel, it is in just such a situation that we see him, as the dispenser of hospitality to the hacks of Grub Street, and Jery Melford notes that "if any individual lost his temper so far as to transgress the bounds of decorum, he was effectually checked by the master of the feast, who exerted a sort of paternal authority over this irritable tribe".[6] Paternalism was, for Smollett, a virtue in social relationships, and it is in opposition to the expanding, individualistic, capitalistic society of eighteenth century Britain, that he sets up the country estate as the exemplar of an ideal social unit linked by moral and not economic bonds.

It should not surprise us that, in Travels through France and Italy, a Latin inscription near Nice leads him, in an aside, to admit that "For my part, I could never read without emotion, that celebrated eulogium of the senate who exclaimed after [Pertinax's] death,

Pertinace, imperante, securi viximus, neminem timuimus, patre pio, patre senatus, patre omnium honorum, We lived secure and were afraid of nothing under the Government of Pertinax, our affectionate Father, Father of the Senate, Father to all the children of Virtue" (Travels, pp. 146-7n.). By what means Smollett translates his values into fictional terms is the subject of what follows.

1: Smollett and the Picaresque Novel

When Smollett, in his "Preface" to *Roderick Random*, wrote that he had modelled his first novel on the plan of Le Sage's *Gil Blas*, he could scarcely have imagined that, in one sentence, he had sown the seeds of critical confusion which has endured until the present day. The spectre of the "picaresque novel" which we might reasonably expect to find laid by contemporary interest in both comparative literature and a more socially minded approach to fiction, has recently returned to haunt Smollett's critics more frequently than before. So much so, in fact, that even the most helpful critics writing on a totally non-picaresque work like *Humphry Clinker* feel compelled to suggest (though plainly unconvinced themselves) that Matt Bramble, or his sister Tabitha, might owe something to the heroes of the Spanish "novelas picarescas".[1] This continual reference back to the Spanish picaresque tradition has been so overpowering as to drive the American critic, George Rousseau (in despair?), to write an interesting and provocative article deserving considerable attention, in which he claims that "In recent years several critics have maintained that all [Smollett's] novels are 'picaresque'",[2] and to argue himself that in fact none of them are. In this chapter I shall take Rousseau's article as the basis for arguing that two of Smollett's novels - *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* - *do* deserve to be called picaresque, but in the process I shall endeavour to do more than hang a label on them, for fear that, as so often before, it become a mill-stone. If

the term "picaresque" is to be more than a descriptive tag used solely for classification purposes, then any examination of the picaresque nature of Smollett's fiction must show not only how that fiction is picaresque (which in itself first requires that we define the term), but also suggest why Smollett found it useful to use the form of the picaresque novel for his first two attempts at prose fiction, and consider what view of the world those novels embody.

The most readily apparent, if not the most important, questions arising from Rousseau's article concern those mistaken assumptions about the "relationship of Smollett's imaginative prose works to the so-called 'picaresque tradition'" that he claims are commonplace. As evidence of his assertion that in recent years a number of critics have held all of Smollett's fiction to be picaresque, he quotes the critical work Tobias Smollett by Robert Spector, which indeed makes Smollett's attachment to the picaresque novel form throughout his work its main argument. Nevertheless, those "mistaken assumptions" which Rousseau attacks are not nearly as widespread as he would have us believe. They are not held, for example, by all specialists - by L.M.Knapp, Damian Grant or Angus Ross, for instance, in their recent introductions to new editions of Smollett's novels,[3] nor by all literary historians: even Walter Allen, who in The English Novel writes that in his first four novels "Smollett added nothing to this primitive [i.e. picaresque] form of the novel",[4] makes an exception of Humphry Clinker, whilst Robert Giddings, despite the fact that his book The Tradition of Smollett attempts

to fit Smollett into a picaresque tradition, acknowledges that in Humphry Clinker "there is very little evidence visible of the picaresque tradition, the half-hearted picaresque element that was from time to time visible in Sir Launcelot Greaves has now disappeared altogether".[5] With the exception of Spector, no-one maintains that Smollett was a "picaresque novelist"; what these writers - and others - do maintain is that Smollett wrote some picaresque novels. The question of how many such novels there are is one which still invites considerable difference of opinion amongst critics of Smollett, and it might well be argued (à la Rousseau) that such obvious confusion about which novels are picaresque is even more disturbing than the supposed idea that they all are.

In his article, George Rousseau takes one critic, Philip Stevick, to task, for continuing to describe Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle as picaresque even after having (quite rightly) argued against so labelling Sir Launcelot Greaves and Humphry Clinker. Smollett's novels, however, as Rousseau himself recognizes, do not easily fit into a predetermined pattern of any sort. The best - indeed the only - method of classifying them is to consider each individually.

If we grant Rousseau's premise - a very just one - that form and content must be separated, and that "picaresque" can refer only to content, then our task must be to attempt a definition of the term "picaresque", and to look at Smollett's fiction in the light of it. A failure to define exactly what is meant by "picaresque" has led, since the eighteenth century, to a

point where, as Rousseau rightly observes, the word has come to denote - at least among a majority of critics of English literature - no more than a "cultural milieu pervaded by rogues and rascals". Such a loose definition is, obviously, of very limited value in critical terms, and has indeed proved most misleading. But equally, if not more, misleading, is a definition which, concerning itself solely with enumerating the elements essential to picaresque fiction, completely misses the spirit which pervades, and is crucial to, the whole genre. Rousseau defines picaresque content as applicable to "those prose works which, regardless of their form - and this last clause is all important - contain a first person narrator, a picaro, whose social fluidity is marked, whose perspective towards himself and the external world is demonstrably oblique, and who haphazardly wanders through a variegated natural or mental landscape only to discover that his life is a game from which he ought to and finally does withdraw" (p. 1389). In commendably attempting to avoid the vagueness of other Smollettian critics, Rousseau has, unfortunately, not only come up with too narrow a definition, but also missed an essential attribute of the world created in picaresque fiction. I propose that for the purpose of examining Smollett's fiction, we consider the picaresque novel as being constructed around a central figure, the picaro, who engages our sympathies and who often - though not invariably - relates his own life history. That history will describe the erratic (not necessarily haphazard) and at times unwilling progress of the picaro through different strata of a society which

reveals a combination of moral and social disorder finally translated into a social vision essential to, and uniquely characteristic of, the picaresque novel. To consider Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle in the light of Rousseau's definition, would not only be misleading, but would lead to a failure to appreciate why Smollett wrote his novels as he did, and thus seriously to underestimate his artistic achievement.

In order to consider Peregrine Pickle as picaresque fiction, the first aspect of Rousseau's definition we must challenge is that relating to a first-person narrator. In a long footnote, Rousseau attempts to justify this restriction on the term "picaresque" by reference to a number of critics of the genre, and further, by implying that to remove this restriction necessarily results in the inclusion of "almost every prose work dealing with travels and low-life". Although it would be foolish to dismiss the question of the first-person narrator as a matter of no importance, it is equally unwise to assert that it must be considered crucial to any definition. Of those "astute writers on the subject" whom Rousseau quotes as supporting his own stress on the importance of the first-person narrator, few are as rigid as Rousseau himself. Indeed, three of the most perceptive of these - Angel Valbuena y Prat, A.A.Parker and Stuart Miller - maintain exactly the reverse. In his Introduction to La Novela Picaresca Española, Valbuena y Prat writes:

> Antes de examinar en detalle la evolución de la novela picaresca española, en sus obras significativas, debemos notar cómo no puede

> reducirse todo el género a una demasiada estricta unidad, que daría una impresión del mismo demasiado unilateral. Aunque el Guzmán, de Alemán, se halla en el centro de toda la picaresca, no hay que ver en él una obra que cierre o impida otras posibilidades.[6]

In other words, a definition drawn from too narrow a source will, when applied to later works, create more problems than it will solve. This point is particularly relevant to a consideration of the first-person narrator, and in his anthology of picaresque novels, Valbuena y Prat is happy to include works such as Rinconete y Cortadillo and Coloquio de los Perros of Cervantes, or La Garduña de Sevilla of Castillo Solorzano, which are not first-person narratives. On this very point Valbuena y Prat adds:

> Hemos advertido, pues, una diferencía, una picaresca diversa entre las obras de Cervantes y las otras hazañas y relatos de los mozos que narran su autobiografía. Por esto, los elementos picarescos adquieren una forma personalísima en manos de Cervantes.[7]

We might say exactly the same of the differing forms of the picaresque novel with which Smollett presents us in Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle.

Valbuena y Prat, moreover, is far from alone in this view. A.A.Parker, in Literature and the Delinquent, is equally clear: "The autobiographical form, although adopted by the majority of the picaresque novelists, is not essential",[8] whilst Stuart Miller, though less concisely, comes to the same

conclusion. In The Picaresque Novel, he writes:

> the picaresque novel is told, traditionally, from the first person, recollected point of view...the sustained first person narration forces us to sympathetically identify ourselves (more or less) with the picaro.... This sympathetic identification arising from the first person point of view is basic to the functioning of the picaresque novel.[9]

In other words, what is crucial to the picaresque novel is not a first-person narrator, but the reader's sympathetic identification with the main character, the picaro. The importance of the identification should not be underestimated, not least because it quickly rids us of a number of works which have misguidedly and unhelpfully been considered picaresque, Moll Flanders and Jonathan Wild, for instance, in both of which irony plays a crucial role in the narrative and in our response to the characters of the titular heroes.[10] It is true that sympathetic identification is helped by first-person narration, but if the same effect can be produced by a third-person narrator basically sympathetic to the main character then the picaresque novel functions as before. We can see the truth of this assertion by looking at Wayne Booth's excellent treatment of types of narration in The Rhetoric of Fiction. "Perhaps the most overworked distinction", he writes, "is that of person. To say that a story is told in the first or the third person will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise and describe how the particular qualities of the narrators relate to

specific effects".[11] Stuart Miller obviously realizes this, for in his conclusion he declares that "The picaresque novel generally limits its point of view to the picaro. It may or may not be autobiographical; the essential thing is that the reader identifies himself with the protagonist and vicariously undergoes the shocks of his chaotic experience".[12] We can now see that by drawing on too restricted a choice of both primary and secondary source material for his definition of the picaresque novel, Rousseau overemphasizes the importance of the role of the first-person narrator, by failing to understand why he is important, and being consequently unable to acknowledge that his function could be (and was) performed in other ways.

Important as this is to Smollett's picaresque fiction - and particularly to Peregrine Pickle - a more serious defect in Rousseau's definition must now be observed. It is Miller's phrase "chaotic experience" which indicates the basic inadequacy of the definition, and which reveals Rousseau as over-concerned with the individual elements necessary to picaresque fiction - the narrator, the journey motif, the roguish milieu - and insensitive to the vision of the world which these elements combine to produce, and hence to the importance of that vision for picaresque fiction. All picaresque narratives, without exception, present us with a picture of a world in disorder. The casual violence and overt brutality characteristic of Smollett's fiction are found in the anonymously written Lazarillo de Tormes (1554), the earliest picaresque novel, and continue to be present throughout the genre's development.

Together with the emphasis on pain and disease and the extremes of fortune experienced by the heroes of the picaresque novels, that violence is indicative of the collapse of the moral and social order in which the reader believes and trusts. Such elements are brought together in an episodic plot, characteristic of picaresque fiction, which adds disorder to the books' structure, and helps to project what Miller calls "a universe in a state of chaos". Moreover, if we consider this last phrase of Miller's, we can quickly begin to see why the picaresque novel might present itself as an ideal form to a writer of a conservative viewpoint in Augustan Britain. To an age for which "Order is Heav'n's first law",[13] a novel whose vision is of chaos, must inevitably evoke a sympathetic response from many of its readers. Smollett was, at least in 1748 and 1751, more optimistic than Pope (perhaps he took more seriously Bolingbroke's dictum that "Not to despair of the commonwealth, whatever her condition be, is the principle of a true patriot"[14]), but it was an unrealistic optimism, or so we might argue from the conclusions to his novels. Certainly, for much of both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, his vision is very close to that of the Dunciad:

'Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd'

and if "Universal Darkness" ultimately buries neither Roderick nor Peregrine, then it certainly threatens to do so on more than one occasion.

If we accept the importance of both sympathetic identification with the picaro, and a vision of chaos or disorder in a moral or social sense as essential attributes of picaresque fiction, then we do not need

to include within our definition of picaresque (as Rousseau contends) "every prose work dealing with travels and low life". Tom Jones, for example, to consider a case cited by Rousseau, could not possibly come into the category of a picaresque novel. Our identification with the hero of Fielding's work is very different from our identification with Lazarillo, Pablos de Segovia, Roderick or Peregrine, because we do not see all events from Tom's point of view. Fielding, like Cervantes in Don Quixote, adopts the view-point of the omniscient narrator, and his own interpolations in the head-chapters provide much of the book's comic irony, forming an obvious and important contrast between the characters' reactions in a given situation, and the author's comments on the situations and characters he himself has created. Such a direct comment as "Tom Jones, who, bad as he is [my emphasis], must serve for the heroe of this history",[15] is nowhere to be found in Peregrine Pickle. Indeed, the moral comments of Fielding in Tom Jones are always very different to the few moral comments inserted into the narrative flow of Peregrine Pickle, which compare much more closely to the moral sermons, or commentaries on the book's actions, delivered by the picaresque hero of Guzmán de Alfarache.

The plot of Tom Jones, moreover, as many critics, including Coleridge, have observed, is extremely elaborate and most skilfully unfolded. Such complexity contrasts very obviously with the episodic (though not haphazard) plots of picaresque fiction, and serves to underline the differences between the chaotic universes of Lazarillo, Guzmán or Roderick Random,

and the supremely ordered world of Tom Jones. Everything in Fielding's novel, as we only fully appreciate after finishing it, is purposive - a contrast to much of Spanish and Smollettian picaresque fiction. Structural coherence, moreover, reflects not simply Fielding's powers of organization, but the essence of his moral outlook. Arnold Kettle has remarked that "Fielding...is very sure of his world. He is not complacent but he is fundamentally confident - confident that the problems of human society, that is to say his society, can and will be solved by humane feeling and right reason".[16] We find an illuminating illustration of the differing attitudes of Fielding and Smollett in this respect by comparing the encounters with magistrates of Heartfree (in Jonathan Wild) and Roderick. The former finds himself under sentence of death by reason of perjured testimony delivered against him by Fireblood from Wild's gang - legal processes have been carried out with all possible care for the truth. When Fireblood is himself taken for theft, he confesses to the magistrate, revealing his part in the plot against Heartfree. Fielding continues: "The justice, having thus luckily and timely discovered the scene of villainy...lost not a moment in using his utmost endeavours to get the case of the unhappy convict represented to the sovereign, who immediately granted him [his] gracious reprieve".[17] How different from Roderick's experience with a magistrate. When the justic mistakes him for a notorious felon, Roderick is, for some time, at the mercy of a man whose power is matched by his obstinate belief in his prisoner's guilt. Only the chance intervention of a court officer

saves Random, whilst the justice disguises his lack of perception with a mask of benevolence (v. below p. 98). Other instances of differing attitudes abound in the novels of Fielding and Smollett. The travel elements, for example, in Tom Jones and Roderick Random are very different. Roderick's wanderings are dictated by chance rather than by design. His journey to London takes place because his employer wishes to lay a bastard at his charge, his entry into the Navy - which he has been trying to effect for a considerable time at great expense - actually occurs when he is press-ganged, his first meeting with Narcissa is the chance result of the treacherous attack he suffers, his re-encounter with his uncle takes place after Roderick has been captured by pirates, and so on. Tom's voyaging, however, is very different; the larger part of his journey - from Upton-upon-Severn to London - is made in pursuit of Sophia, and marriage to her is the intended result of most of his subsequent actions throughout the book, and if at our first glimpse of Tom we read that "it was the universal opinion...that he was certainly born to be hanged",[18] we are in fact convinced from a very early stage in his career that he was really born to succeed.

We can now see two major reasons why Tom Jones need not - indeed cannot - be considered a picaresque novel, even though first-person narration is not considered as essential among the criteria for picaresque fiction. The reader may feel sympathetically inclined towards Tom, but his identification with the hero will be of a far different order to his identification with Peregrine, because the moral commentary

and irony which Fielding inserts into his narrative gives him an objective, and at times detached, view of Tom. Secondly, and more importantly, the ordered world in which Tom moves is fundamentally at odds with the world in which Roderick and Peregrine fight for their survival.

If we apply the criteria suggested as essential to picaresque fiction to Smollett's other prose narratives, then it soon becomes very clear that none of them are, in fact, picaresque in nature. Ferdinand Count Fathom has a hero who (except perhaps at odd moments) does not gain our sympathy; his deliberate perversity and his readiness to defraud even those who feed, clothe, educate and trust him, ensures that the reader does not identify with the main character. Moreover, though the early part of the book, in which Ferdinand's deception appears rewarded, might suggest a world in moral disorder, it becomes increasingly apparent as the story progresses that the worthy, moral behaviour of Renaldo, Monimia and Don Diego will triumph over the immorality of Fathom. What Fielding writes in his Preface to the Miscellanies (1743) concerning Jonathan Wild might, in its tone of moral certainty, equally well apply to Fathom: "though perhaps it sometimes happens...that the Villain suceeds in his Pursuit, and acquires some transitory imperfect Honour or Pleasure to himself for his Iniquity; yet I believe he oftener shares the Fate of my Hero, and suffers the Punishment, without obtaining the Reward".[19] We can dispose even more easily of Sir Launcelot Greaves; although occasionally governed by chance, the hero's wanderings are far more purposive than those of any

picaresque hero. Events do not occur despite the hero - as is largely the case in picaresque fiction - but because of him. Misplaced zeal, not the necessity of survival in a cruel or uncaring world, provides the mainspring of the book's action. In fact, the knight himself, far from being thwarted by the disorder his world reveals, is the instrument of restoring moral and social equilibrium. And if the philosophical dimension of the novel is far less successfully handled by Smollett than by Cervantes in his masterpiece, the conflict between Launcelot's errantry and his lunacy does put the novel even further from the world of Lazarillo; whatever the eighteenth century may have thought, to confuse the picaresque and the quixotic is to be guilty of a substantial critical error. Only a similar failure to define what is meant by the term "picaresque" (such as we find in Spector's book) allows Humphry Clinker to be denominated a picaresque novel. Critical uncertainty about who is a picaro (Matt Bramble? Tabitha? Humphry himself?), should make clear that none, not even the most sympathetic, appears to us as do Roderick or Peregrine. Moreover, Bramble, the central character, makes his journey purposefully, and his social mobility is minimal, particularly in regard to the lower strata of society. Though affronted by much he sees, Bramble provides a clear contrast with the picaro since his travels are voluntary, and such disorder as his experience may reveal, can easily be rectified by a speedy return home.

Smollett cannot, then, be considered a picaresque novelist, but he did write two picaresque novels. If we return to Rousseau's article, we find that Rousseau

is concerned with the varied literary elements to be found in Smollett's imaginative fiction - he cites elements of the picaresque alongside satire, romance and realism. His question as to why Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle should be considered picaresque, we have tried to answer in terms of the vision of the world which they embrace. In the former book, Smollett shows the world as vicious - in both the eighteenth and twentieth century senses of the word - and chaotic; Roderick, despite, or perhaps because of, his essential honesty, is constantly set upon by those who, through desire for personal gain, revenge, or sheer malice, distort the world as it should be. Peregrine Pickle reveals a world slightly less brutal, but no less criminally inclined; a world in which the hero, in the course of his wanderings, discovers that hypocrisy is rife and that those (including himself) who should be exemplars of certain human virtues and attributes are often completely devoid of them. This is the vision of the world which, with other more obvious elements - the sympathetic central character and the peripatetic life-style, for instance - leads us to describe Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle as picaresque novels. If we examine Smollett's fiction, or that of the Spanish writers closely, however, we find that the literary elements - satirical, realistic, farcical, burlesque or grotesque - mentioned by Rousseau, are also in evidence, working not in opposition to, but as a means of building up, the dominant picaresque vision. The view of society which emerges from picaresque fiction emphasizes the defects and vices of mankind, rather than positive qualities and virtues. As its nature

tends to describe the disordered - the opposite of the human ideal - this is by no means surprising. Similarly we may justifiably expect to find (and do) that satire plays an important role in creating the picaresque vision of the world. In his introduction to La Novela Picaresca Española, Valbuena y Prat writes: "En la novela picaresca entra, en gran parte, el elemento satírico. Los diversos oficios o estados sociales son el blanco de las graciosas burlas o las aceradas censuras del personaje que traza, a capricho del autor, su pretendida autobiografía".[20] What begins in Lazarillo as relatively short satirical passages (the picaro's description of the priest's life, for example), is developed in Guzmán and many subsequent picaresque novels, until it is completely woven into their narrative framework, or into moral and religious commentaries such as Guzmán delivers. Smollett, like Alemán and Quevedo, uses satire to its fullest effect (as we shall see later), not merely as a means to delineate the shortcomings of the Church, the Navy, the nobility, the medical profession or whatever, but as a way of suggesting the values that these professions and social classes should, in fact, embody. Smollett's satire has, almost invariably, a positive as well as a negative aspect.

To speak of Smollett's "realism" is to tread on more dangerous ground. For many years Smollett was considered a "realistic novelist", but the multiplicity of his heroes' adventures, occurring with such frequency as to be completely unbelievable, together with the exaggerated characteristics of many of Smollett's creations and the contrived endings of the novels,

makes "realistic" an absurd adjective to describe the fiction as a whole. Nevertheless, Smollett does build up individual episodes by means of the accretion of detail in order to give his work a documentary quality - in such episodes as the History of Miss Williams (Chap. XXII), the naval scenes and the descriptions of Bath in Roderick Random or the school sequences, parts of the continental tour and the prison episode in Peregrine Pickle, for instance. Such scenes - Smollett's "realism" if you like - not only combine to produce a powerful image of eighteenth century society, but serve as a means to ensure that the burlesque or grotesque elements also present in Smollett's fiction do not predominate. It is the combination of the realistic and the grotesque (the latter visible in, for example, the characterization of Capt. Whiffle or Pallet and the physician, and generally introduced for satirical purposes) which Smollett took over from picaresque fiction, where it occurs with great frequency. Even Lazarillo, the prototype of the picaresque novel, in which we find a clear intention to portray the physical world as contemporaries perceived it, cannot pretend to be wholly realistic (satire plays an important secondary role), but it does make observation rather than fantasy of paramount importance.

The "novela picaresca" was, in part, a reaction against the libros de caballerías - the "novels of chivalry" - widely read in Spain throughout the sixteenth century. Like the Italian and English epic poems - Orlando Furioso, Gerusalemme Liberata and The Færie Queene, these novels described an unreal world populated by perfect heroes such as Palmerín de Ingla-

terra or Amadis de Gaula whose deeds - performed in the service of idealized women - were numerous, exceedingly brave and entirely fantastic. Though Lazarillo did not break down literary convention very quickly (it was first published in 1554 and the novels of chivalry serve as the starting point of Cervantes' satire in Don Quixote, 1605), it did portray a world radically opposed to the fabulous one of the knights, and one much closer to the experience of its readers. Perhaps no fiction can claim to be entirely realistic, but though Lazarillo does contain some caricature, contemporary social observers confirm that even the most apparently fanciful characters - such as the impoverished hidalgo who makes the most elaborate attempts to conceal his poverty - do have a real basis in fact.[21] As the picaresque novel evolved, however, the original emphasis on realism became mingled with attempts at satire involving the exaggerated, grotesque characters (or caricatures) which we also find in Smollett's work. Valbuena y Prat writes, "Desde el Guzmán en adelante, el mismo sentido caricatural que hace oblongas las figuras y el fondo, y deforma, por tanto, lo que podia ser realismo, tiende a presentar el lado grotesco o venal, siempre exageradamente en el lado negativo, de cada oficio o cada estado".[22] Thus in Quevedo's El Buscón, the schoolmaster priest Don Cabra (Doctor Goat) is caricatured ferociously: "His nose was partly Roman and partly French, because it was poxy with cold sores (not the real pox of course; it costs money to catch that). His whiskers were pale, scared stiff of his starving mouth which was threatening to gnaw them....His neck was as long as an ostrich's

and his Adam's apple looked as if it had been forced to go and look for food".[23] Whilst Lázaro is content to say of his master, the priest, that "all the money-grubbing meanness in the world had been collected into this single reverend gentleman. Mind you, I don't know if it was natural to him or whether he assumed it when he first put on his clerical robes" (Lazarillo, p. 38), Pablos is describing not a character but a caricature: "He put a spell on the mice in case they nibbled the few crumbs he hoarded. He slept on the floor on one side so as not to wear out the sheets. In short he was the High Priest of Poverty and Avarice incarnate" (The Swindler, p. 94).

As both the realistic and grotesque elements found in Smollett's narratives exist also in Spanish picaresque fiction, so too the romantic elements which Rousseau observes in Peregrine Pickle play an important role in the Spanish novels. The majority of picaros display little if any attachment to women (indeed they are unable to maintain any stable relationship), and nowhere in the Spanish fiction does romantic love play as large a part as it does in Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle. But Smollett's interest in romantic love is less of a break with picaresque tradition than it might seem; rather it reveals a greater awareness of what could be done in the novel form in terms of describing relationships between principal characters, particularly as a means of making a contrast with other relationships and attitudes present in the novel. Smollett was by no means the first author to make the stability of romance serve to underline the fundamental disorder of the picaro's

existence. In Guzmán de Alfarache (Parte I, Libro I, Cap. VIII), Alemán presents us with the inserted story (itself a precursor of Smollett's interpolated narratives such as Miss Williams' history or the "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality") of Ozmin and Daraja. Alemán presents his characters - two Moors - in idealized terms similar to those Smollett uses for Narcissa and Emilia in his novels. In Guzmán, we read "Era la suya una de las más perfectas y peregrina hermosura que en otra se había visto. Sería de edad hasta diez y siete años no cumplidos. Y siendo en el grado que tengo referido, la ponía en mucho mayor su discreción, gravedad y gracia".[24] Compare this with, for example, the first description of Narcissa in Roderick Random: "Her age seemed to be seventeen, her stature tall, her shape unexceptionable, her hair that fell down upon her ivory neck in ringlets, black as jet; her arched eye-brows of the same colour; her eyes piercing, yet tender; her lips of the consistence, and hue of cherries; her complexion clear, delicate and healthy; her aspect noble, ingenuous and humane".[25] In Alemán's story, Ozmin, after numerous adventures in which the lovers' constancy is amply demonstrated, is sent for execution in Seville, falsely accused and unfairly judged, when, by an improbable chain of events - in which the fathers of Ozmin and Daraja are captured by the Spanish, convert to Christianity and become loyal subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella - he is saved from death, marries Daraja and grows wealthy. Such a story, in which moral and social justice are obviously seen to be done, serves to point out by contrast the disorder of the picaro's world. In the story's happily

resolved conclusion we see that events should ultimately produce an ordered world in place of the chaos which characterizes the earlier adventures of Ozmin and the whole life of the picaro. The romantic elements, and conclusions, of Smollett's novels are very similar in execution and intent to the interpolated story in Guzmán. Smollett abandons the inserted narrative for this purpose, and makes the picaro's own love affair and eventual marriage comment on the instability of the world he has hitherto inhabited. Neither the conclusion of Roderick Random nor that of Peregrine Pickle is really justified by the events which precede it, but rather reveal an interesting fusion of Smollett's own moral and social convictions (or hopes). Smollett's reasons for writing such conclusions are integral to an understanding of why he wrote his first two novels in a picaresque manner and why and how he adapts the picaresque format and vision of life to his own design.

We have suggested that the Spanish picaresque novels present their readers with a picture of sixteenth century Spain in moral and social disorder, and in his earliest fiction Smollett is concerned with portraying eighteenth century Britain in a similar state. His methods, as we shall now see, follow the Spanish exemplars with remarkable fidelity. The Spanish authors' favourite technique for revealing the disorder they saw in their society, was to contrast the picaro's experience with standards which are, or were, considered the human ideal. If, in discussing Smollett's fiction, critics have generally not remarked on the care with which the author uses repeated examples

of a shocking divergence between the ideal and the actual in eighteenth century society as a means of giving structural coherence to his novels, it is partly because Smollett makes no real attempt to define what he means by ideal. At least in his earliest novels, he still feels confident that he may depend on his readers' instinctive understanding of the exact nature of a morally and socially ordered society (one, in fact, based on Christian and classical values). Moral order - a state in which "good" and "bad" can be recognized as such and rewarded or punished accordingly - has always been a human ideal. Social order - comprising a rigidly structured hierarchical society in which each person knows, and is content with, his allotted place - was considered, in both the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, not only as an ideal in itself, but as a necessity without which moral order could never be achieved. In the picaresque novels such ideals are rarely attained, and the events in the picaro's life usually occur in a manner directly opposed to that in which the reader expects, or hopes, they will occur in his own life.

One aspect typical of picaresque fiction is the circumstance of the picaro's birth and the distorted relationship he enjoys with his parents. We may reasonably contend that the reader's ideal in this area of human experience is that each child will have two parents and a stable home environment in which he may pass his early years. In the picaresque world, however, the picaro's experience differs widely from the ideal. He often has no parents, or at best only one, or (as a variation on this theme) has

parents whose occupation is dishonest or disreputable or whose behaviour towards their child is unnatural. In the first picaresque novel, for instance, Lázaro relates that "when I was about eight years old they caught my father bleeding the sacks belonging to the people who came to have their crops milled there. So they arrested him, and he confessed, denied nothing and was punished by law" (Lazarillo, p. 25). Exiled as a thief, Lazarillo's father embarks on an expedition against the Moors and is killed. His mother, "with no husband and no protector" is forced to leave her native village, and go with Lázaro to Salamanca where she associates with a Negro who is also subsequently arrested for theft. Sentenced to one hundred lashes herself and dismissed from her job, Lázaro's mother is once more obliged to move, this time to work as servant at an inn, where unable to support her son, she gives him as a guide to a blind beggar. Such is the childhood life of Lazarillo, and other picaros' experiences are similar. In Cervantes' story Rinconete y Cortadillo, Cortado says "mi tierra no es mia, pues no tengo en ella más de un padre que no me tiene por hijo y una madrastra que me trata como alnado".[26] Alonso, the picaro in Alcala Yañez's El Donado Hablador relates that: "yo, padre mío, nací en una villa de Andalucía; mis padres que Dios haya, aunque yo no los conocí, me dicen que fueron personas de cuenta en mi pueblo....A veinte días me faltó el padre...pues en la cuna me pusieron luto".[27] Pablos, in Quevedo's El Buscón, is not an orphan, but, as he relates in the first chapter of his narrative, his father was a thief who had frequently suffered imprison-

ment, whipping and torture, his mother was well-known by the townspeople as a witch, and his brother died as the result of a lashing incurred for theft.

In these and other Spanish novels, the childhood experience of the picaro deviates markedly from what the reader regards as an ideal upbringing, and this aspect of disorder recurs in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle. Roderick loses both parents, whilst he is still an infant, by the actions of a grandfather whom he describes as "unnatural and inflexible". Although able to attend school, he suffers continual ill-treatment and lacks "cloathes, books, and other necessaries I required, my condition was very ragged and contemptible; and the schoolmaster, who, through fear of my grandfather taught me gratis, gave himself no concern about the progress I made under his instruction....I was often inhumanly scourged for crimes I did not commit...[by] this arbitrary pedagogue" (Random, i, pp. 7, 8, 9). Such brutal treatment is typical of the picaro's experience throughout his education. Pablos de Segovia suffers beatings and starvation at the hands of Dr. Goat, and Lazarillo too goes hungry and is beaten by the blind beggar who serves as teacher for him. Moreover, in his description of Roderick's beatings, Smollett is closely following the precedent not only of the Spanish novels, but also of Gil Blas, whose hero suffers from his treatment by the "most expert flogger in Oviedo". Peregrine is not an orphan, but his childhood reveals both the by now typical brutality of the picaresque novel and the totally unnatural rejection of the hero by his mother. Forced to leave his first school, Peregrine

is "committed to the instruction of a pedagogue, who was ordered to administer such correction as the boy should in his opinion deserve. This authority he did not neglect to use; his pupil was regularly flogged twice a day".[28] Though resilient enough to withstand this experience, the hero still suffers from his mother's aversion, and we find that Mrs. Pickle's "original disgust degenerated into such inveteracy of hatred, that she left no stone unturned to alienate the commodore's affection from this her innocent child" (Pickle, p. 108). Dominated by his wife, Mr. Pickle also rejects Peregrine who like other picaresque heroes finds himself parentless (although unlike them, he does find a parental substitute in Commodore Trunnion). In both Smollett's novels, then, as in other picaresque fiction, the distorted relationship between the picaro and his parents reflects a wider moral and social disorder. Smollett emphasizes this disorder by extending the range of the heroes' distorted family relationships, revealing that both Roderick and Peregrine are injured by others of their relation. The former reveals that he suffered from "the jealous enmity of my cousins; who, the more my infancy promised, conceived the more implacable hatred against me" (Random, i, p. 7), whilst the latter faces physical attack by his brother Gam, who "had been instructed to bear the most inveterate grudge" against him.

This, then, is a typical picaresque childhood, and in the narration of the picaro's adolescence and early adult life, we see the same cleavage between the human ideal - that which the author knows his readers will instinctively expect or hope for - and

the reality of the picaresque world. Although between the Spanish picaros - Lazarillo, Guzmán, Rinconete or Pablos - and Smollett's heroes there lies a gap of two hundred years, a change of country and an important difference in social status, the underlying social ideals, principal among them the need for stability, remain surprisingly similar. In the first chapter of Lazarillo de Tormes, Lázaro remarks "...how awful it is to fall if you are highly placed" (Lazarillo, p. 28), and throughout all picaresque fiction social disorder plays an important part in the moral disorder which affects the picaro and the society in which he lives. To fully understand the impact of social problems on the Spanish "novelas picarescas" and on Smollett's fiction, we must look at - respectively - the societies of Spain between 1550 and 1650 and eighteenth century Britain.

From a reading of the Spanish picaresque novels it seems at least arguable that the moral disorder which affects the picaro is the most important symptom of a general disorder affecting Spanish society for several decades on either side of 1600. The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, which had begun in 1469 and which ended in 1504 with the latter's death, had been characterized by the consolidation of existing social patterns. Though the political influence of the aristocracy had been somewhat curbed, their social and economic power continued to increase. A contemporary chronicler wrote, "All the grandees and caballeros and hijosdalgo who served in the conquest of this kingdom [Granada], received mercedes - favours -

each according to his status, in the form of houses, lands and vassals".[29] Social and economic power remained vested in land, and as the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella confirmed the pattern of landownership as it had existed in mediaeval Castile, by the turn of the century two to three per cent of the population owned 97% of the land in Castile. Among the peasantry too, the existing social system remained unchanged. Although after 1480 serfdom virtually ceased to exist, and the peasantry - about 80% of Castile's population - was free to move at will, the people's life changed little. A hierarchical system, including a peasant aristocracy of wealthy labourers, existed, and poverty obliged the majority of the people to work on rented land as before.

But if in 1504 Spanish society showed signs of stability, by 1600 it had changed enormously, and at all levels gave an impression of fundamental disorder. Throughout the sixteenth century two major economic problems combined to alter the social patterns which had existed in Spain since the mediaeval era: continuous price increases and an ever-mounting burden of taxation. In the hundred years between 1501 and 1601 overall prices rose four-fold, largely, though not exclusively, because of the vast quantities of precious metals imported from Spain's new American colonies. In Spain under the Hapsburgs, John Lynch writes that the price revolution "brought impoverishment to those who lived on fixed incomes and small rents, for these did not keep pace with prices. Small landowners of the hidalgo class, the lower clergy, government officials and many others all found their

standards of living reduced",[30] and at worst, the smallest landowners might lose their estates to a middle class seeking to consolidate gains made during Spain's short-lived industrial boom. The conviction, ironically stated by Quevedo in his Epistola satirica y censoria, that

Hoy desprecia el honor al que trabaja[31]

underlies the contemporary social prejudice against trade and towards nobility. An excessive concern with commerce might affect the reputation of an aristocratic family, and as J.H.Elliott writes in Imperial Spain 1469-1716, "Few...would be anxious to compromise too heavily a status which conferred on them not only great social prestige, but also important financial and legal advantages".[32] Heads of families might, though poor, retain their land, but younger sons - victims of the mayorazgo system which kept apart the greater portion of a family's wealth for their elder brothers - were often reduced to extreme indigence. These younger sons might enter the Church in search of a comfortable living, or join the army hoping for a pension given in reward for services rendered in the campaigns of Italy or Flanders. Many, however, would obtain neither and in an effort all too painfully repeated in eighteenth century Britain would spend what little they possessed in making continual appearances at Court, seeking the favour of a minister who might bestow on them some minor office. In the opening lines of his great Moral Epistle to Fabio, Andrés Fernández de Andrada warns:

Fabio, las esperanzas cortesanas
prisiones son do el ambicioso muere

y donde al mas astuto nacen canas.[33]

And if all else failed, as the picaresque novels and contemporary observers make clear (v. below p. 41), the hidalgos would go hungry and naked rather than dishonour themselves by working, for as the contemporary saying puts it, "el no vivir de rentas no es trato de nobles".[34]

This breakdown of the traditional social order at the top of Spanish society is paralleled by an increasing disorder in the life patterns of the peasantry. Although the majority of peasants remained desperately poor throughout the early part of the sixteenth century, they were virtually tied to the land for lack of any other form of livelihood. When an increased demand for manufactured goods, coming partly from the expansion of the traditional Flemish and Italian markets and partly from the American colonies, led to a growth of industry, the peasantry endeavoured to escape the destitution of rural life by mass emigration to the cities in search of employment. This sudden increase in activity proved disastrous for the Spanish economy. Castilian agriculture was now unable to support both a growing domestic population and supply the American colonies with sufficient produce; food prices rose and the ordinary Castilian, increasingly unable to purchase the necessities of life, found manufactured articles completely beyond his reach. The prices of these goods - particularly textiles - rose in consequence until Spanish goods were so overpriced that foreign competitors were able to corner not only the Spanish home market, but the lucrative American one as well. This discourage-

ment to Spanish industry was reinforced in 1538 by the introduction of a new tax, the servicio, from which the hidalguía was exempt. Its effect was to prompt those who had prospered in Spain's brief industrial boom to abandon business and invest their profits in a landed title, with rapid and disastrous consequences for industry and its workers. In his Historia de la Economía Política en España, Manuel Colmeiro writes: "Había la industria española llegado a la cumbre más o menos alta de su prosperidad al comedio del siglo XVI. No gozó mucho tiempo su buena fortuna, porque presto empezó a despeñarse y cayó rodando con fracaso hasta el fondo del abismo".[35] Spain's industrial expansion died away leaving large numbers of former peasants not only landless but also unemployed. In such circumstances, comments Colmeiro, "debió ser muy crecido el número de gentes condenadas a perecer de miseria por falta de trabajo".[36] For those who escaped this extremity, the possibilities were few indeed. Religious communities and the army took many, but for the majority only a life on the periphery of established society, gaining a vagabond living by beggary or theft, remained open. In 1545, Philip II wrote to his father saying, "the common people who have to pay the taxes are reduced to such extremes of calamity and misery that many go naked...the prisons are full, and everyone is heading for ruin."[37] This was not simply an isolated opinion. Many others expressed similar views - for a variety of reasons. In 1559, when Philip was himself a king of three years' standing, the Cortes of Toledo petitioned their monarch thus:

Otrosí decimos que una de las cosas que causa

> haber tantos ladrones en España, es igualmente disimular con tantos vagamundos, porque el reino está lleno de ellos, y son gente que muchos de ellos traen cadenas y aderezos de oro y ropas de seda, y sus personas mui en orden sin servir a nadie y sin tener hacienda, oficio ni beneficio, y sacado en limpio unos se sustenan de ser fulleros y traer muchas maneras de engaños, y otros de jugar mal con naipes, y otros de hurtar, y hay entre ellos capitán de ladrones que trae sus cuadrillas repartidas en las ferias y por todo el reino...y muchos de ser rufianes, que es la más perniciosa y mala gente.[38]

It was from this sector of the community - divorced from its traditional home and occupation - that the picaro emerged.

The hidalgos and the peasants, both victims of changes taking place in Spanish society, are forced to seek their livelihoods in surroundings alien to them, and even in their struggle for existence, they cannot escape instances of the continuing instability of sixteenth century Spain. Lázaro describes one such instance, a food shortage in Toledo, resulting from the increasingly obvious defects in agricultural methods: "that year there had been a poor harvest and the Town Council decided that all poor people who weren't natives of the town should leave. The town crier announced that anybody who was found there would be whipped. The law took its course and, four days later, I saw a procession of poor devils being whipped around the main streets. That scared me so

much that I didn't dare beg any more" (Lazarillo, p. 58).

Although, as here, Lazarillo de Tormes is typical of all picaresque fiction, in its delineation of the effects of the wider disorder of Spanish society, chronologically it is isolated, for it ante-dates the bulk of the Spanish novels by fifty years. It was at the end of the 1590s, when the full impact of a century's rising prices and still rising taxation (a result of Philip II's military involvement overseas) was being felt, that the picaresque novel really flowered. Since the 1580s Spain's economy had begun to suffer from the increasing economic independence of her American colonies which now produced textiles, grain, wine and oil - previously their major imports from the mother country. The goods America now wanted were not the goods Spain could supply, and neither her industry nor agriculture were able to meet the new demands placed on them. The earlier exodus from countryside to town had left the former depopulated and increasingly unable to meet the demands of a growing population, and though the Cortes periodically complained about the decay of agriculture, it is typical of the lack of cohesion in Spanish society that it was unable to marshal enough national support for the extensive and radical changes which would have been necessary for success. Even so, the return of peace at the end of the century might - together with a corresponding reduction in military expenditure - have presented Spain with an opportunity for economic development, except that at the very end of the century the harvest failed drastically, corn prices rose

three fold in three years and the resultant famine was immediately followed by a plague which, first appearing in 1596, reached its zenith in 1599-1600, when it wiped out much of the population increase which had occured during the sixteenth century. The immediate effects of the plague were a labour shortage, a resultant rise in wages, and virtual destruction of any hope of building a healthy Spanish economy through industrial expansion. Equally important was the sense of desengaño, or disillusionment, felt by the Spanish people. After the failures of Philip's expeditions in France and the Low Countries, the defeat of the Invincible Armada and the raid by Drake on Cádiz, the famine and the plague, the ideals of the Spanish were largely destroyed and national chaos coincided with personal disorientation. A failure to appreciate the causes of these disasters led to a replacement of optimism with fatalism - a feeling that chance, not industry, affected Man's destiny. Those who had worked hardest were often those who had lost most - perhaps the reverse might also be true. This was the feeling, and this the period, which coincided with the production of the bulk of picaresque fiction: Guzmán de Alfarache was published in 1599, Cervantes' Novelas Ejemplares, written from 1602 onwards, appeared in 1613, and Lopez de Ubeda's La Picara Justina (1605), Barbadillo's La Hija de Celestina (1612), Espinel's Marcos de Obregon (1618) together with many others, including Quevedo's El Buscón, all belong to this period of national disillusionment, and the breakdown of the traditional economic bonds and social groupings which had previously held Spain together. The episodic plots of the novels

themselves reflect this feeling of desengaño; the picaro's progress is determined by short-term motivation - he is influenced not by a wish to provide for his future, but simply by a desire to eat today; his wandering is not in search of stable employment, but as an escape from a bad master, from the law, or to new areas in which to beg. Not only his own experience, but his contact with other ranks of society - the hidalgo, the priest, the friar or the soldier - contribute to a feeling of instability and disorder. The picaro's hopes, expectations or illusions are constantly shattered; appearances constantly deceive. Lazarillo's first experience of his caballero master is very favourable: "I chanced to meet a gentleman strolling along. He was quite well dressed, his hair was neat, and he looked pretty well-off" (Lazarillo, p. 49). But as Lazaro soon discovers, the hidalgo's clothes are all he possesses and at night his breeches and doublet serve him as a pillow; his room is bare and his food and drink are bread and water. Similarly, in El Buscón, Don Toribo appears well dressed in his cloak and hood, but Pablos relates that "he took off his cape and hood and I saw that under his robe he had something rather bulky. I thought it was his breeches....But then he got ready to delouse himself so he hoisted up his clothes and I saw he had two cylinder-shaped pieces of cardboard tied to his waist and fixed round his thighs so as to stick out under his cloak, because he didn't have any leggings or a shirt" (The Swindler, p. 155). Such physical examples of how the picaro finds himself deceived by appearances are not merely comic, but serve to underline the moral

and social disorder which characterizes his experience. Though Lazaro's encounter with the hidalgo may initially amuse the reader, the breakdown of the social structure implied by the gentleman's poverty will also disturb him.

To many Britons in the eighteenth century, an analogy drawn between sixteenth century Spain and their own country between 1700 and 1750 would have seemed absurd. The sense of desengaño prevalent in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century, contrasted strikingly with a generally felt optimism of large sections of the British people. Smollett himself comments on the relative well-being of very diverse sections of English society - the socially envied and influential landowning aristocracy, the prosperous trading middle classes, and the tenants of the gentry, for example. Of the first, he writes (in The Present State of All Nations): "The nobility of England are numerous and wealthy; and enjoy many honourable privileges....The majority of them live with great magnificence, especially at their country-seats, which are indeed elegant palaces, adorned with fine gardens, ponds, parks, and plantations" (Present State, ii, pp. 204-5), and in the same work he characterizes the "merchants and traders" (in a manner more diplomatic than heartfelt, as we shall see later) as "greatly and deservedly respected in England, on account of their riches as well as their profession" (Present State, ii, p. 210). Finally, in Travels through France and Italy, he compares England's "commonalty" very favourably with that of France,

noting particularly "her peasants well fed, well lodged, well cloathed, tall and stout, and hale and jolly" (Travels, p. 308). If we consider the circumstances described in these views (two of which derive from Smollett's most consistently objective work), it might seem strange that the picaresque novel - reflecting a sense of moral and social disorder - should reappear and flourish. But though uncritical comment has often seen the first half of the eighteenth century as a "Golden Age", at least in rural England, for some sections of the community the phrase is as much a misnomer as it was for sixteenth century Spain.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century no one had successfully challenged the social and economic supremacy of the aristocracy and gentry. Although the bourgeoisie - now including financiers as well as merchants and manufacturers - had greatly increased opportunities to become not merely prosperous but wealthy, the social prestige and political power vested in land made the purchase of a country estate a first priority for those who could afford it. For the gentry, brought up to regard ownership of such estates as the sole birthright of themselves, this was no easy thing to accept, particularly since fortunes acquired in trade or by stock-jobbing could support life-styles which were the envy of all but a handful of traditional landowners. Boswell puts the latter's view succinctly: "the too rapid advance of men of low extraction tends to lessen the value of that distinction by birth and gentility, which has ever been found beneficial to the grand scheme of subordination".[39] An extreme form of such social

advancement, this time in France, provides Smollett with material for a scornful passage in the Travels. "Nice", he writes, "abounds with noblesse, marquisses, counts, and barons. Of these, three or four families are really respectable: the rest are novi homines, sprung from Bourgeois, who have saved a little money by their different occupations, and raised themselves to the rank of noblesse by purchase. One is descended from an avocat; another from an apothecary; a third from a retailer of wine, a fourth from a dealer in anchovies; and I am told, there is actually a count at Villefranche, whose father sold macaroni in the streets" (Travels, pp. 151-2). A certain degree of fluidity in the social structure was, in fact, more advantageous to the gentry than they themselves would allow, but it was left to the more pragmatic Doctor Johnson to put the case for a limited amount of social mobility, for "leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in a country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought" (Life, ii, pp. 428-9).

Nevertheless, if entry into the ranks of the landowners, rather than their overthrow, was the aim of most wealthy bourgeois, the gentry felt not only their social prestige, but also their economic advantages and their political influence to be at risk by the end of the seventeenth century. Economically the country gentlemen felt themselves discriminated against not only during the last years of the seventeenth

century, but also throughout most of the next hundred years. A foreign policy favouring continental wars (which brought with it greatly increased land taxes) was particularly galling, so they argued, since it enabled the merchants and financiers, who profited by the war, to enrich themselves at the expense of the landowners.

Politically too they were dissatisfied; as early as 1696, the back-bench parliamentary representatives of the country gentlemen, led by Jack How, had introduced a land qualification bill to exclude the middle classes, and younger sons of the aristocracy, from sitting in parliament. The House of Lords, conscious of William III's disapproval, rejected the Bill, but it remained dear to the hearts of many of the squirearchy and after the Tories gained a majority in the 1710 parliament, Henry St. John (later Viscount Bolingbroke) reintroduced it successfully, at the expense only of removing the clause excluding the sons of peers. If the Bill was successfully passed, however (and it remained in force for over a century), it was never effective, for those affected by its restrictions were not slow to find legal methods of circumventing it. Both socially and politically then - particularly as the Court and aristocracy strengthened their links with the City - the country gentlemen were becoming isolated; their importance as a class was not yet at serious risk, but their position was by no means as impregnable as it had once appeared.

Of secondary and more localized importance to the gentry as a whole, but of particular importance to Smollett's first novel, was the predicament of

that group's junior members. Though it helped consolidate the position of the squirearchy as a class, the entailing of estates on the eldest son almost inevitably denied security to his younger brothers. Like the younger sons of the hidalgos, cadet members of the gentry were forced to seek a living in a world for which their privileged childhoods had often ill-equipped them. Like their Spanish counterparts of the sixteenth century, they sought that living in the Church or the army or navy; given the greater professional opportunities of eighteenth century Britain they tried also for places in law and medicine. Their attempts were not always successful. As early as 1711, Addison (in the opening lines of the twenty-first Spectator) comments that "I am sometimes very much troubled, when I reflect upon the three great Professions of Divinity, Law and Physick; how they are each of them over-burdened with Practitioners, and filled with Multitudes of Ingenious Gentlemen that starve one another".[40] The mentality of "el no vivir de rentas, no es trato de nobles" cannot really be said to have applied in Britain,[41] and certainly many members of the aristocracy found any expedient acceptable if it enabled them to live well. Smollett notes that not only do "the younger sons of the best families engage in commerce" (Present State, ii, p. 210), but that "A nobleman thinks it no disparagement to match with the lowest of the people...provided it be cemented with a large sum of money" (Present State, ii, p. 216). Many writers were not tardy in recommending commerce as a sure recourse for all those who had no particular talents for a profession. Addison wrote that "When I consider how each of these Professions are crouded

with Multitudes that seek their Livelihood in them...I very much wonder at the Humour of Parents, who will not rather chuse to place their Sons in a way of Life where an honest Industry cannot but thrive....A sober, frugal Person, of slender Parts and a slow Apprehension, might have thrived in Trade, tho' he starves upon Physick".[42] For many of those coming from the squirearchy, however, trade was a last and unwelcome resort, for it not only broke down the final distinction between them and the bourgeoisie (the distinction of wealth had long since failed to apply), but also placed them - if unsuccessful in their careers - in jeopardy of losing even their claim to the title of gentleman. For these younger sons, the privileges of their seniors must have seemed very remote.

And if the gentry had their problems, the working population was not, in its entirety, enjoying a "Golden Age" either. The estimates of population made by Gregory King in 1696 suggest that out of England and Wales' total population of five and a half million, one million three hundred thousand were cottagers and thirty thousand simply vagrants. In the seventeenth century, and particularly before the 1662 Act of Settlement which restricted the movement of non-freeholders, the poorest rural dwellers had generally been able to gain a meagre living by squatting on common land and practising subsistence farming. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, the enclosure movement, which helped towards the dramatic improvement in agricultural standards, had begun and such a life was, by and large, no longer possible. It is true that many of this depressed sector of the

population rose to take their places amongst the relatively prosperous day-labourers, but there remained an unemployed and vagrant residue whose poverty was even more readily apparent. Economic historians of the twentieth century have tended to cast doubt on the extent of poverty in the countryside, and one, T.S.Ashton, writes firmly that "There is no evidence... of large-scale rural unemployment".[43] Contemporary accounts, however, present a rather different picture. As late as 1760, Smollett could still write that, despite the many poor-relief laws in England, "this as much as any country swarms with vagrant beggars, and teems with objects of misery and distress".[44]

For those unable to gain employment as agricultural labourers, but anxious to avoid the arduous existence of the vagrant, the growing urban centres of Britain proved a powerful attraction. Though the most concentrated period in the growth of industrial centres did not begin until the 1760s, the expansion of industry and the shift of population - particularly among the economically depressed groups - from the countryside to the towns, was, in proportional terms impressive enough, certainly to eighteenth century eyes. Manchester, for example, increased its population five-fold between 1717 and 1773 and Liverpool's inhabitants were ten times as numerous in 1760 as they had been in 1680. It was as early as 1757 that John Dyer, in The Fleece, celebrated

> Th'increasing walls of busy Manchester,
> Sheffield, and Birmingham, whose redd'ning fields
> Rise and enlarge their suburbs (iii, ll. 338-40).

Most striking of all, however, was the growth of London, which increased both in size and in importance

as purchaser of foodstuffs and of raw materials for its industries. In his Tour through Great Britain (1724), Defoe remarks that "the great and more eminent increase of buildings, in, and about the city of London...[that] is become so infinitely great, has been generally made in our time, not only within our memory, but even within a few years".[45] Defoe's estimate of London's population at "fifteen hundred thousand" is certainly exaggerated by at least a quarter of a million, but his comment that the number "is still prodigiously increasing" need not be doubted. Though they suffer from the erratic collection of statistical evidence in the eighteenth century, demographic studies suggest that population growth over the country as a whole was slow until the middle of the century and that real expansion only took place after 1780. If this is true, as parish registers and bills of mortality would suggest, then the growth of urban populations must be explained in terms of a considerable movement from the countryside to towns. Again then, as in sixteenth century Castile, we see a boom in industry coinciding with the beginning of a large-scale migration from rural to urban centres in search of employment by a section of the community whose traditional life-style is no longer possible or attractive in a society whose economic needs have altered.

To say that a traditional land-orientated way of life was no longer possible or attractive is important, for rural distress was not the sole reason for the towns' attraction for country dwellers. Higher wages and a sense of independence were other important

factors, though perhaps not sufficient in themselves, as some historians have suggested,[46] for life in the cities was no easier (and for some no more rewarding) than existence in the country. Although extreme hardship was not as common as in the cities of sixteenth century Spain, it remained an omnipresent possibility. Political or economic crises brought periodic unemployment to many trades, and in some - textiles for instance - difficulties were frequent. There was, moreover, a continual and considerable gap between supply and demand in terms of labour (it has been estimated that there were rarely fewer than ten thousand domestic servants seeking places in London, for example[47]). Similarly, the tendency of manufacturers to keep a pool of available labourers attached to their industries, even in slack periods, in order not to be hampered in more prosperous times, inevitably meant that many workers existed without earning the wages of full-time employment. Even for labourers there were additional problems of over-specialization. Boswell records Johnson on the issue: "A particular kind of manufacture fails: those who have been used to work at it, can, for some time, work at nothing else" (Life, iii, p. 401). And when employment was lacking for too long, the penalties could be severe. Divorced from a rural community which would, at least, prevent their complete starvation, labourers could die in their hundreds (Johnson puts the figure at over one thousand a year); "not absolutely of immediate hunger; but of the wasting and other diseases which are the consequences of hunger. This happens only in so large a place as London, where people are not known" (Life,

iii, p. 401).

The similarities between sixteenth century Spain and eighteenth century Britain are then, at times, most striking. During both periods the gentry - hidalgos or English squires - find their living standards threatened (though for different reasons), and see not only a gap developing between themselves and the aristocracy, but also an encroachment on their privileges by a bourgeoisie with new found wealth. Both groups, in attempts to maintain a corporate existence, concentrate their wealth on the eldest son, leaving their junior members to seek their own livings in an unsympathetic, if not alien, society. The change at the top of society is echoed by one towards the bottom. Industrial booms in both countries produce a shift of population from countryside to town which, whether the boom continues (Britain) or collapses (Spain), presents the urban labourer with fresh problems to replace those he had endeavoured to escape by leaving the country. Even more importantly, perhaps, it destroyed the traditional allegiances of the worker, divorcing him from the rural community and his master (even where Spanish landowners took little interest in their tenants, the labourer was at least attached to the land he leased or worked), whilst failing to substitute fresh allegiances.

We should not, however, be misled into looking for too close a resemblance between late sixteenth century Spain and Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century, for Smollett's use of the picaresque novel form does not require that such a resemblance should exist. The problems of the two countries are not identical, but neither are Roderick

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and Peregrine typical picaros in the Spanish sense. It was the changes taking place in the social structures of both countries which produced conditions similar enough to suggest to Smollett the usefulness of the picaresque novel as a means of describing the realities of life in contemporary Britain. The sense of chaos - of moral and social disorder - pervading both of Smollett's early novels, stems basically from the misfortunes which threaten the social status of Roderick and Peregrine, and from the heroes' experiences of the changing social structure, not least as it reveals itself within urban society.

Although Spanish picaresque fiction was never strictly autobiographical, many of its authors, including Cervantes, Alemán, Espinel and even Quevedo, had lived in an adventurous or vagabond manner from which they had gained first-hand experience of the milieux they describe in their novels. Not unnaturally the autobiographical element in Roderick Random has always provoked critical comment, despite Smollett's own warning against perceiving too close a resemblance between author and hero. In a letter to Richard Smith of New Jersey, he wrote that "The low Situations in which I have exhibited Roderick I never experienced in my own Person" (Letters, p. 112). Nevertheless, the similitude between his own life and that of Roderick to which Smollett admits is by no means negligible, for he was "born of a reputable Family in Scotland...bred a Surgeon...having served as a Surgeon's mate on board a man of war during the Expedition to Carthagene" (Letters, p. 112). It was

(so we may reasonably infer) through these experiences that his moral and social attitudes were, in part, shaped. We have already seen that the childhoods of Roderick and Peregrine, like those of the Spanish picaros, are characterized by a breakdown in what the reader will consider normal moral order - a breakdown manifested in rejection by parents and relations, a certain degree of poverty and an unpleasant education at the hands of a brutal schoolmaster, for example. Smollett's own childhood experience was undoubtedly less gruelling than that of either of his heroes, but he was obliged, nonetheless, to travel to London at the end of the 1730s to pursue such an occupation as would enable him to maintain his position as a gentleman - as the son of "reputable Family". Nor was this obligation (or Roderick's) unique. In the Scottish section of The Present State, Smollett has this to say of the dilemma of junior members of the Scottish gentry:

> The estates of the Scottish gentlemen being generally small and indivisible, the younger brothers commence adventurers, quit their own country, and push their fortunes in the English service, which, both by land and sea, abounds with Scotch officers: nay, they do not confine themselves to Great Britain, but travel over the face of the earth in the different capacities of soldiers, sailors, merchants, scholars, physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries (Present State, ii, pp. 9-10).

It is precisely this compulsion - to seek a livelihood in a changed environment - which provides the impetus

for Smollett's first novel, and though Peregrine Pickle presents us with somewhat changed circumstances, it is a similar risk of the hero becoming déclassé (itself a symptom of the changing social pattern in the eighteenth century) which animates that novel also.

In Roderick Random, whatever the hero's financial state may be, he never ceases to regard himself as other than a member of the gentry. In Chapter XLI, for instance, he considers "an hundred schemes for assuming the character of a gentleman, to which I was entitled by birth and education" (Random, ii, p. 31). Roderick's determination to retain his social rank proves of little account, however, when he reaches London, for the social structure he finds in the metropolis is very different from that which he knew in rural Scotland. The relationship between landowner and tenant which, at its best, involved reciprocal paternal protection and filial obedience, flourished even more strongly in eighteenth century Scotland than in England, and the shock to Roderick's sensibilities is the greater when the city-dwellers whom he meets in London, having lost their traditional allegiances in moving away from the land, prove very different beings from those tenants who so willingly support their "darling" in Scotland. In addition to the change of environment, and the periodic unemployment already mentioned, part of the alteration in the labourer's normal pattern of life was due to his separation from traditional methods of diversion and relaxation. Several contemporary observers commented on the tendency to work excessively for three or four days a week -

in seventeen or eighteen hour shifts - and spend the wages thus earned in drink on the remaining days. Mandeville, for example, writes in The Fable of the Bees: "Every Body knows that there is a vast number of Joumey-men Weavers, Tailors, Clothworkers, and twenty other Handicrafts; who, if by four Days Labour in a Week they can maintain themselves, will hardly be persuaded to work the fifth".[48] Mandeville's idea that this was simply due to "an extraordinary proclivity to Idleness and Pleasure" should be balanced against the more charitable, and probably more perceptive view of Adam Smith, who affirmed that: "Excessive application during four days of the week is frequently the real cause of the idleness of the other three, so much and so loudly complained of...It... requires to be relieved by some indulgence, sometimes of ease only, but sometimes, too, of dissipation and diversion".[49] Whatever the reason, it is clear that the phenomenon was widespread[50] and in these circumstances of irregular prosperity (both in the long and short term), it is not surprising that the eighteenth century saw a growth both in the number of prostitutes and pimps and of beggars and thieves. Fielding describes the latter in Jonathan Wild, where Jonathan's gang is composed of "undone gamesters, ruined bailiffs, broken tradesmen, idle apprentices, attorneys' clerks, and loose and disorderly youths, who, being born to no fortune, nor bred to any trade or profession, were willing to live luxuriously without labour".[51]

Neither Roderick nor his companion Strap are in the least prepared for the realities of London life. After spending only two days there, Strap gives vent

to a heartfelt "'God send us well out of this place'" (Random, i, p. 100). Their experience of London has been completely chaotic, and Roderick would surely have agreed with the commentator writing in 1730, under the name of González, who had this to say of urban labourers: "In the City of London and other populous trading towns they generally get a good livelihood - eat and drink well, and on Sundays and holidays appear very well cloathed, and in their own phrase, look upon themselves to be as good as the best, that is, deserve to be treated with respect. Cottagers are not generally so insolent: they have such poor wages and depend so entirely on the gentlemen and farmers that they are ready to pay their masters the respect that is due to them".[52] Smollett certainly appreciated this latter virtue, for he later wrote admiringly of the poverty-stricken peasants around Nice that "They are remarkably respectful and submissive to their superiors" (Travels, p. 173). In London, Roderick's social inferiors find a variety of ways to humiliate him. A carman insults him when he asks for directions, and a hackney coachman deliberately covers both Roderick and Strap with mud as he passes, "after which exploit", the hero remarks, "he drove on, applauding himself with a hearty laugh, in which several people joined, to my great mortification" (Random, i, p. 87). Customers in the ale-house where the pair dry themselves add considerable insult to this injury, provoking Roderick about the country of his birth, and so revealing the antipathy, not uncommon in the eighteenth century, between the Scots and English which is described in

fictional form in more than one contemporary novel.[53] Smollett shows the frustrations aroused by Roderick's helplessness in a different environment, with great clarity: "I was incensed at this usage, but afraid of resenting it, because I happened to be in a strange place" (Random, i, p. 87). Roderick has quickly discovered that London will not admit his rank nor his claim to be treated with respect by those below him in the social scale. "Subordination", as Dr. Johnson remarked, "is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had" (Life, iii, p. 262). Smollett emphasizes this breakdown of social order, typical of the picaresque novel, by giving prominence to Strap's welcome acceptance of a traditional servant-master relationship with a member of his laird's family. Though not solely a Scottish trait, as we shall see, it was particularly associated with the Scottish tenantry, and in describing Scotland in The Present State, Smollett remarks that "a man of the lower class, who has been taught from his infancy to...behave submissively to his superiors...will, through the whole course of his life, retain the colour of his education...he will pay due deference to those whom fortune hath placed in a superior sphere" (Present State, ii, pp. 10-11).

Such deference, coupled with Strap's undoubted love for Roderick, forms the basis of a relationship crucial to Roderick Random as a means of contrast with the general disorder which affects its hero. A similar relationship, also based on mutual recognition of social rank and the inferior's affection for his master, appears again in Peregrine Pickle, where Tom

Pipes accepts the reasonableness of his serving Peregrine when the latter is no more than twelve years old. It is the reciprocal nature of this relationship, where obligations are mutual, which is, for so long, misunderstood by both Roderick and Peregrine. Neither can overcome the social disorder they both abhor until they recognise their errors in trying to replace the almost feudal values of service and protection by bourgeois ones of financial reward. This relationship between master and servant (which will be fully discussed in later chapters) is of great importance, but in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle remains an isolated indication of an ideal social structure - only revealed in the novels' conclusions - whose values are constantly negated by the heroes' general experience, and often by their own actions. We must leave the most important examples of picaresque chaos, particularly those directly related to Smollett's own social vision, until later, but before moving on to look in depth at individual novels, it will be useful to mention some of the many peripheral instances of moral and social disorder to be found in both novels. We have mentioned the role of satire in the Spanish "novelas picarescas" and it maintains its importance in Smollett's fiction. In both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, appearances continually deceive; those virtues or attributes which the hero (and the reader) associates with a particular social group or profession are constantly found to be wanting. The schoolmaster lacks learning, the doctor medical knowledge and humanity, Capt. Oakum is cruel and insensitive to the needs of his men, Capt. Whiffle is

oversensitive and unable to command respect and provide leadership, whilst the vicar to whom Roderick applies for help after he is assaulted, completely lacks charity. Members of the Church are constantly targets for satirical attack in Spanish picaresque fiction as well as in Smollett. The priest in Lazarillo, for example, is devoid of charity, the friar very worldly and (Lázaro hints) sexually deviant; similarly the character of the Capuchin whom Roderick meets in France, fails to agree with that credited to him by Random, since he unashamedly admits to sleeping with both of two daughters of a household which offers him accommodation. The import of such moral disorder is clear, for Roderick declares: "Libertine as I was, I could not bear to see a man behave so wide of the character he assumed" (Random, ii, p. 49). But such reversals are common to much of Roderick's experience; honest rather than naive, he continues to trust to appearances and to his idea of a fundamental moral order, and is, in consequence, persistently deceived (by the Minister, Melinda and Lord Quiverwit, for example).

Peregrine's experience is similar though - in the early part of the novel - less chaotic, since whilst his sense of values is shaken, he finds neither his life nor his liberty threatened. From a series of incidents - portrayed satirically - Peregrine (and the reader) learns that appearances frequently deceive. The clergy, and particularly its sexual laxity, once more comes under attack, again in a manner very reminiscent of Spanish picaresque fiction. In El Buscón, Pablos visits a church for a lengthy period of time, awaiting an opportunity to sleep with a nun, without

any impedance from the clergy there. "You won't believe how many services I attended....I became a great friend of the sacristan and the acolyte, and the priest, who had a great sense of humour, always had a smile for me" (The Swindler, p. 207). The ability to turn a blind eye - at a price - is also typical of the Capuchin who has charge of a Frenchwoman whom Peregrine admires. Having given the friar a purse of ten guineas, Pickle asks for a private audience with the Capuchin's ward in order that he might find "easy entrance at the gate of heaven". Smollett makes this cynical substitution of temporal for spiritual values particularly apparent, for we read that "the priest assured him, that these were operations of the spirit, which must not be repressed; and comforted him with the hope of enjoying the blessed interview which he desired, protesting, that as far as his influence extended, his wish should be that very evening indulged" (Pickle, p. 282). Yet though Peregrine's childhood experiences, and such interpolated stories as Cadwallader Crab-tree's, project a typically picaresque sense of chaos, a number of Peregrine's adventures in the middle of the novel, though treated satirically and set in a picaresque framework, may not seem to move beyond a simple sense of disillusionment. Peregrine is intelligent and perceptive, and quickly realizes that, for example, the extravagant opinions of Pallet and the physician only thinly disguise the fact that both are ignorant and insensitive concerning those subjects about which they profess to know most. It is the ironic contrast between Peregrine's perception

of the faults of others and his obvious lack of self-awareness, to which Smollett here wishes to draw our attention. But if Peregrine trusts less in appearances than does Roderick, he still retains a belief that in certain areas of human activity, automatic trust need not be misplaced. At one period of Peregrine's affluence in London we read: "Among these professed patrons, the greatest part of whom Peregrine saw thro', there was one great personage, who seemed to support with dignity the sphere in which fortune had placed him" (Pickle, p. 608). Very quickly, though, Peregrine realizes that such trust is misplaced, and throughout the remainder of the novel (until its conclusion) his experience is wholly picaresque. Misfortune succeeds misfortune seemingly without reason and both individuals and social groups fail to behave in the way hoped for by Peregrine. Although able to avoid some traps, he is deceived, like Roderick, by his own basic honesty. After adroitly declining a stranger's request for a loan, Peregrine prompts Smollett to the following comment: "It would have been well for our hero, had he always acted with the same circumspection: but he had his unguarded moments, in which he fell a prey to the unsuspecting integrity of his own heart" (Pickle, p. 612), and such unguarded moments lead him eventually to a debtors' prison.

As the principal element in the picaresque vision of life is disorder, so the misfortunes of both Roderick and Peregrine seem attributable only to chance, and few of the heroes' experiences suggest that the stability lacking in their lives will ultimately be attained. Such indications as do exist to suggest the heroes'

eventual good fortunes are generally metaphorical. In Roderick Random, Roderick's mother dreams she is "delivered of a tennis-ball, which the devil (who, to her great surprise, acted the part of a midwife) struck so forcibly with a racket, that it disappeared in an instant; and she was for some time inconsolable for the loss of her off-spring; when all of a sudden, she beheld it return with equal violence, and enter the earth beneath her feet, whence immediately sprung up a goodly tree covered with blossoms" (Random, i, pp. 1-2). A similar incident presaging eventual success appears at the time of the hero's birth in Peregrine Pickle. Immediately after birth, Peregrine suffers a daily bath in a tub of ice-cold water (Smollett here takes the opportunity to include some satire on contemporary medicine[54]); it is an action which seems an unpropitious indication of his future well-being, but which has a surprising effect: "the boy, instead of declining in point of health, seemed to acquire fresh vigour from every plunge" (Pickle, p. 29). Peregrine's misfortunes in later life do not have such an immediately salutary effect, but as we see in the novel's conclusion, they are by no means fatal to his fortunes, and serve as warnings for his future conduct.

As Spanish picaresque fiction reflects the uncertainty resulting from a changing social structure, so the situations in which Smollett's heroes find themselves - unable to take or maintain their rightful places among the gentry - reflect the plight of many younger members of a class whose entire traditional role in society was changing. Throughout Spanish picaresque fiction, moral chaos or disorder is linked

with social instability as the picaro is unable, for a variety of reasons, to adopt what would have been - in a stable society - his traditional life-style; his experience in the course of his subsequent wanderings reveals an essential moral disorder underlying human relationships in a changing society. Although few of the Spanish novels have more than very loose conclusions, many suggest, either explicitly or implicitly, that only when the picaro can find a new and stable place within the existing social structure will his experience reflect the moral order he has previously found wanting. In Chapter Six of Lazarillo, the picaro takes a job as a water-seller and comments: "That was my first step towards becoming a respectable citizen" (p. 76), and in the book's last chapter, he continues "I wondered how I could settle down to have an easy life and earn something for my old age" (Lazarillo, p. 77). His answer is to accept a lowly government position as a town-crier, but that position is not achieved without cost. Although he has previously despised the vices of the clergy, he is content to marry the Archpriest of San Salvador's maid, turning a blind eye to their subsequent adultery, though he evidently realizes that this is the price of his new-found prosperity, which in itself is poor enough: corn once a year, meat at Christmas and Easter, "and now and again a couple of votive loaves or a pair of old stockings" (Lazarillo, p. 78). As his father had ended his days in service to a nobleman, so Lázaro abandons wandering and accepts a position in life which (however humble) is stable. The book's penultimate sentence - though it may appear ironic to the reader - does not misrepresent the picaro's feelings: "At that time I was at the height

of my good fortune" (Lazarillo, p. 79). Pablos de Segovia, on the other hand, is representative of the picaro who does not recognize the necessity of social stability. At the end of El Buscón, Pablos, chased by the law, emigrates to America, still pursuing his vagabond existence. The last sentences of the book suggest only a belated awareness on the part of Pablos that he too needs stability: "I thought things would go better in the New World and another country. But they went worse, as they always will for anybody who thinks he only has to move his dwelling without changing his life or ways" (The Swindler, p. 214).

The social position of the Spanish picaro is generally a very low one. Even the apparently more privileged situations of Smollett's first two heroes are not sufficient, however, to prevent an emphasis on stability and the need of the acceptance of traditional social values from assuming an important role in Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle. Both Roderick and Peregrine (like Smollett himself) are born into the gentry, but neither are easily able to uphold their social position. The former once his father is disinherited must seek his own livelihood, whilst the latter, initially estranged from the paternal estate because of his mother's animosity, later loses the social stability he might have possessed by his attempts to gain an entrée to the urban aristocracy. In the novels' conclusions, Smollett lays stress on the fact that neither Roderick nor Peregrine can in any way be considered nouveaux riches; their good fortune merely consolidates the status quo as it existed at the very beginning of the novels. In both books Smollett presents

a contrast between life on the country estates, where the traditional, hierarchical social structural remains unchallenged, and the town - of which London serves as the prime example - where rank no longer commands its deserved respect. We have noted how disorder predominates in both Roderick's and Peregrine's experience of London, and how a sounder set of values is suggested in the relationships, founded in respect for social divisions, of Roderick and Strap, and Peregrine and Pipes. For further evidence that Smollett's ideal includes the desirability of maintaining traditional social patterns, we need only examine the novels' conclusions, where the honest contentment of the tenants of Roderick and Peregrine makes an obvious contrast with the dissolute and criminal behaviour of many of London's inhabitants. When Roderick's father purchases the family estate, the status quo is happily restored. Happily, suggests Smollett, not simply for Don Rodrigo and Roderick who regain their old privileges, but also for their tenants who may expect the paternal protection they clearly desire. The Scottish tenants' reactions - precisely and minutely described - are a little more extravagant than those of Peregrine's English ones, but again in his second novel, Smollett suggests that not only the landowners, but also the common people welcome and benefit from the stability resulting from the re-establishment of traditional social relationships.

The conclusions of both novels, in which rejection of urban society and its values, in favour of the values and life-style of the gentry, leads not only to social but also to moral stability cannot really

be justified by the events which precede them. It may be true that a conscientious landed family residing on their estate could bring stability to their own tenants, as Johnson suggested: "a well-regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety" (Life, iii, p. 177), but the retention of opportunities to set that example was far from easy for large numbers of the gentry. Yet despite the pressures on landowning families and particularly on their junior members, despite the pressures on the common people resulting from the shift of population from rural to urban areas, Smollett still posits, in his earliest novels, a return to the moral stability he obviously found lacking in contemporary society by means of a return to a traditional social system based on the mutual interest of landowner and tenant. However unrealistic this may have been as an answer to the new problems of an emergent industrial society, it was the solution favoured by Smollett, and in his fictional presentation of both problem and solution he made use of the most suitable literary form open to him - the picaresque novel. The narration of the tribulations of the wandering picaro - together with the novel's episodic structure - allow Smollett to give a sympathetic impression of individuals and groups affected by the moral and social disorder of contemporary society, whilst rejecting the disorder itself. In his first two novels, Smollett did write picaresque fiction. Yet in itself such a statement is of little value, except for purposes of general classification, and does not help us to appreciate Smollett's artistic

achievement. In order to do that we must not only attempt an understanding of the social vision of the picaresque novel - of its social and moral values - but also consider in detail the way in which Smollett relates that vision to the progress of his heroes through eighteenth century society.

2: "Roderick Random"

In order to understand the particular view of eighteenth century society which *Roderick Random* embodies, we must first come to an understanding of the picaresque nature of the novel. This, as we have already seen, involves not simply a recognition that Smollett placed his first piece of prose fiction firmly in the literary tradition of the Spanish *novelas picarescas*, but also an awareness that he translated the dominant characteristic of the picaresque vision - a sense of moral and social disorder - into eighteenth century terms. By examining *Roderick Random* we can see that the hero's experience is a realization in fictional terms of what is perhaps the most significant eighteenth century social phenomenon in Britain, the clash between the interests of the traditional society of the landed gentry and the developing mercantile society of the bourgeoisie.

That Smollett's concerns in his earliest novel are not merely social, but also (and very importantly) moral, is, of course, self-evident from even the most cursory reading of *Roderick Random*. In fact, two main aspirations stand as the goals of Roderick's wanderings. These aspirations, deriving from the chaotic nature of the hero's early experience - and crucial to an understanding of his motives throughout the novel - are moral and social stability. Of these two goals, however, only the latter is consciously desired by Roderick, whose determination to retain his socially, economically and politically privileged position as a "gentleman"

provides the mainspring for the greater part of his actions in the first half of the novel, and as such remains his single long-term motive throughout this period. Only in the last quarter of the novel - after he sees Narcissa at Bath - does Roderick begin to realize, and then very slowly, the implicit desire for a return to traditional morality which has paralleled his explicit quest for social position.

Smollett never defines nor does Roderick articulate what either understands by moral stability (or a traditional morality); rather, the hero suggests to the reader that it consists of the opposites of those elements which combine in the novel to produce the picaresque vision of chaos which pervades it. Of these elements we must consider three main ones: inhumanity, injustice and dishonesty, the last including that most typical of picaresque details - the discovery that appearances frequently deceive. That humanity, justice and honesty should (in Smollett's mind) characterize an ideal society is beyond doubt, and Roderick accepts this, but he is not always able, nor indeed willing, to put his instinctive feelings into practice. Only towards the end of the novel does he recognize that his search for social stability is inextricably linked to a quest for moral stability; that the moral values he desires to see restored in society are threatened by the encroachment of bourgeois values on those of the gentry.

Almost alone amidst Roderick's chaotic experience, two relationships hint at the possibility of achieving stability in contemporary society, and it is a feature of Roderick's "want of experience" (as Smollett describes

it) that, until the end of the novel, he fails to recognize this fact. The hero's relationship with Strap (a master-servant relationship derived from the Spanish picaresque novels which Smollett transforms in his fiction) serves to underline the social values which dominate the work. At the same time, but perhaps less successfully, Smollett develops another picaresque idea by attempting to make Roderick's relationship with Narcissa embody the moral values which are equally important to the novel.

Three main points, therefore, present themselves for discussion: firstly, Roderick's explicit social aspirations, secondly, the elements of the picaresque vision of chaos which combine in the novel to frustrate these aspirations, and thirdly, the hero's relationships with Narcissa and Strap. By discussing these three points, we can see not only the importance to Roderick Random of its hero's quest for social and moral stability, but also that defence of the values of the gentry against those of the bourgeoisie which underlies the view of society intrinsic to Smollett's first novel.

Smollett makes it clear to the reader even in his "Preface" to Roderick Random that he has carefully considered both the moral and social implications of his novel. The reader, he remarks, "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" (Random, i, p. vii). This is the sympathetic identification which, as we have seen, is essential to the picaresque novel.

In order, Smollett continues, to secure the necessary favourable prepossession, "I have allowed him the advantages of birth and education" (i, p. ix). In his struggle against the "sordid and vicious disposition of the world", however, Roderick's "advantages" rarely appear as such, and if we consider the earlier part of the "Preface" we can perhaps see why.

"Cervantes", writes Smollett, "by an inimitable piece of ridicule, reformed the taste of mankind, representing chivalry in the right point of view, and converting romance to purposes far more useful and entertaining, by making it assume the sock, and point out the follies of ordinary life" (i, p. ix). This sentence, and its successor, in which Smollett relates Le Sage's Gil Blas to the work of Cervantes, and his own fiction to both, is more important to an understanding of Roderick Random than it may at first appear. As many critics have rightly noted, this is Smollett's own admittance of his debt to the picaresque novel form (within which he, and the rest of the eighteenth century, included Cervantes). The debt, however, extends far beyond the mere literary elements of picaresque fiction. Smollett is here suggesting that the spirit of knight-errantry - i.e. the spirit of the epic - in which, as Lukács describes it, the hero is attached "par un réseau de liens indissolubles à la communauté dont le sort se cristallise dans sa propre vie",[1] was totally inadequate as a means of representing the society of sixteenth century Spain with its slowly dissolving feudal order. Following Cervantes' example, Smollett presents us in Roderick Random with a hero whose relationship with the world, despite - or perhaps

because of - the "advantages" of his birth and education, is one of antagonism.

That Smollett's intention was to write a "realistic" novel - at least insofar as that word suggests a deliberate attempt to portray locations, individuals and social groups accurately by accumulation of detail - is beyond doubt. He qualifies his assertion that he is writing in the manner of Le Sage, for example, by noting his own independence "in the execution, where I thought his particular situations were uncommon, extravagant, or peculiar to the country in which the scene is laid" (i, p. ix). This is obviously of great importance, and a detailed analysis of Smollett's use of ideas suggested by Le Sage might usefully be the subject of another work. In the course of this chapter we shall consider occasional examples of Smollett's development of incidents found in Gil Blas only where they impinge directly upon our main theme, but before beginning, some general discussion of the issue will not come amiss.

Roderick Random first appeared in January 1748, and in October of that year Smollett published his translation of Le Sage's work. A close reading of the two novels throws up numerous similarities between them, but more interesting than these resemblances is the different use which Smollett makes of common elements. The single most important difference between Gil Blas and Roderick Random (or Peregrine Pickle) is, obviously, the change of locale from Spain to Britain. Though he was a Frenchman and (it would seem from numerous geographical errors in his work) one who had never visited Spain, Le Sage endeavours to repeat the success of

the novelas picarescas by keeping a Spanish background. In fact, this decision alters the picaresque novel form immensely by removing one of its greatest strengths - its criticism of contemporary society and its institutions. Le Sage is, of course, writing more than simple entertainment, and he hints at his serious intentions when he comments, à propos of his satire on doctors: "There are physicians in Castile as well as in France, whose practice consists in evacuating their patients a little too much",[2] but his complete disregard for chronology makes the firm anchoring of his fiction in contemporary society an impossibility. A variety of incidents place events from the late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries, but Le Sage allows his work to swing erratically between the years, making no real attempt to impose a consistent order. The loss to his fiction is considerable, and Smollett attempts to restore a sense of authenticity engendered by, for example, the description of the flogging of beggars in Toledo (in Lazarillo) in his descriptions of contemporary society (most obviously in the inclusion in Roderick Random of the hero's experience at Cartagena).

The individual episodes in Roderick Random which derive from Gil Blas are many, but Smollett at all times goes beyond mere slavish imitation. Instances of moral or social disorder strewn haphazardly throughout Gil Blas re-emerge in Roderick Random more carefully cultivated by Smollett who seizes on ideas of Le Sage - Gil's relationship with his servant, his aims to marry for money, his vanity and ambition, his rejection of town for country - and makes them central

to the moral structure of his novel. This is not the place for detailed comparisons of the two novels, but one more difference between tham cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed. In the first chapter we noted how Rousseau, in his article on Smollett and the picaresque, misses the all-important spirit of the genre, and it is the spirit of Roderick Random which differs from Le Sage's work. In the latter Gil remarks "Fortune no sooner overthrew than she raised me up again" (Gil Blas, ii, p. 94); we can be sure that had Roderick articulated his feelings in a similar manner, he would have completely reversed Gil's sentiment - "Fortune no sooner raised me up", he might have said, "than she overthrew me again".

By not only acknowledging Le Sage's influence on Roderick Random, but by also differentiating his work from Gil Blas, in important respects, Smollett lets us know from the outset that his is a novel concerned with the social realities of eighteenth century Britain. As, in the "Preface" to the novel, Smollett suggests that Roderick's struggle is not simply an individual dilemma, but one vitally affecting the whole of the gentry, so he implicitly acknowledges the clash of interest between the established land-owning society of the gentry and that of the expanding bourgeoisie. Smollett establishes Roderick's own position within the gentry in the very first sentence of his narration. In the brief description of his grandfather, the hero encapsulates all the advantages to which the upper classes could aspire. The grandfather is a "gentleman of considerable fortune and influence"; in other words, he possesses not only social rank but

the economic and political power which traditionally accompanied it, and it is against the background of the social position that Roderick might have inherited that we must view his subsequent experience. An attempt to regain his lost social position remains Roderick's primary conscious motive throughout the first half of the novel. Of his right to that position, Roderick admits of no doubt, and his ability to sustain his rank is instinctive. During his childhood, for example, it is from his relationship with the country people rather than from his family that he derives his few comforts. "As I strongly resembled my father", he says, "who was the darling of the tenants, I wanted nothing which their indigent circumstances could afford" (i, p. 6).

Tom Bowling's attempt to secure for Roderick a share of his grandfather's fortune emphasizes the social instability which remains an ever-present threat to the hero's well-being, while the grandfather's offer to bind Roderick "apprentice to some honest tradesman or other" (i, p. 15) makes explicit the fall in status which Roderick's poverty is likely to entail. The threat of being forced to seek a livelihood within a middle class environment - involving a possible loss of status as a gentleman - was, as we have seen, a very real one for a large number of the gentry in eighteenth century Britain. From a viewpoint differing completely from that of Smollett, Addison writes in The Spectator of Will Wimble, younger son of the ancient family of the Wimbles, "bred to no Business and born to no Estate": "Will. Wimble's is the Case of many a younger Brother of a

great Family, who had rather see their Children starve like Gentlemen, than thrive in a Trade or Profession that is beneath their Quality...however improper he might have been for Studies of a higher Nature, he was perfectly well turned for the Occupations of Trade and Commerce...I think this is a Point which cannot be too much inculcated".[3] It is a point which would have pleased neither Roderick nor Smollett; the latter writes in a letter to John Moore that commerce "is a Subject quite foreign to my Taste and Understanding" (Letters, p. 32). For many, without even the capital to attempt entry into a profession, no alternative to trade (often in very lowly positions) was possible, but for Roderick such a prospect is not immediate, for Bowling's opposition to such a course is violent; before making his nephew a tradesman's apprentice, he remarks, "I had rather see him hang'd" (i, p. 16).

Smollett nevertheless suggests the contrast between Roderick's expectations and those of his cousin very forcibly, opening the following chapter with Roderick's account of his grandfather's death and a deliberately meticulous description of his estate, consisting of six or seven thousand pounds at interest besides the land, worth seven hundred pounds per annum. Although among the possibilities discussed as to the disposal of this wealth is one that Roderick will inherit the bulk of the capital, in order that the judge may atone for his unnatural usage of his son, Roderick's consequent hopes serve only to accentuate the very different prospects of the hero and his cousin (equally closely related to the old man) when we learn that the foxhunter receives the entire estate, leaving

Roderick penniless.

The hero, as we have previously noted, is not, in terms of social rank, a typical picaro, and Tom Bowling's characteristic generosity, enables his nephew to receive a university education. But this alone - as Roderick himself recognizes - may not be enough to allow the hero to retain the social position to which he feels himself entitled; in a rare contemplative mood, he consdiers the instability of his world: "As I was now capable of reflection", he writes, "I began to consider my precarious situation; that I was utterly abandoned by those whose duty it was to protect me; and that my sole dependance was on the generosity of one man" (i, p. 26). Roderick is right to fear the unstable nature of his social position. Although his birth and inherent good nature lead to initial social success and Roderick acquires the esteem and acquaintance of the most important people in town, the reversal of fortune so common in his experience is not far off. Bowling is forced to flee his ship, leaving his nephew at the mercy of the Potions, and immediately Mrs. Potion, justifying her indifference to Roderick's fate with the platitudinous sentiment that "charity begins at home", raises once more the question of the social position to which the hero may legitimately aspire. "She wished", recalls Roderick, "I had been bound to some substantial handicraft, such as a weaver or a shoemaker, rather than loiter away my time in learning foolish nonsense that would never bring me in a penny" (i, p. 30). Roderick may, it seems, have acquired the education and graces of a gentleman, but economic pressures seem to be forcing him inexorably

into the lower middle classes. Not only Potion, but also the remainder of his acquaintance decline to help Roderick, and he finds himself in a typically picaresque situation, "deserted to all the horrors of extreme want, and avoided by mankind as a creature of a different species, or rather as a solitary being, no ways comprehended within the scheme or protection of Providence" (i, p. 35).

With his financial position precarious, Roderick is inevitably forced lower down the social ladder, and he accepts an apprenticeship with Launcelot Crab, together with a room in a garret, "which I was fain to put up with, notwithstanding the mortification my pride suffered in this change of circumstances" (i, p. 37). But though Roderick's pride makes him particularly sensitive to the indignities he suffers ("mortification" is a term the hero uses to describe his experience on more than one occasion), it does serve to keep alive his social ambitions throughout the two years he spends with Crab. Though he is continually searching for the means to launch himself into the world, it is by typically picaresque irony that he finally obtains the necessary money only by having a bastard laid at his charge, although he embraces his opportunity with a resilience that is equally picaresque.

The hero's experience in the metropolis embodies all the chaos, all the disrespect for social tradition to which his fall in status has exposed him. Throughout his stay there, only his relationship with Strap, and his determination to obtain the socially respectable post of naval surgeon's mate sustain his social aspira-

tions. The extent of his social decline is such though, as to make even this limited ambition appear beyond him. Having finally gained admittance to the examining board of Surgeons' Hall, Roderick is once more confronted by the opinion that he should accept a position in society amongst the middle class. His first questioner voices this unpalatable sentiment when he remarks that "my friends would have done better if they had made me a weaver or a shoemaker, but their pride would have me a gentleman (he supposed) at any rate, and their poverty could not afford the necessary education" (i, p. 120). We should not underestimate the importance of Roderick's refusal to bow down to economic pressures. We have already noted two previous instances in which the hero's family or acquaintances suggest he should accept a lower social position and this third adds a very real sense of desperation to his plight, whilst emphasizing the solitariness of his position. Repitition, as so often in Smollett's early novels, reinforces the feeling of antagonism which the hero perceives in his relations with the world around him. Yet it does much more than simply describe a situation peculiar to Roderick's experience, for Smollett is here underlining both the social attitude of his hero (in resisting a downward social movement) and signalling his own rejection of the growing belief that money is the most important criterion in viewing social rank. Addison's expression of this sentiment, we have remarked upon; in The Fable of the Bees, Mandeville is equally emphatic that where gentility cannot be supported by existing wealth, then children must, in his view, invariably prepare them-

selves to earn their own livings in however humble a metier:

> There are abundance of Men of a Genteel Education, that have but very small Revenues, and yet are forced, by their Reputable Callings, to make a greater Figure than ordinary People of twice their Income. If these have any Children, it often happens, that as their Indigence renders them incapable of bringing them up to creditable Occupations, so their Pride makes 'em unwilling to put them out to any of the mean labourious Trades, and then, in hopes either of an Alteration in their Fortune, or that some Friends, or favourable Opportunity shall offer, they from time to time put off the disposing of them, 'till insensibly they come to be of Age, and are at last brought up to nothing. Whether this Neglect be more barbarous to the Children, or prejudicial to the Society, I shall not determine.[4]

In Roderick Random, Smollett makes his hero oppose this view both verbally and by his actions, and in the novel's conclusion he makes us very aware of his opinion that, despite repeated set-backs, Roderick's determination to retain his position as a gentleman proves neither barbarous to him individually, nor prejudicial to society; in fact, the very reverse is true.

When the hero has obtained both his medical qualification and a place with the apothecary, M. Lavement, his social aspirations revive and despite

his contention that "I was consider'd in no other light than that of a menial servant" (i, p. 138), he states boldly that "I now began to look upon myself as a gentleman in reality" (i, p. 152). In the world of the picaro, however, illusions rarely remain intact for long, and Roderick, falsely accused of theft, is dismissed from his post with Lavement. With no money, deserted by his friends, Roderick's social decline continues, and he writes dejectedly of his calamitous circumstances and his reluctant decision to hire an apartment in a garret.

Being taken by the press-gang may not immediately seem an obvious upward turn in Roderick's quest for social position but it does have two advantages. Firstly, it saves the hero from what he considers an abject piece of behaviour in begging from an acquaintance, and secondly, it places him (despite his first impressions) in an environment where his rank is both recognized and respected. In treating Roderick to salt pork from naval rations, Thomson comments that no man "possessed of generosity and compassion, would have any objection to it, considering my birth and talents, and the misfortunes I had of late so unjustly undergone" (i, p. 207), sentiments which are echoed by Morgan who declares, "As for a shentleman in distress...I lofe him as I lofe my own powels" (i, p. 207). Again Smollett uses the repetition of this sentiment by more than one character to stress the importance of rank both to Roderick and to the values of his novel, and to ensure that we grasp its significance, the hero concludes that Morgan, "being inquisitive about my birth, no sooner understood that

I was descended of a good family, than he discovered a particular good will to me on that account" (i, p. 207). Such respect encourages Roderick's social ambitions, and having the good fortune to obtain a warrant as surgeon's third mate, his spirits revive, and now that he is an officer, he declares himself "resolved to maintain the dignity of my station, against all opposition or affronts" (i, p. 217).

So determined is Roderick to uphold his position as an officer and a gentleman, that not even the numerous instances of moral disorder - especially in his ill-treatment at the hands of Oakum and Crampley - cause him to despair of maintaining his social rank. Indeed, when he encounters the newly prosperous Thomson on shore, and is the recipient of gifts from him, he declares, "Being thus provided with money, and all necessaries for the comfort of life, I began to look upon myself as a gentleman of some consequence, and felt my pride dilate apace" (i, p. 289). But if his social rank gives Roderick much satisfaction, the pride which accompanies it not only proves troublesome to him, but indirectly leads to a further, and more serious, loss of status. When Crampley is promoted lieutenant, the hero balefully reflects that "pride and resentment had rendered [me] utterly incapable of the least submission to...the wretch who had, on many occasions, treated me so inhumanly" (i, p. 281). Certainly Roderick does not always make things easy for himself, and at least some of his misfortune stems from his pride and sense of independence. He is an obvious fictional example of the Scottish gentleman whom Smollett

describes in The Present State: "There is no creature upon earth less capable of flattery and dissimulation, or more fiery and precipitate, than a Scot who piques himself upon his family" (Present State, ii, p. 10), but his troubles without doubt owe more to the general moral disorder of the world, than to his own impetuosity. Here, Crampley's unjust behaviour, together with the hero's pride, increases the antagonism between the men to such a point that, landing in England, they fight a duel.

It is with an irony wholly picaresque that Roderick, having beaten Crampley, finds himself treacherously struck down from behind in the moment of victory, and left unconscious on the beach. This assault, by once more depriving Roderick of the means to support his pretensions to a superior social position, forces him to accept an inferior place as a footman. The helplessness of his situation becomes all too evident when he falls in love with his employer's niece, Narcissa, and he begins to "curse the servile station, that placed me so infinitely beneath the regard of this idol of my adoration" (ii, p. 18). But if his apparent social position is unprepossessing, his appearance and behaviour quickly reveal his true rank. This has always been the case to some extent; M. Lavement, for instance, comments on first seeing Roderick: "'Ma foy! c'est un beau garçon, c'est un gaillard'" (i, p. 136). Similarly, Roderick's new mistress remarks to Narcissa, "'Ma foy! le garçon est bien fait!'" (ii, p. 19). Smollett is again using the crude but effective device of repitition to stress important qualities, and he emphasizes his point by

having Roderick comment shortly afterwards that "[I] frequently enjoyed the pleasure of hearing myself mentioned in French and Italian, with some degree of warmth and surprize, by the dearest object of all my wishes, as a person who had so much of the gentleman in my appearance and discourse, that she could not for her soul treat me like a common lacquey" (ii, p. 24). Indeed, although the hero displays more control over his pride than hitherto, his every action is determined by a gentleman's code of conduct, so that when challenged by a coachman to box for twenty guineas, he retorts that, "I would not descend so far below the dignity of a gentleman, as to fight like a porter" (ii, p. 30). The title of "Gentleman John" which he thus gains, together with his love for Narcissa, keeps his social aspirations alive, even when they seem least likely to be fulfilled. "At certain intervals", Roderick declares, "my ambition would revive; I would despise myself for my tame resignation to my sordid fate, and revolve an hundred schemes for assuming the character of a gentleman, to which I was entitled by birth and education" (ii, p. 31).

Events within the novel and particularly Sir Timothy Thicket's attack on Narcissa give the hero an opportunity not only to declare his love but also to reveal himself as an "unfortunate gentleman". Even this revelation is of little immediate help in asserting his true rank, since fear of Sir Timothy's revenge obliges him to flee the area, and being captured by smugglers, he finds himself deposited almost penniless in France. Here Roderick's social ambitions gradually disappear as poverty forces him to enlist in the French

army in order to eat. In this predicament - by one of those ironies of fate to which he has become accustomed, if not innured - the hero once more encounters Strap. Their meeting is indeed ironic, for Strap, heartlessly abandoned by Roderick as a social embarrassment, now appears "in the sphere of a gentleman, to which, while I knew him, he had not even the ambition to aspire" (ii, p. 63).

Strap's appearance at this juncture is structurally important (and in the context of the hero's experience, particularly fortuitous) for he gives to Roderick both the motivation and the means to attain his former social position. The love and respect Strap has for the hero quickly prompt him to make over his newly-acquired wealth to Roderick in order that he may appear in the "character of a gentleman, (which is your due)" (ii, pp. 68-9). Rapidly adapting himself to this sudden change of fortune, Roderick again contemplates marriage with Narcissa, but (for reasons we shall discuss more fully later), once a part of London society, he all too quickly loses this ambition. Between the time of Strap's suggestion that he should attempt to marry a rich heiress, in Chapter XLIV, and his re-encounter with Narcissa at Bath, in Chapter LV, Roderick's desire to regain his place amongst the landowning class disappears entirely. During the intervening period, the hero is constantly preoccupied with <u>appearing</u> as a gentleman (Smollett stresses his preoccupation with, for example, his dress), but in contrast to his previous aspirations, wealth becomes an end in itself, rather than a means of regaining a lost social position. Immediately upon seeing Narcissa once more, Roderick's

emphasis on social rank returns, and Narcissa is reported as saying that "she had seen me at the ball, where I appeared in the character which she always thought my due" (ii, p. 187). The hero shows himself equally concerned with his social rank when he declares to Miss Williams that he "laid claim to the character of a gentleman, by birth, education and behaviour" (ii, p. 191), and by speaking to Narcissa of "my cruel fate [which] compelled me to wear a servile disguise so unsuitable to my birth, sentiments, and let me add, my deserts" (ii, p. 195).

The hero's endeavours to acquire a fortune at the end of the novel, even in his despair after Narcissa is imprisoned by her brother, are directed towards the end of supporting himself and his intended bride in the social position which is their due. Smollett emphasizes that his hero's quest for social rank has superseded his desire for wealth per se in his description of Roderick's sentiments after his discovery of his father in the West Indies. "I began", he writes, "to relish this important turn of my fortune...[and] entertained myself now, with the prospect of possessing her in that distinguished sphere, to which she was entitled by her birth and qualifications" (ii, p. 293).

As an element in Roderick's ultimate success and happiness, his desire to retain his social position amongst the gentry is of the utmost importance. Even when his prospects seem most dim, it is this desire which prevents him from meekly accepting his fate, and assuming the lower social role which others seem intent on forcing on him. By giving him a long-

term motive which transcends his day-to-day preoccupations, the hero's social aspirations finally enable him to overcome the disorder which affects him, and thus makes his experience different from that of the normal picaro. The exact nature of the social vision of Roderick Random remains for us to discuss, but it is important to recognize that, however facile the novel's conclusion may initially appear, it is completely consistent with its hero's quest for social stability, the success of which is a vindication not only of traditional social values, but also of a traditional morality.

In order that we may fully understand the importance of Roderick's social aspirations as a means of restoring both social and moral stability, we must now consider the extent and nature of the moral disorder which affects him. Like many of the Spanish picaresque novels, Roderick Random contains a first-person narrator, a journey motif and milieux which may generally be called "roguish". We have seen, however, that our reasons for calling Smollett's first novel "picaresque" can be only partly these, for most importantly Roderick Random embodies the picaresque vision of the world - a vision characterized by chaos and disorder. Roderick moves through a society which is both morally and socially unstable, and it is against the background of this society that his quest for authentic values must be considered.

The hero's experience reveals three major elements of disorder - inhumanity, injustice and dishonesty - and it is essentially these three elements that make

up the chaotic vision of the world in Roderick Random. Smollett follows the example of many Spanish picaresque novels in making the effect of disorder felt by the reader by frequent repetition. Thus, in reading Roderick Random, we must not only pay attention to the numerous incidents by which disorder suggests itself, but also the repetition of certain words related to moral concepts; in the case of inhumanity, for example, "inhumane", "unnatural", "barbarous" and "cruel" become key words. Smollett introduces the concept of inhumanity into the novel very quickly. Roderick's father expects humanity to characterize human relationships (as does the hero himself). When confessing his secret marriage, he says that "he could be in no danger of wanting, while his father's tenderness remained" (i, p. 2). But "tenderness" - a humane quality - is no part of his father's character, and the old man rejects both his son and pregnant daughter-in-law. In attacking this behaviour, both son and grandson lay heavy emphasis on his lack of humanity. Roderick writes that his father accepted his wretched situation "rather than supplicate an unnatural and inflexible parent" (i, p. 3). Of his mother he says that she would have fallen victim to her father-in-law's "rigour and inhumanity", and for dismissing the servant who aids her, the old man is cursed by his son for his "barbarity", and Roderick attacks the "cruel" treatment of the "hard-hearted" judge.

In this manner, by constant repetition, Roderick suggests the importance of inhumanity as a dominant feature of his personal experience. Nor does Smollett use such terms simply in order to obtain the reader's

sympathy for his hero; they are integral to his vision of the contemporary world, and as such suggest that humanity should characterize human relationships. When at the end of the novel, Roderick discovers his father in the West Indies, Don Rodrigo laments that he lost his wife "through the barbarity of an unnatural parent" (ii, p. 295). Smollett stresses that the hero's adventures (and the novel's conclusion) have led to a restoration of natural behaviour (or moral stability) when Roderick informs Don Rodrigo of his love for Narcissa: "He raised me", says the hero, "with a smile of paternal fondness; said, he knew what it was to be in love; and observed, that if he had been as tenderly beloved by his father as I was by mine, he would not now, perhaps, have cause - - Here he was interrupted by a sigh (ii, p. 294). It is characteristic of Smollett's method that though he makes no attempt to define "natural" behaviour, he makes it clear that he expects to be instinctively understood by the reader. Thus in relating his adventures, Roderick comments that his father "listened with wonder and attention, manifesting from time to time, those different emotions, which my different situations may be supposed to have raised in a parent's breast" (ii, p. 294; my emphasis).

The stress on inhumanity is by no means confined to criticism of the hero's grandfather, however. Other members of Roderick's family, and particularly his cousins, contribute to the atmosphere of moral instability reflected in Roderick's youthful experiences. He speaks of his cousins' "jealous enmity" and "implacable hatred" which reach their height in their employment of a collegian to publicize in verse, Roderick's

poverty and his parents' misfortunes. In a typical phrase emphasizing the injustice of this situation as well as his relations' intolerable behaviour, the hero declares himself "the innocent victim of their barbarity and avarice" (i, p. 28). Smollett stresses the lasting effect on the hero of this conduct by re-introducing a cousin at the end of the novel; Roderick ironically introduces her as "one of the young ladies, who (as I have formerly told you) treated me so humanely in my childhood" (ii, p. 320). Despite the resilience he displays towards misfortune, Roderick is, in fact, evidently affected by his experience, and on discovering that success in his examinations for the post of surgeon's mate depends more on his financial position than on his ability, he inveighs with much bitterness against "the barbarity of my grandfather, and the sordid avarice of my relations, who left me a prey to contempt and indigence" (i, p. 130).

Frequent repetition thus sustains the stress on inhumanity, and in this manner Smollett suggests to the reader the extent to which moral disorder characterizes eighteenth century society. Although Roderick's attacks on inhumanity recur throughout his autobiography, three relationships above all others reveal the contemporary degradation of moral values.

The hero expects humanity to characterize all human relationships, but in three professions with which he has personal contact - the schoolmaster's, the surgeon's and the naval captain's - the humane characteristics he anticipates are very obviously lacking. The schoolmaster, teaching Roderick only

through fear of his grandfather, quickly removes from the hero any illusions he may have had concerning the teaching profession. The hero admits that he soon conceives antipathy and horror for the "merciless tyrant", and relates that "I was often inhumanly scourged" (i, p. 8). Roderick may suffer physically from his experience but he is also learning from it. He writes: "far from being subdued by this infernal usage, my indignation triumphed over that slavish awe which had hitherto enforced my obedience; and the more my years and knowledge increased, the more I perceived the injustice and barbarity of his behaviour (i, p. 9).

Roderick soon discovers that the schoolmaster is not the only person who fails to uphold the moral standards which he expects. When he is press-ganged, he finds that the surgeon, Mackshane, is even more brutal, making no objections to the order of Capt. Oakum (who also falls far short of the hero's expectations) for a review of the sick. Knowing that many of the men will die if moved, Roderick comments that "this inhuman order shocked us extremely" (i, p. 221). Having witnessed the inevitable result of the captain's and doctor's brutality, Roderick stresses the moral disorder prevailing on board, in commenting, "It would be tedious and disagreeable to describe the fate of every miserable object that suffered by the inhumanity and ignorance of the captain and surgeon, who so wantonly sacrificed the lives of their fellow creatures" (i, p. 223). On many occasions - as here - Smollett is at pains to suggest that Roderick's own instincts are, in contrast, basically humane. In this

instance, the contrast between Mackshane and Roderick is clear; when the surgeon endeavours to discover complaints against the hero amongst his patients, he is unable to do so, since Roderick's diligence and humanity has procured their goodwill.

Life on board the Thunder seems to be all too frequently characterized by inhuman behaviour, however. Thomson, for instance, contemplates suicide when, as he puts it, he finds himself "in the power of the barbarians", and when his friend disappears, Roderick recalls, in typical terms of moral outrage, "the greater horror we conceived for the villain who was undoubtedly the occasion of it" - the "abandoned miscreant" Mackshane (i, p. 238).

If Roderick's earlier experience has led him to consider moral disorder an intrinsic part of the world he inhabits, his arrival in the West Indies heralds his subjection to the even greater inhumanity of Crampley. Stricken with fever, the hero attempts to avoid almost certain death by requesting Oakum's permission to leave the cockpit - a request refused by "this humane commander", and when Crampley discovers that Roderick has disobeyed Oakum's order, he takes a "barbarous piece of revenge" by reporting him. Roderick's narration continues to emphasize (by repetition and careful use of language) the continual moral disorder of Roderick's world. When "the wretch who had on many occasions treated me so inhumanly", is promoted to command the vessel on which the hero travels, Roderick finds himself under the "brutal sway of this bashaw", who tries to prevent him leaving the grounded ship, with his "inhuman partiality". It

is with typically picaresque irony that Roderick, having entertained such high hopes for himself on the return voyage, should find his thoughts of affluence ended by the very inhumanity he seems to have avoided, when he is attacked on the beach after his duel with Crampley. Robbed and stripped naked, he curses "the villainy of those who had left me in that miserable condition" with understandable vehemence (ii, p. 6).

If Roderick's relationships with the schoolmaster, the surgeon and the two naval officers, Oakum and Crampley, epitomize his experience of inhumanity, they are by no means unique. Although Roderick Random is not haphazard, it is episodic, and (as we have already seen) Smollett makes frequent and deliberate use of repetition to suggest the extent of the moral disorder characterizing eighteenth century society. In this way, other episodes in Roderick's adventures stress the inhumanity with which the hero meets, and - very importantly - reveal his determination not to descend to the same depths of immorality. Captain O'Donnell's attack on Roderick, carried out at night, is a case in point; though considering retaliation on his assailant in a similar manner in order to kill him outright, his honour - deriving from his sense of position - opposes such behaviour as "a piece of barbarous cowardice, in which he was not to be imitated" (i, p. 148). In a less deliberate, but equally disturbing way, Roderick's life again seems in danger from what he terms the "inhuman treatment" of others, when he partly recovers from the attack on the Sussex shore. The local country people, a farmer and even the vicar refuse to assist him, and Roderick laments

that "No body [had] humanity enough to administer the least relief to me, until an old woman...received me into her house" (ii, p. 10).

Only infrequently do the virtues of some character - such as the humane gentlewoman, Mrs. Sagely - give Roderick some room for optimism that moral order will eventually be restored, but for the reader, the hero's own undoubted humanity also serves to suggest that such a restoration is possible. We see this particularly in relation to the tellers of the novel's interpolated stories - Miss Williams and Mr. Melopoyn - both of whom the hero aids in a substantial way. The interpolated stories are themselves of great importance to the moral vision of the novel, for they echo and underline many of its values. Certainly Smollett very carefully emphasizes the element of inhumanity in Miss Williams' story in order to suggest that Roderick's experience is not unique. Her own life reflecting considerable moral disorder in every way, Mis Williams finds herself at length in Bridewell, subject to the "tyranny of a barbarian, who imposed upon me tasks that I could not possibly perform, and then punished my incapacity with the utmost rigour and inhumanity" (i, p. 185). The close similarity of the language Miss Williams uses to that employed by Roderick makes it clear that Smollett is attempting to extend his vision of moral disorder beyond the confines of his hero's experience. If Miss Williams' encounter with her gaoler foreshadows Roderick's with Crampley, then her fellow-prisoners bear a considerable resemblance to the hero's crew-mates, for while lying senseless with pain, she too is robbed and stripped. Such indeed

is the emphasis on inhumanity and brutality in Miss Williams' tale that Roderick, despite his own experience, can be thankful that he is not yet completely subject to the "caprice and barbarity of the world" (i, p. 192).

Using two devices - frequent repetition and confirmation of his hero's experience by means of interpolated stories - which derive from the Spanish picaresque novels, Smollett suggests to the reader the degree to which inhumanity is a common feature of contemporary society. Together with injustice and dishonesty, it is one of the leading elements of a general moral disorder, and one which the return to social and moral stability will eliminate (for Roderick) at the end of the novel.

Injustice is the second of the constituent concepts which shape the picaresque vision of chaos in Roderick Random, and which help in moulding its hero's view of society. Like inhumanity, it threatens Roderick from birth onwards, both morally and socially. In social terms, injustice is not only responsible for his loss of status, but also invalidates his attempts to regain his lost social position; morally its effect is continual, even - on more than one occasion - threatening his life. From his childhood onwards, Roderick instinctively expects justice - like humanity - to characterize human relationships. As his experience reveals the extent of the moral disorder affecting society, he does become cynical (consider, for example, his comments on the innocent simplicity of Tom Bowling or Mr. Melopoyn), but he never completely loses faith that justice can, and will, be restored. Throughout

the novel, Smollett stresses that Roderick not only suffers injustice, but is acutely aware of it. Thus "innocent" becomes a word frequently employed by the hero to describe himself, whilst others are "tyrants", their decisions "arbitrary" and their laws "inflexible".

As with inhumanity, we can point to three particular cases in which injustice proves an especially emportant element in Roderick's vision of moral disorder. The hero's experience at school sets the pattern for many of his later predicaments, and two subsequent episodes - one in London, the other on board the Thunder - consolidate the atmosphere of moral instability. Moreover, in another similarity to Smollett's treatment of inhumanity in the novel, the interpolated stories suggest that the injustice affecting Roderick is only part of a wider disorder affecting the remainder of contemporary society.

Even before birth Roderick is threatened as the "innocent fruit" of his mother's womb, and throughout his early years he experiences more unjust treatment at the hands of his grandfather, particularly in contrast to his cousins. During his schooling, such injustice not only becomes more common, but is consciously recognized by the hero. In the person of the schoolmaster, inhumanity and injustice go hand in hand, and the hero relates - in a passage which might equally well derive from any Spanish picaresque novel - that "I was often inhumanly scourged for crimes I did not commit, because, having the character of a vagabond in the village, every piece of mischief whose author lay unknown, was charged upon me" (i, p. 8). In a series of such incidents, Roderick first discovers

that neither innocence nor proof of innocence will suffice to convince those predisposed to believe him guilty. Yet although he perceives the "injustice and barbarity" of the schoolmaster's behaviour, he does not, for that reason, lose a fundamental belief that justice will ultimately prevail.

In an observation concerning his cousins that "I have found, by experience, that...there is no wretch so ungrateful as he, whom you have most generously obliged; and no enemy so implacable, as those who have done you the greatest wrong" (i, p. 29), Roderick betrays a certain, and understandable, cynicism. Nevertheless, his faith in an underlying moral order reveals itself again in London, when, having to answer a bawd's trumped-up charge of theft, he remains convinced that justice will be done to him. This same incident provides an excellent illustration of Smollett's use of ideas suggested to him by Gil Blas. A single incident in Le Sage's novel becomes the basis for a series of episodes in Roderick Random, through which Smollett builds up one facet of a world in moral disorder. In Book I, Chapter XII of Gil Blas, the young hero finds himself wrongfully imprisoned on suspicion of theft, and comforts himself only with the words of the judge who bids him have no fear: "if thou art innocent, thou shalt sustain no harm" (Gil Blas, i, p. 54). Yet after more than a fortnight's solitary confinement, Gil sees the prospect of his immediate release disappear in a moment when a muleteer, who, almost alone, can give the prisoner an alibi, refuses to testify on his behalf (indeed he deliberately perjures himself) because on their last encounter he

had stolen and sold the hero's belongings. Though Gil Blas knows himself to be in the right, no amount of protest will alter the muleteer's testimony and Gil must resign himself to a further period of imprisonment. Innocence is of no more use to Roderick in his predicament than it is to Gil in his; the collapse of moral order seems even more complete within the court than without it, and Roderick - like Gil - again discovers that innocence is no guarantee of acquittal. When Smollett's hero finds himself mistaken for one Patrick Gahagan, supposed to have returned illegally from transportation, and Jackson is charged with being a notorious felon, both find their lives in danger. Despite their protestations of innocence, the securing of justice seems to be beyond them; they are subject to the jurisdiction of one man - not disposed to believe them - and are thus powerless to save themselves (only the fortunate presence of the arresting constable can do that).

Very similar in its evocation of complete moral disorder is Roderick's experience on board the Thunder. Accused of plotting against the life of Oakum, the hero hears that "captain Oakhum is resolved for to do every body justice" (i, p. 240), but he soon discovers that nothing could be further from the truth. As proof of the hero's guilt, his diary, written in Greek, is produced. Mackshane insists that the characters are ciphers, and faced with Roderick's affirmation that they are Greek letters, claims a knowledge of the language himself. Supporting this claim by uttering a few words in Irish, Mackshane has no difficulty in persuading Oakum that Roderick is lying. Even Morgan's

corroboration of the hero's story meets with quick dismissal from the surgeon, who claims a plot exists between them. Rejecting the plan to clear himself which Roderick suggests, Oakum accepts Mackshane's proof of Random's mendacity. This time malice rather than ignorance supports injustice, but the result is the same - disorder prevails. Knowing himself to be speaking the truth, Roderick is, nevertheless, powerless to prove his innocence. Returned to confinement at Oakum's declaration that "I find he must dangle" (i, p. 247), the hero is, for the second time, faced with execution for a crime of which he is completely innocent.

Although such incidents erode Roderick's absolute belief in an underlying moral stability, his experience is so completely chaotic that he is unable even to take advantage of the cynicism thus engendered. He is able, it is true, to help Morgan avoid a fate similar to his own, by convincing him of the precarious issue of any trial, but in the area of his own experience, he remains helpless. When smugglers capture him in Sussex as he flees from Sir Timothy Thicket, he is at first glad to be beyond that knight's resentment, but he soon realizes the precarious nature of his new situation, when his captors threaten to execute him as a spy. His previous experience affords the hero no more than the resignation to comment laconically, "It was in vain for me to protest my innocence" (ii, p. 35). Later, alive but once more penniless, Roderick reflects on the injustice which, seemingly without reason, has characterized so much of his life. "I revolved all the crimes I had been guilty of", he says, "and found them so few and venial, that I could

not comprehend the justice of that Providence, which after having exposed me to so much wretchedness and danger, left me a prey to famine at last in a foreign country" (ii, p. 52).

Both Roderick and the reader recognize injustice as a major element of the general moral disorder affecting the society through which the former moves. Smollett further emphasizes this by a variety of less dramatic, but equally revealing, incidents, and by intentional repitition within the interpolated narratives. That the injustice from which Roderick suffers so frequently is not peculiar to his experience, but is rather a feature of the society he inhabits, is a point which Smollett stresses. Justice is equally remote in the experience of (for example) Miss Williams who, falsely accused of theft, finds herself before a judge who mistakes her confusion for an admittance of guilt. Committed to Bridewell, she (like Roderick) faces the possibility of an ignominious death.

Roderick's experience - like that of Miss Williams, Morgan, Thomson or Mr. Melopoyn - seems to reveal little but disorder. Only the novel's conclusion is more optimistic, and though the hero consciously remarks on the rectification of distorted values, insofar as justice is concerned, when he comments that "fortune hath at length recompensed me for all my sufferings, and enabled me to do justice to my love" (ii, p. 308), the reader may find his remark more platitudinous than Smollett evidently intended it to be.

Both inhumanity and injustice figure largely in the Spanish picaresque novels, but perhaps even

more striking as an element of the novels' vision is dishonesty or deceitfulness. It is common experience for the picaro to discover that not only do appearances frequently deceive, but that the attributes commonly associated with certain professions or vocations are often found wanting. These aspects of dishonesty both appear in Smollett's first novel although they - like inhumanity and injustice - undergo some transformation at the hands of the author who makes them play an increasingly important role in revealing both the hero's vision of the world and his response to it.

Roderick Random's vision of moral disorder arises, in part, from the constant frustration of its hero's expectations concerning those traditional virtues he associates with a number of callings. The incidents in which such frustration reveals itself derive from the Spanish picaresque novels, many of which contain similar satirical portraits. Lazarillo de Tormes is less concerned with satire than its successors, but Lázaro's tales of the priest, friar or pardoner are similar to the description of (for instance) Don Cabra in El Buscón, in intent if not execution. Smollett also chooses, as targets for his satire, members of the church - on at least three occasions - but his primary purpose is not to emulate Lazarillo's anticlericism, but to provide simple, direct instances of moral disorder, even where Roderick is most confident of discovering moral stability.

The hero's experience of the immorality of the clergy commences on his journey from Scotland to London. Smollett stresses that Roderick is not naive when he has his hero comment that he was not surprised to find

a "cheat in canonicals". Nevertheless, Roderick does reveal that he still retains certain expectations of moral rectitude on the part of the clergy, by continuing: "I was scandalized at the indecency of his behaviour, which appeared in the oaths he swore, and the baudy songs which he sung" (i, p. 54). Though he may be morally disillusioned, Roderick is not in this instance personally affected by the curate's behaviour, whereas in later encounters with the clergy he is both robbed, and threatened with death. Certainly the vicar who disclaims responsibility for the injured Roderick in Sussex, lacks not only the Christian virtues of compassion and charity, but also simple humanity, as the hero's account of the incident emphasizes. Most obvious in stressing Roderick's disillusionment with the clergy is his meeting, in France, with the Capuchin friar. The incident particularly illustrates the fact that appearances may deceive, for the hero writes that "It was not long before I discovered my fellow-traveller to be a merry facetious fellow, who notwithstanding his profession and appearance of mortification, loved good eating and drinking better than his rosary, and paid more adoration to a pretty girl than to the Virgin Mary, or St. Genevieve" (ii, p. 47). Even before the friar robs him, Roderick crystallizes his objection to such behaviour, when he comments, "Libertine as I was, I could not bear to see a man behave so wide of the character he assumed" (ii, p. 49).

This remark emphasizing, as it does, that the hero's deprecation of the friar's conduct centres on the sense of moral instability it engenders, is characteristic of his comments on other professions

(although he has not yet learnt to look at his own behaviour in the same light). In the case of the army, for example, we see a similar situation delineated, this time in comic terms. Smollett's point is nonetheless a serious one, for it emphasizes to the reader that he cannot always rely on traditional values in the contemporary world. On several occasions in the novel Roderick demonstrates that a show of valour often serves only to mask an excess of cowardice. We see that Capt. Weazel's self-proclaimed courage is a complete sham when a cry of "Highwayman" sends him scurrying under his wife's petticoats. In a similar, but this time genuine, incident with highwaymen, another army officer reveals a like disinclination to display his bravery, despite his previous boastfulness. Other professions attract comparable attention from Smollett and provide further disillusionment for Roderick. Mackshane, for instance, completely lacks the compassion for the sick which Roderick expects of a doctor, and neither the tyrant Capt. Oakum (ignorant and barbaric) nor the effeminate Capt. Whiffle (absurdly hypersensitive) demonstrate the requisite qualities for successfully commanding a naval vessel and inspiring their crews' respect. Although we might argue that some of Smollett's examples of deceitfulness - the faint-hearted soldiers, for instance - are literary archetypes, the effect of Roderick's repeated disillusionment regarding traditional traits within a variety of professions is to intensify the sense of moral instability which his experience has given him.

In itself, this is important for the novel, but

as so often, even in his earliest fiction, Smollett succeeds in marrying moral with social criticism. He has already, in his description of Roderick before the examining board at Surgeons' Hall, shown clearly that naked corruption militates against any radical improvement in the Navy's medical standards (Crampley owes his position to the bribes he has paid to men who place their own financial enrichment above the lives of ordinary seamen), and other professions are corrupt in analogous ways. The inhuman priest who refuses the slightest assistance to the injured Roderick in Sussex owes his place to the patronage of some evidently uncaring local landowner - possibly Narcissa's boorish brother - and to Smollett, the inhumanity of the one and the irresponsibility of the other are equally reprehensible (in Chapter IV of Launcelot Greaves, Smollett's quixotic hero gives an excellent example of how ecclesiastical patronage should be exercised[5]). Moreover, corruption in the navy extends beyond its provision of doctors to its whole system of appointing officers. The latter owe their preference not simply (like the former) to wealth, but also to the influence of the powerful. The honest, skilful and well-loved Tom Bowling, unversed in the courtier's arts, is unable to obtain command of any ship, and looks to be set for the fate of Roderick's third captain, who "had been lieutenant since the reign of King William, and notwithstanding his long service, would have probably died in that station, had he not applied some prize-money he had lately received, to make interest with his superiors" (i, p. 289). Oakum and Whiffle, meanwhile - both in

their different ways totally unsuitable men - attain the rank of captain. The navy undoubtedly provided a fit target for Smollett's satire, for throughout the eighteenth century preferment was increasingly difficult to obtain except by patronage or family connexion,[6] and if the corrupt use of such patronage was scarcely a new topic of attack for writers of a conservative outlook, Smollett uses it particularly skilfully to provide a persuasive example of a link between social and moral disorder.

Dishonesty within the novel takes other and more fundamentally important forms, however. Much of Roderick Random is concerned with its hero's learning about the nature of the society in which he moves and in which he must regain his social position. We have noted his quick discovery that traditional relationships cannot always be relied upon, for the assistance he expects from his family is sadly lacking. Almost as rapidly, he finds that so-called friends are as little to be trusted as relations. When Bowling leaves the Thunder, he writes to Roderick lamenting his inability to send him any money, but comforts himself that Potion will take care of his nephew "for the love he bears to me; and let you want for nothing" (i, p. 31). The truth is less palatable and the hero learns that the appearance of friendship all too frequently disguises a harsher reality. The folly of trusting to appearances is brought home to Roderick by his experiences on the road to London in a variety of encounters, often adapted from other picaresque fiction. An inn-keeper's appearance (the hero describes him as "a venerable old man"), together

with his learning and good humour, so impress Strap that Hugh believes that they may pay nothing for their night's lodging, and though Roderick is less sure, it is only when their bill arrives that he realizes that although their host has not the appearance, he has all the avarice, of the common publican. This particular episode follows a similar one in Gil Blas (itself based on an incident in Marcos de Obregon) in which Gil willingly allows the flattery of other more worldly men deprive him of money or a meal. Gil learns his lesson, and so does the picaresque hero of Espinel's novel who comments: "'Esta fue la primera baza de mis desengaños, y el principio de conocer que no se ha de fiar nadie de palabras lisonjeras'".[7] For Roderick this lesson proves a more difficult one to learn, and he reveals his innocence of the world - on which the inn-keeper comments - once more on the London waggon. The hero's remark on Mrs. Weazle foreshadows his attack on the declining social standards which Smollett attributes to the bourgeoisie in London. "Had I not been a novice in the world", he says, "I might have easily perceived in her the deplorable vanity and second hand airs of a lady's woman" (i, p. 70). Yet a further adaptation of other picaros' experiences - Gil Blas, on becoming valet to a young lord, says, "I observed, not without wonder, that these three domestics copied the air and manner of their respective masters" (Gil Blas, i, p. 177) - this attack on the breakdown of traditional standards serves as the starting point for much more detailed satire on the behaviour of servants in London society, which only ends (benevolently) in Humphry Clinker, in the description of

Win Jenkins' introduction to the world of fashion. Although on arrival in London, Roderick soon becomes acquainted with some of the more blatant abuses of the capital, he is still innocent enough to be gulled on more than one occasion by apparently beautiful women who prove on closer acquaintance to be prostitutes. On his second visit to the metropolis, he learns the folly of judging by appearances in a surprising and distasteful manner, for when he attempts to kiss a "very handsome creature, genteelly dressed", instead of "banqueting on the ambrosial flavour, that her delicacy and complexion promised" (ii, p. 74), Roderick finds himself almost suffocated by the smell of gin. Strap is as shocked as his master, and emphasizes the moral lesson they are so slow to learn: "who would have thought that so much devilish malice and billingsgate, could lurk under such sweetness of countenance and modesty of behaviour? Ah! God help us! Fronti nulla fides - nimium ne crede colori" (ii, p. 76) - a truly picaresque sentiment. The ingenuousness of both Roderick and Strap is so persistent because their previous experience has not adequately prepared them to meet with the complete disorder of urban life. Roderick Random does contain instances of deception outside of London, but it is essentially within the city that the hero must face the dishonesty of contemporary society. On arrival there, both the hero and his servant distinguish themselves by their simplicity, and waste their first morning, for example, in following the misleading instructions of a malicious footman whomStrap knew to be "an honest friendly man by his countenance" (i, p. 89). Undeterred by this experience,

they shortly afterwards accept the invitation of "a very decent sort of man", whom Roderick regards as "a prodigy of integrity", who proceeds to strip the hero of his every shilling at cards.

Throughout most of the novel, Roderick experiences deception and subsequent disillusion, but only (as we shall see later) when he descends to the same level of moral corruption does the hero fully comprehend the extent to which deception runs through the whole of bourgeois society. Strap recognizes, during their first visit to London, that they have been "much imposed upon by appearances", but both are the repeated victims of deceit. Even external features - particularly clothes - continue to deceive Roderick, who fails to understand the way in which the petit-bourgeoisie is aping the gentry. Thus some enlightenment by Mr. Medlar is necessary before Roderick is conversant with the real characters of supposed gentlemen whom he encounters in a London tavern. "A person who sat opposite to me, and by...the richness of his apparel, seemed to be a foreign ambassador" turns out to be a fiddler at the opera, whilst another whom the hero notes for his "illustrious birth, and noble education, and [whom I] accordingly rated...in my conjecture as a young prince on his travels" proves to be a dancer at a theatre (ii, pp. 77-82).

Such examples are essentially humorous, and do not directly affect Roderick, but they are symptomatic of changes taking place in British society. Smollett emphasizes the extent to which these changes have already robbed town-dwellers of even a modicum of discernment, in relating the ease with which Roderick

revenges himself on Melinda. The latter, though an heiress and daughter of "a very notable woman" is so lacking in the perception which we might expect of one in her social position that the hero and Banter are able to partner her at a ball with a barber, "an exceeding coxcomb, lately come from Paris, whose absurd affectation and grimace would easily pass upon her, for the sprightly politesse of a gentleman improved by travel" (ii, p. 130). Melinda's lack of discernment is the product of her constant exposure to the distorted values of town society which mistakes surface accomplishments for gentility. Though this incident proves diverting to Roderick, the moral disorder of London in general does not. Nor does the hero understand the nature of the changes occurring in urban society; he does not realize, for instance, that the aristocracy are now closer to the middle classes in self-interest (and sometimes in behaviour) than to the squirearchy. Encountering Lord Strutwell, therefore, he can still say hopefully (and naively, if we consider his prior attempts at physiognomy) that "I thought I discovered so much sweetness of temper and candour in this earl's countenance, that I did not doubt of profiting by his protection" (ii, p. 142),[8] but experience again leads to complete disillusion. Smollett suggests to the reader that urban society not only opposes the traditional social system of Britain, but is capable of destroying its values. Strutwell is both possessed of the "unnatural" vice of homosexuality, of which Smollett writes in Advice (1746) -

Eternal infamy his name surround,

Who planted first that vice on British ground
A vice that 'spite of sense and nature reigns,
And poisons genial love, and manhood stains!

(ll. 91-4)

and reveals a complete acceptance of bourgeois values, displaying an indifference to the gentleman's sense of honour, which is typical of the town. His attitude to money, like that of the lords Straddle and Swillpot, is equally bourgeois and he not only scrapes a living by pimping for his fellow peers, but actively assists the breakdown of a mutual dependence between different social ranks by allowing his servants "no other wages than that part of the spoil which they could glean by their industry" (ii, p. 150);[9] "industry" in this case consists of the extraction of gratuities from visitors. The extent to which Smollett disparages this abdication of social responsibility on the part of Strutwell can only be fully grasped by contrasting it with the ideal social system of benevolent paternalism which he proposes in the conclusions to his first three novels and describes more fully in Launcelot Greaves, but an indication of his attitude can be found not only here but again in Advice:

Shall I then follow with the venal tribe,
And on the threshold the base mongrel bribe?

(ll. 39-40).

In describing dishonesty in eighteenth century society, Smollett stresses, by means of the interpolated narratives, that such experience is not peculiar to Roderick. Mr. Melopoyn's story is a series of recurring disappointments through which the narrator loses his simplicity - his faith in traditional

morality - because of the deceit and bad faith from which he constantly suffers. Appearances similarly deceive Miss Williams and it is an instance of deception which starts her on the downward path to a life of prostitution. Lothario, she says, "vowed eternal fidelity with such an appearance of candour and devotion, that I became a dupe to his deceit" (i, p. 169), and she is also victim to a trumped-up story of Horatio's. Smollett makes Miss Williams' story not only underline the moral disorder of society - and particularly town society - but also foreshadow Roderick's own reaction to the moral chaos which confronts him. Miss Williams curses her simplicity, but, unable to remove herself from the milieu of corruption, resolves instead to take her revenge on the male sex by deceiving them herself. "The first stroke of my dissimulation", she writes, "was practised upon a certain j—ge, to whom I was recommended by this matron, as an innocent creature just arrived from the country. He was so transported with my appearance and feigned simplicity, that he paid a hundred guineas for the possession of me for one night only" (i, p. 178).

Such instances of moral disorder - as experienced by the hero or practised by Miss Williams - may seem to reveal the most insidious aspects of the advance of distorted values within town society, but it is only when Roderick realizes how close he has come to accepting these values himself that the reader feels the impact of Smollett's vision of society. The confession by Miss Williams (quoted above) foreshadows the two ways in which the hero will be morally debased by his contact with urban, bourgeois society.

Firstly, it suggests the deceit which Roderick will practise during his second visit to London, and secondly, it prefigures the hero's obsession with wealth, pursuit of which becomes the predominant motive in his life, causing him to ignore the immoral behaviour to which his pursuit of money leads.

In this respect, dishonesty becomes the most important element of the novel's vision of moral disorder, for it is both the one most obviously bourgeois, and the one which affects the hero most profoundly. Ian Watt's contention that not only Robinson Crusoe, but also Defoe's other central characters - Roxana or Colonel Jack for instance - are embodiments of economic individualism[10] illuminates what is generally the widest area of divergence between these creations and those of Smollett, yet for the period of his second stay in the capital, Roderick is as clearly bourgeois in his motivation as any hero of Defoe's. Between the time of Roderick's encounter with Strap in France and his meeting with Narcissa in Bath, his ambition to regain his former social position is completely lost. Ironically, it is Strap, whose relationship with Roderick provides the novel's best example of traditional social stability, who initially makes the suggestion which leads to the hero's temporary rejection of traditional for bourgeois values. Strap's idea is that Roderick should travel to London, appear as a gentleman, and pay court to "some lady of fortune who can render you independent at once" (ii, p. 69). The stimulus for this idea of Smollett's we find once more in Gil Blas, where an innkeeper tells Gil: "you are young and handsome; and these qualifications alone, without the

least glimpse of understanding, are more than sufficient to captivate a rich widow, or some fine lady unhappily married: if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often maintains those who have none" (Gil Blas, i p. 67), but again Smollett transforms a single idea until it becomes a corner-stone of his work, underlining the conversion of Roderick to measures of expediency which ultimately serve only to destroy the very moral and social stability that he seeks. It is true that Strap calms Roderick's evident doubts by affirming his suggestion to be "both prudent and honourable", but the hero's future experience will prove otherwise. Indeed, Strap's comment about the deceit of "common fortune-hunters" in which he remarks to the hero that "I know you have a soul that disdains such imposition" (ii, p. 69), is - as we only fully recognize in retrospect - deeply ironic, for once in the immoral atmosphere of London society Roderick not only practises deceit, but almost loses all qualms about so doing.

We have noted some of the occasions on which appearances deceive the hero, but the dangers of marrying for money (as opposed to the immorality involved) are particularly hard to avoid. Firstly, it is Strap who nearly suffers from the deceit of his intended bride. The woman, supposedly a wealthy widow, is a "short thick woman, about the age of thirty-six [with] a particular prominence of belly" (ii, p. 103) which alarms Roderick, though Strap believes the swelling to be the result of liver trouble. The hero quickly enlightens him, and not only correctly predicts that that the woman is pregnant but guesses (accurately)

that her fortune is non-existent. The incident serves two purposes: it firstly emphasizes once more that the hero's experience is not unique, and secondly it provides some intentional irony by contrasting Roderick's perception of the deceit being practised on Strap with his inability to recognize the occasions when he is himself being misled, or to see that his own behaviour is gradually becoming equally reprehensible.

It is primarily Roderick's narration which reveals to the reader the degradation to which he is subjecting himself. His first glimpse of Melinda, for example, is accompanied by Chatter's comment that she is a "reigning toast worth ten thousand pounds". Characterization of a woman by her monetary value is typical of the bourgeois standards of London society (it is also for that reason, characteristic of Defoe's fiction), and Chatter's description both satisfies Roderick's curiosity concerning the woman he hopes to marry, and silences the doubts which arise from Banter's adverse comments about her. The hero's first meeting with Melinda underlines his preoccupation with the pursuit of wealth - at the expense of all human values, for he notes that, "she would not have though herself affronted in being the subject of a duel. I was by no means pleased with this discovery of her thoughts, which not only argued the most unjustifiable vanity, but likewise the most barbarous indifference; however, I was allured by her fortune" (ii, p. 106).

It is Banter who, in a piece of advice to Roderick, unwittingly strikes right to the heart of the hero's present situation, pointing particularly to the risk

he runs of completely losing his social status by adopting the behaviour and ambitions of the bourgeoisie. Banter's revelation that Roderick's character and situation are the subject of public conjecture, suggests that the hero, though temporarily wealthy and superficially part of the beau monde, is less obviously a gentleman than in his less affluent days. We have noted how Roderick's social quality is immediately apparent - to Lavement and Narcissa, for example - and Strap's happy subservience reminds us of the hero's social superiority, but during his stay in the town, Roderick, though he dresses as a gentleman, leaves his actual rank open to doubt. Even more striking than this is the stated opinion that Roderick might be an Irish fortune-hunter. "This last hypothesis", says the hero, "touched me so nearly, that, to conceal my confusion, I was fain to interrupt his detail, and damn the world for an envious meddling community" (ii, p. 110). Lest we lose all sympathy for his hero, however, Smollett here emphasizes that though, by lowering himself morally, Roderick has also lowered himself socially, all is not yet lost. Banter, recognizing the truth of his allegation, declares that Roderick will never succeed: "You are too honest", he says, "and too ignorant of the town, to practise the necessary cheats of your profession" (ii, p. 111).

The threat to Roderick's quest for moral and social stability is, even so, by no means over, for his attempts to become a part of town society are unrelenting, as is his endeavour to marry Melinda. In Chapter XLIX, he reveals both of these activities in a passage reflecting the aimless frivolity of his

daily existence and the sterility of his emotional life. It is particularly noteworthy that his preoccupation with wealth makes "prospect" replace "love" as his inspiration, and that the only qualities of his mistress which he can hope to gratify are her vanity and pride:

> I soon became acquainted with a good many people of fashion, and spent my time in the modish diversion of the town, such as plays, operas, masquerades, drums, assemblies and puppet-shows; chiefly in company with Melinda, whom I cultivated with all the eagerness and address that my prospect could inspire, and my education afford: I spared neither my person nor my purse, to gratify her vanity and pride (ii, pp. 124-5).

His efforts are to no avail, however; with his money rapidly disappearing, Roderick presses for an "éclaircissement" and Melinda - anxious for fresh admirers - contemptuously rebuffs him. During his final interview with Melinda and her mother, the hero comes a step closer to understanding the realities of urban life, for though herself of good family, Melinda displays the values of the bourgeoisie. The hero will not make pretence of any non-existent fortune, and his claim to be a "gentleman by birth and education" holds little interest for a woman whose aspirations - like his own - are pecuniary.

Roderick's subsequent conduct reveals a continuing decline - both moral and social. Although he occasionally reveals his humanity (in, for example, his generous forgiveness of Miss Lavement), and abandons fortune-

hunting, he comes to rely increasingly upon gambling to satisfy his needs. His values have become hopelessly distorted and concerned only with superficial appearance as he demonstrates by his own declaration that gaming is a "certain resource for a gentleman in want" (ii, p. 162), despite the fact that his fellow-gamblers are - far from being gentlemen - largely sharpers, highwaymen and apprentices. Morally he has descended so low that, though having supposedly renounced fortune-hunting, he immediately accepts Banter's proposal that he should seek to marry the latter's cousin. Far from displaying any personal beauty, Miss Snapper is described as "sickly and decrepit" and as a "little deformed urchin", neither of which epithets detracts from Roderick's enthusiasm for her fortune of twenty thousand pounds. Banter's proposal, he decides, is "too advantageous to be refused". Smollett is at pains to stress Roderick's total preoccupation with the pursuit of wealth for its own sake, by means of the hero's reiterated references to Miss Snapper's fortune. "On the whole", recalls Roderick, "I thought I should have great reason to congratulate myself, if it should be my fate to possess twenty thousand pounds encumbered with such a wife" (ii, pp. 169-70). Strap's earlier insistence that Roderick need not marry an unattractive wife simply for her money, now seems particularly ironic. When the hero converses with Miss Snapper in the Bath coach, he notes not simply her loquacity, but also the sharpness of her tongue. Boswell records Johnson as commenting of fortune-hunters, that "when they contemplated the fortunes singly and separately, it was a dazzling and tempting

object; but when they came to possess the wives and fortunes <u>together</u>, they began to suspect that they had not made quite so good a bargain" (<u>Life</u>, ii, pp. 131-2). Not even the prospect of life married to a scold such as Miss Snapper can now deter Roderick, however, for as he confesses: "when I considered... the joys attending the possession of twenty thousand pounds, I forgot her imperfections, seized occasion by the forelock, and endeavoured to insinuate myself into her affection" (ii, p. 176).

Morally and socially this is the lowest point to which Roderick descends. Gone are his ambitions to resume his rightful social position amongst the gentry, gone too his moral scruples about deceit - like Miss Williams, Roderick has also begun to accept bourgeois society on its own terms. Though he has previously disdained money as motivation for his actions (in refusing any financial reward for saving Narcissa, for example), he now maintains his appearance by gambling, and aspires to enrich himself by marriage to an heiress, regardless of the cost to his self-esteem. It is at this moment that the reader perceives not only the full extent to which dishonesty pervades contemporary society, but also - in the hero's own fall - the full significance of Smollett's vision of moral and social disorder in eighteenth century Britain.

In this dilemma, seemingly in danger of irrevocably adopting the behaviour and aspirations of bourgeois society - as Smollett has revealed them in London - Roderick encounters Narcissa for the second

time. Critics have generally attacked the hero's abrupt change of heart on once more seeing Narcissa, or, at best, dismissed it as "artificial".[11] Psychologically, we may well consider it so, but thematically it represents a return by Roderick to the precepts of a traditional morality, in a manner for which Smollett has assiduously prepared the reader. Although the unfortunate weakness of the author's attempt at describing his hero's emotions may detract from the fullest appreciation of this aspect of the novel's plan, the appearance of Narcissa - an exemplar of the virtues of the gentry - amidst the distorted values of the town, is all that Roderick needs to inspire him anew with the moral and social aspirations to which he was once so strongly attached.

Between the time of Roderick's flight from Sussex and his meeting with Narcissa at Bath, he does not forget her completely; rather his memory of her is gradually eroded as he accepts the false values of the town. Whilst sleeping on the night following his encounter with Strap in France, says the hero, "my fancy was blessed with the image of the dear Narcissa, who seemed to smile upon my passion, and offer her hand as a reward for all my toils" (ii, p. 68), and when Hugh first suggests that he should marry an heiress, Roderick listens with pleasure because the idea "indulged a ridiculous hope I began to entertain of inspiring Narcissa with a mutual flame" (ii, p. 69). In London, however, the immoral values of town society make Roderick's love for Narcissa subordinate to his hopes of achieving a wealthy match. Even so, this love does not completely disappear, and when he

finds himself rejected by Melinda, Roderick can declare that "I was in no danger of dying for love of Melinda; on the contrary, the remembrance of my charming Narcissa was a continual check on my conscience, during the whole course of my addresses; and perhaps contributed to the bad success of my scheme, by controuling my raptures, and condemning my design" (ii, p. 127). Smollett does not intend such a declaration to excuse his hero's behaviour, nor does Roderick intend it as such; rather it is important as a demonstration of the extent to which Roderick has accepted bourgeois values by making economic motives paramount in his life. Other references to Narcissa during this period are similarly intended by Smollett to reveal the divergence between the ideals previously posited by his hero and the reality to which his surrender to bourgeois motives has reduced him. Believing himself to have made a conquest of Miss Sparkle, Roderick relates that "my pride soared beyond all reason and description; I lost all remembrance of the gentle Narcissa, and my thoughts were wholly employed in planning triumphs over the malice and contempt of the world" (ii, p. 137). The latter part of this sentence is more important than it may at first appear, for Smollett is suggesting that his hero's values have become even more distorted; like Melinda he is ruled by pride and vanity, and he aspires to wealth only as a means of gratifying his desire for a show of ostentation - a folly he had once despised. Smollett's point is very clear. In a bourgeois environment, all sense of decorum desappears; even Roderick - born into the gentry - has lost his earlier distaste for

using wealth simply to gratify vanity. It is a point that Smollett the historian makes about the bourgeois on more than one occasion. In describing the early financial success of the South Sea Company profiteers, he writes: "Intoxicated by this flow of wealth, they affected to rival the luxury and magnificence of their superiors; but, being destitute of sentiment and taste...they ran into the most absurd and illiberal extravagances" (Continuation, i, p. 175).

By the time Roderick meets Narcissa at Bath, his motives (as Smollett makes very plain) are both base and short-term. The preoccupation with short-term motives is - as we have noted - a particularly important feature of the existence of the Spanish picaros. Their efforts at ameliorating their social and financial lots being constantly confounded by fortune, they often exhibit a sense of desengaño, looking forward to no more than the next meal or the next night's lodgings. Circumstances force Roderick into a similar existence, but while he retains his social aspirations, he has still some chance of attaining the social and moral stability so evidently lacking in the picaresque world. Having once accepted bourgeois values however - but being unwilling to accept a middle class life-style - Roderick's motives become increasingly short-term. The hero himself epitomizes this attitude when he writes that "by this time I was so well skilled in procrastinating every troublesome reflection, that the prospect of want seldom affected me very much, let it be ever so near" (ii, p. 153). What a difference in character such a remark reveals between the hero's present state of mind and his early days in Scotland

or London, when almost every action related to his attempts to regain the social position of which he had been unjustly deprived.

The meeting with Narcissa at Bath does not then merely provoke an unmotivated romantic response in Roderick, but reminds him very forcefully of all those moral and social values which he has recently abandoned. Smollett has previously extolled love as the true basis for marriage (in the case of Roderick's parents, for example), and faced with the object of his love, Roderick determines to eschew financial motives in favour of those he regards as moral. The insistence that marriage for love is truly moral behaviour directly opposed to marriage for financial gain, runs through the whole of Smollett's fiction. As early as 1746, Smollett had written in Advice:

FRIEND

Or if thy soul can brook the gilded curse,
Some changling heiress steal ———

POET

Why not a purse?
Two things I dread, my conscience and the law
(ll. 217-9),

and his attitude remains similar even in Humphry Clinker. How far this concern with marriage for love (which in his fiction becomes a critical standard by which Smollett invites us to judge the behaviour of bourgeois and aristocrat alike) has its roots in the author's personal experience is not, perhaps, our business to discuss here, but we might profitably make two or three points. To begin with, there is a marked (if decidedly less melodramatic) resemblance

between the marriage of Smollett's own parents and that of Roderick's parents. We have mentioned Archibald Smollett's marriage to Barbara Cunningham, celebrated - like that of Roderick's parents - without his father's permission; certainly neither husband nor wife suffers madness or an early death as a result of Sir James' displeasure, but both suffered as a consequence from a degree of poverty - poverty from which Smollett himself was not exempt. If the insistence on marriage for love owes anything to this episode, it argues much for Smollett's loyalty to his parents; if it derives from his own marriage, it may argue not simply for Smollett's love of his wife, but also a certain degree of defensiveness. The exact circumstances of Smollett's marriage are not clear, but his bride Ann Lassels was the daughter of a West Indian plantation owner, and herself an heiress - if a modest one. Though we know little of Nancy Smollett (the most widely known reference to her in the Travels as "a delicate creature, who had scarce ever walked a mile in her life" (Travels, p. 300) seems barely complimentary to the twentieth century reader), it is clear from the sincere, if conventional, To Blue-eyed Ann, that Smollett was greatly attached to her. He was also, however, self-conscious about her family's comparative wealth, and refers to his own financial independence on several occasions. In a letter to Richard Oswald, he mentions his hope that his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Leaver, can help him to do more than pay off existing debts, but insists gratuitously "You will easily believe that the Expense of housekeeping, added to my former occasions and incumbrances, must have thrown me consider-

ably back in a course of four or five years during which I touched not one farthing from Mrs. Leaver" (Letters, pp. 18-9). This excuse, totally unnecessary in the context of the letter, certainly suggests that Smollett was, at best, uncomfortable about the request he was making, and anxious not to appear as though he was living off his wife's money, or that of her family. This letter was written in 1752; in his will (made in 1769), Smollett makes over to his wife "all my Estate personal and real", "this being", he adds, "no more than restoring what she freely & generously gave to me without hesitation or Reserve".[12]

Whether or not the importance that Smollett attaches to love as the true basis for marriage is in any sense a form of compensation for his own situation, we should be careful not to underestimate its importance to his fiction. Certainly Smollett is at pains to emphasize that Roderick's conversion to this idea, though sudden, is genuine. Encouraged by hope of pecuniary gain, the hero has adopted the town's practice of feigning his emotions, but although Miss Snapper perceives his attention to Narcissa, Roderick can now say, "At any other time I should have been prodigiously alarmed at her suspicion, but at that instant, I was elevated by my passion above every other consideration" (ii, p. 185). Not only does the hero drop the deceit he has hitherto practised, but he firmly rejects Strap's suggestion that it would be more advantageous to marry Miss Snapper.

If Roderick's encounter with Narcissa was a coincidence, his meeting with Miss Williams, and the discovery that she is now Narcissa's maid is fortuitous

in the extreme. Yet though the hero might well be "delirious" at this news, it is scarcely out of character for the novel as a whole; disorder and coincidence have constantly characterized Roderick's experience. Moreover, in preparing for an optimistic conclusion, Smollett has not been unmindful of the need to justify the good fortune of his hero by reference to his merits. Miss Williams, we must remember, is no ordinary acquaintance from Roderick's past. He first encounters her when she - a prostitute - endeavours to trick him into matrimony and when she makes a second appearance, she is both destitute and close to a miserable death, which she avoids only thanks to Roderick's skill in curing her and to the compassion which leads him to undertake the cure. Though it may seem tenuous, it is evident that Smollett is suggesting the existence of a link between Roderick's rejection of bourgeois values in favour of a return to traditional morality, and his immediate good fortune. For almost the first time in his experience, the hero discovers that moral behaviour (in this case to Miss Williams) may eventually produce rewards. After much disillusionment, he gains an intimation that justice is not beyond his reach. Previously, such justice as Roderick has obtained has been of a rough and characteristically picaresque variety, often repaying cruelty with cruelty. Like Lázaro causing the blind beggar to jump into an iron post, Roderick obtains justice (or revenge) ferociously, knocking out the curate's teeth, or thrashing the schoolmaster, for example. Here, it is to his own humanity, as well as to fate, that he owes his change in fortune.

Were Roderick Random to finish at this point, however, it would indeed be difficult to see in its conclusion any serious moral purpose on Smollett's part. But though his encounter with Narcissa has abruptly turned Roderick's thoughts back to his social aspirations, he has by no means reached his goal. Smollett stresses this in Miss Williams' caution - related by Roderick - that Narcissa is still not without some scruples relating to his true situation and character: "I was a good deal startled at this insinuation", he says, "because I foresaw the difficulty I should find in barely doing myself justice; for...I laid claim to the character of a gentleman, by birth, education and behaviour; and yet (so unlucky had the circumstances of my life fallen out) I should find it a very hard matter to make good my pretensions even to these, especially to the last, which was the most essential" (ii, p. 191). It is clear that Roderick recognizes his problem in relation to Narcissa; what he does not recognize, or is not prepared to admit, is the extent to which he must remedy his own shortcomings in order to reveal the "behaviour" of a gentleman.

It is precisely in the changes which Roderick undergoes by the end of the novel that the justification for his ultimate happiness is founded. These changes - both moral and social - involve a total rejection of bourgeois motives and behaviour in favour of the values of the gentry. We have seen that for Smollett, marriage for love is associated with the gentry, and throughout the difficult times he must still undergo, it is his love for Narcissa that sustains Roderick. He writes of

a visit to her, that "We spent the afternoon in all the extasy of hope that the most fervent love, exchanged by mutual vows, could inspire" (ii, p. 208). The change in Roderick is particularly apparent here; learning from his father's experience, he reveals that he is not oblivious of his financial obligations to Narcissa. He not only voices this consideration, but also emphasizes his interest in wealth primarily as a means of supporting Narcissa in her rightful social position, when he says, "I began to be a little anxious about the situation of her finances; well knowing that I should do an irreparable injury to the person my soul held most dear, if I should espouse her, without being able to support her in the rank which was certainly her due" (ii, p. 208). Unlike so many of the good intentions that Roderick displayed in London, this is no hollow moralizing, as he quickly has the opportunity to demonstrate. Narcissa offers to show her affection by marrying Roderick secretly, but the hero, in order that he might not be outdone in generosity, declines: "[I] resisted the bewitching temptation, in consideration of her honour and interest" (ii, p. 221). Such a statement is far closer to the sentiments Roderick displayed as a young man, uncorrupted by bourgeois society, concerned with people rather than wealth, and valuing once more the gentleman's concept of "honour".

Smollett even attempts to give some psychological credibility to Roderick's moral conversion, by demonstrating that it is not yet entirely secure, and when Narcissa is kidnapped by her brother, his behaviour all too quickly descends towards the level of

the town. It is, nevertheless, Roderick's love for Narcissa, rather than any possible financial aspirations, which sustains him even at the nadir of his fortune, in the Marshalsea. Reflecting on his experience of moral disorder, Roderick concludes that he would have been content to remain in prison "had not the remembrance of the amiable Narcissa preserved my attachment to that society of which she constituted a part" (ii, p. 268), and similar considerations lead Roderick to undertake his voyage with Tom Bowling, in the course of which he discovers his father.

Roderick's relationship with Narcissa, then, is the first of two which together underline the moral and social values of the novel. In Guzmán de Alfarache, as we have seen, Mateo Alemán makes the interpolated love story of Ozmin and Daraja serve to point out, by contrast, the instability of the hero's world. Developing this picaresque device, Smollett makes Roderick's love for Narcissa instigate a change in the hero's values and behaviour as a result of which disorder may eventually be replaced by stability. Although this change is seen largely in moral terms, the values concerned involve social differences. The deceitfulness and the pursuit of wealth for its own sake, which Roderick abandons, are distorted values identified in the novel with the bourgeois-orientated society of London, whilst the honesty and concern for his honour which he readopts are the qualities which (Smollett suggests) characterize the landowning gentry. Equally important, in social terms, is Roderick's renewed ambition to regain his rightful place amongst the gentry, an ambition which when realized, brings

a complete return to the stability he is seeking.

Roderick's relationship with Strap reveals both moral and social values, but in contrast to the hero's relationship with Narcissa, it is the latter values which Smollett emphasizes here. The reader first meets Hugh Strap during the hero's account of his schooldays, and Smollett stresses Hugh's affection for the hero. "The attachment of Strap", says Roderick, "flowed from a voluntary disinterested inclination, which had manifested itself on many occasions in my behalf" (i, pp. 22-3). It is a combination of affection and respect, however, which forms the basis of the second of those relationships so important to Roderick, and to the novel as a whole. The familiarity between them - deriving from their schooldays - continues to some degree throughout the novel, but after their encounter in Newcastle, it is obvious that Strap accepts, and is content with, a subsidiary social role. In suggesting that he should accompany Roderick to London, for example, Hugh offers to carry all the baggage on the journey - an offer accepted by the hero without demur.

London provides the most powerful example in the entire novel of moral and social disorder. Strap describes their experience vividly and succinctly when he says, "God send us well out of this place, we have not been in London eight and forty hours, and I believe we have met with eight and forty thousand misfortunes. We have been jeered, reproached, buffeted, pissed upon, and at last stript of money; and I suppose by and by we shall be stript of our skins" (i, p. 100). But though their misfortunes are shared equally, Roderick

is perhaps more affected by them, for his first experience of London not only leaves him penniless, but emphasizes the fall in status that he has suffered. Here Strap comes to the rescue, as he so often does, not simply with financial aid, but far more importantly, by reminding Roderick that traditional social stability is not irrevocably lost. On examining the purse Strap gives him, Roderick insists that "I would have returned [it] to him, saying, he knew better than I how to manage it; but he absolutely refused my proposal, and told me, it was more reasonable and decent that he should depend upon me who was a gentleman, than that I should be controuled by him" (i, p. 101). We have already noticed (v. above p. 57) how closely Smollett's portrayal of Strap resembles his non-fictional portrait of a lower class Scot in The Present State, and that description nowhere fits Hugh more exactly than here: the Scot, says Smollett, "who has been taught from his infancy to bridle his passions, to behave submissively to his superiors, and live within the bounds of the most rigid œconomy, will, through the whole course of his life, retain the colour of his education. He will not swear, drink, and swagger like the common people of England: he will not set his betters at defiance, nor commit any breach of law or decorum....On the contrary, he will save his money and his constitution: he will pay due deference to those whom fortune hath placed in a superior sphere" (Present State, ii, pp. 10-11). Strap's willingness to assume a subordinate role is important, not only to Roderick, but as a guide to the social values of the novel itself. Both reason and decency suggest that

even - or perhaps especially - here in the disorder of London, when the hero is far from attaining the social rank to which he aspires, and is, moreover, penniless, the fact of his gentle birth retains its importance, and respect for the upper class by the lower is equally valid. Strap's belief in the traditional, hierarchical social system not only sustains Roderick, but provides for the reader a significant instance of stability in a world which appears endlessly chaotic.

Strap's acceptance of the role of servant supports Roderick both socially and morally during their stay in London. Socially, Roderick finds in his relationship with Strap at least a partial restoration of the status quo, and the phrases he employs to describe Hugh - "faithful adherent", for instance - reflect this. Strap similarly contrasts his own rank with that of Roderick; "To be sure, Mr. Random", he says, "you are born a gentleman, and have a great deal of learning - and indeed look like a gentleman, for as to person you may hold up your head with the best of them. - On the other hand, I am a poor, but honest cobler's son" (i, p. 133). Strap's moral - and indeed financial - support is equally important; with his supply of money nearly exhausted, Roderick writes that he consults Strap, who promises to pawn everything before the hero shall want.

Despite the moral support and financial aid which Strap gives to Roderick, the latter is both unable to recognize the fact that Strap provides his only contact with the social stability he is seeking, and unwilling to face up to his responsibilities towards Hugh. Thus, when Strap prefaces a remark with a lengthy preamble,

Roderick bursts in angrily with "D—n your relation and pedigree!" to which the former replies, "Surely, our pedigree is not to be d—n'd, because it is not so noble as yours. - I am very sorry to see such an alteration in your temper of late" (i, p. 134). The reproaches implied in Strap's remarks are not only justified, but strike right to the heart of what Roderick must still learn about his social and moral responsibilities before he can hope to regain some form of stability. In Chapter XX, we see clearly the contrast between Strap's acceptance of the responsibilities of his social rank - manifested particularly in his loyalty and in his complete rejection of purely financial motives - and Roderick's indifference to his. Having received an offer of employment as valet de chambre to a gentleman, Strap assures Roderick that he is so attached to the hero that he will not part from him regardless of any advantage he might obtain from such a post. But, says Roderick, "In spite of all the obligations I owed to this poor honest fellow, ingratitude is so natural to the heart of man, that I began to be tired of his acquaintance; and now, that I had contracted other friendships which appeared more creditable, was even ashamed to see a journeyman barber enquiring after me with the familiarity of a companion. - I therefore, on pretence of consulting his welfare, insisted upon his accepting the proposal, which he at last determined to embrace with great reluctance" (i, p. 152). The whole episode provides yet a further example of Smollett's use and development of an idea suggested by Gil Blas. During a period of Gil's prosperity, which he owes largely to a friend,

Joseph, he fails to perform a slight service for that friend in recompense, as a result of which Joseph keeps away from him, and, says Gil "I was charmed at his absence. For besides my being burthened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers" (Gil Blas, ii, p. 141). Whereas Gil's relationship with Joseph is one of many (all of relatively minor importance) however, Smollett transfers the idea to the central social relationship of the entire novel, making it serve as a concise example of the necessity for the traditional hierarchical society in which Roderick believes, to be not narrowly selfish, but based on mutual dependence. The author, in fact, emphasizes the social as well as moral force of this episode in a particularly revealing and ironic juxtaposition, for Roderick remarks in the very next sentence, "I now began to look upon myself as a gentleman in reality" (i, p. 152). The irony is, of course, that Roderick's immoral behaviour is weakening any pretensions he may have to the rank of gentleman. Living in London, Roderick has begun to substitute for his natural virtues, the distorted values of urban society. He has, for example, learnt to dissemble ("on pretence of consulting his welfare"), and the attributes by reference to which he considers himself a gentleman bear no relation to moral qualities, but to the superficial diversions of the town - dances, the theatre and the alehouse. Before he can achieve the stability he is seeking, says Smollett, Roderick must understand and fulfil the responsibilities - as well as enjoy the privileges - of his status as a

gentleman.

It is not long before the hero discovers his mistake in abandoning Strap. Falsely accused of theft, he loses not only his position with M. Lavement, but also his entire circle of friends and acquaintances, a series of misfortunes which prompt the reflection that "my faithful Strap, who alone could yield me pity and assistance, [was] absent I knew not where" (i, p. 160). It is through his misfortune, however, that Roderick begins to learn, and when he encounters Strap once more, in France, he has the opportunity to meet the responsibilities of the rank to which he aspires. In fact, shortly before his meeting with Hugh, Roderick has been involved in an argument which, though relating in particular to the monarchy, could be considered equally valid for any hierarchical social system. The hero posits that "every man has a natural right to liberty; that allegiance and protection are reciprocal; that when the mutual ties are broken by the tyranny of the king, he is accountable to the people for his breach of contract" (ii, p. 56). This is the first clear indication of Smollett's use of the political theories of Viscount Bolingbroke in his fiction - theories which play an important role in much of his work, notably in Launcelot Greaves, the Continuation of the History of England and The History and Adventures of an Atom. The relationship between ruler and ruled (Bolingbroke uses the phrase "conditional contract" in, for instance, A Dissertation upon Parties) is described succinctly in The Idea of a Patriot King: "the prince and the people take, in effect, a sort of engagement with one another; the prince to govern

well, and the people to honor and obey him".[13] Smollett's stress on the "mutual tie" (a stress deriving from Bolingbroke) is central to the moral and social values of the whole book, and Smollett reveals its importance by means of Roderick's growing awareness of his responsibilities towards Strap, and the hero's comments on the tenantry at the end of the novel.

As the values in Roderick Random support the maintenance of a traditional social system, so social mobility is disaparaged in the novel. This is not only implicit in the descriptions of London's perverted, bourgeois values, but also explicit in, for example, the descriptions of the "ridiculously affected" Mrs. Weazle or the upstart ex-coachman, Mr. Ginger. Strap, in contrast, suffers from no such faults. Although, in France, Roderick notes that he appeared "in the sphere of a gentleman, to which, while I knew him, he had not even the ambition to aspire" (ii, p. 63), Hugh willingly surrenders his new-found wealth to the hero's absolute disposal. Moreover, and more importantly, he also resumes his position as Roderick's servant, so that the hero can recall that "I put on the gentleman of figure...attended by my honest friend, who was contented with the station of my valet" (ii, p. 71). Strap, it would seem, gives ample proof of Johnson's contention that "mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination" (Life, ii, p. 219).

Whilst Roderick is still optimistic about his chances of making a wealthy match, his treatment of Strap is unremarkable, but he gradually returns to his short-tempered behaviour, as he frequently acknowledges

in his narration. Yet even during the period of his fortune-hunting, we see glimpses of the hero's growing awareness of his responsibilities; he writes, for instance, of Strap: "This good creature's unalterable friendship for me, affected me with the most grateful sentiments, and acted as a spur to my resolution of acquiring a fortune, that I might have it in my power to manifest my generosity in my turn" (ii, pp. 109-10). It is evident to the reader, however, that Roderick must discover a more moral set of values - including the rejection of marriage for money's sake - before he can find a suitable means of recompensing Strap. Throughout their stay in London, the hero's relationship with Strap is perceptibly altering; Roderick is beginning to accept his responsibilities, but at the same time is growing away from Hugh. The familiarity engendered by their common schooling is disappearing, and Roderick not only distinguishes Strap increasingly by such epithets as "my faithful squire" and "my faithful valet", but also makes obvious differentiation of their ranks, in observations such as "Strap...in spite of his invincible affection for me, still retained notions of œconomy and expence suitable to the narrowness of his education" (ii, p. 153).

The fact that Roderick does not yet fully understand the nature of the relationships between different ranks of society is emphasized by an incident not with Hugh, but with Miss Williams. Hearing that Narcissa is in love with him, the hero attempts to repay Miss Williams for bringing the news, with the gift of a ring, but he finds that "She was above such mercenary considerations, and refused my compliment with some

resentment, saying, she was not a little mortified to see my opinion of her so low and contemptible" (ii, pp. 201-2). Herein lies the essence of the values which Roderick does not fully understand. In rejecting the moral and social disorder which characterizes his experience of urban society, he must also reject the behaviour and values which create it. The hero has already set aside his previous bourgeois-like obsession with wealth (at least in the form of marrying for money), but he must still learn that moral, and not financial, ties should also link both individuals and social groups within the traditional society of the gentry.

As Roderick begins to understand the gratitude which binds Miss Williams to him, so he recognizes that he owes a similar debt of gratitude to Strap. Thus after characteristically losing his temper with Hugh, Roderick writes, "I was soon sensible of the injury I had done, and asked pardon for the outrage I had committed" (ii, p. 212). Such sentiments herald more than a temporary change of attitude on Roderick's part, as his behaviour to Strap in the Marshalsea emphasizes. Jackson perceives the deference which Roderick pays to Strap (although he wears a footman's uniform) and admits Hugh to their company at the hero's request; similarly, Strap sits at table with Roderick and Mr. Melopoyn, the hero informing the assembled company that Hugh was a person to whom "I was extremely obliged" (ii, p. 243).

Nevertheless, Strap's position remains firmly subservient to that of Roderick. Although the hero improves his conduct towards Hugh and goes so far as to introduce him to Tom Bowling as "one of my best

friends", their relationship is essentially one of master and servant. The decision that this shall be so is, however, as much Strap's as Roderick's. When the latter discovers his father in the West Indies, Don Rodrigo invites Strap to dine with them. But, says the hero, "Strap, wild as he was with joy, would by no means accept the proferred honour, crying, 'God forbid! - I know my distance - your worship shall excuse me'" (ii, p. 297). Just as, at the end of the novel, Roderick comes to embody all the traditional virtues of the gentry, so all the attributes of the happy lower classes are revealed in Strap. Both Hugh's behaviour and his acceptance of the traditional social structure are founded in more than a simple respect for Roderick as an individual, as Smollett is at pains to emphasize. We learn, for example, that Strap was greatly valued by the French marquis he served as valet de chambre for his fidelity, and later in the novel, on seeing Melopoyn, Hugh's "tender heart was melted at the sight of a gentleman and christian (for he had a great veneration for both these epithets) in such misery" (ii, p. 242). Strap's ready acceptance of a lowly position in the social hierarchy does not, however, make his role in the novel an unimportant one. It is by means of his relationship with the hero that Smollett suggests to the reader the existence of the social stability so evidently lacking in most of Roderick's experience, and it is largely in response to the virtues of Strap that Roderick learns to accept the responsibilities of his rank.

The return to moral and social stability which

is Roderick's goal throughout his adventures, is described most completely in the last chapter of the novel. All the values which the conclusion of Roderick Random suggests, are those of a traditional, land-based society. The purchase of "all the land which belonged to his father" by Don Rodrigo, and the parallel decline of the fox-hunter and Roderick's female cousins, not only restores the hero and his father to their rightful social position but also highlights the need for the gentry to uphold certain moral values. In marked contrast to the inhuman behaviour to which the family has subjected Roderick and himself, Don Rodrigo demonstrates his generosity by purchasing for the foxhunter, a commission in the army.

It is not only Roderick and Don Rodrigo who wish to lead a rural life, however. Roderick relates that Narcissa is so well pleased with the situation of the place, and with the surrounding company, that she has not the least desire of changing her habitation. Narcissa's agreement on the attractions of the country is in complete accordance with the earlier part of the novel, where Smollett intimates that such a preference is evidence of superior taste. Thus when Jackson enquires of Roderick whether he should remain in London in the hope of gaining a government post, or retire to the country, the hero reveals that "I gave my opinion without hesitation, that he could not do better than buy an estate and improve it....Then I launch'd out into the praises of a country life, as describ'd by the poets whose works I had read" (i, p. 114). This is Roderick as a younger (and less wise) man than we

see him at the novel's conclusion. He has not yet learned his social lessons, and though he is right to prefer the country to the town, his reasons are - as Smollett makes clear - basically derivative. Yet by the end of the novel, his attitude has greatly changed, and we see again how Smollett goes beyond his immediate source for the idea of the picaro's retirement (other influences on the choice of a country life go back at least as far as Horace on his Sabine farm). The source is again Gil Blas, and in Le Sage's novel, the hero also praises the country life, but in terms far more conventional and less socially aware than Roderick's: "Methinks", says Gil, "I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur....Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude" (Gil Blas, ii, p. 201). Smollett makes life in the country not an idealized retreat but a logical and practical extension of the values of his novel, and later goes further by giving comic emphasis to the notion that a preference for rural existence is evidence of superior taste, in the description of Melinda's marriage to Narcissa's brother. The latter hurries Melinda down into the country "much against her inclination", and the antagonism arising from the conflict between the squire's love of fox-hunting and Melinda's yearning for the vulgar pleasures of the town, has risen to such heights that "they preserved no decency before company or servants, but abused one another in the grossest terms" (ii, p. 303) - an obvious indication of how much both fall short of the standards of behaviour which Smollett expects of the gentry.

In order to suggest to the reader that a return to a traditional social stability is possible in the mid-eighteenth century, Smollett does not simply establish the fulfilment of Roderick's social aspirations, but also endeavours to reveal, in a lengthy and important passage, that both the hero and his father are meeting their responsibilities. Father and son make their way to their estate, and when still half a league from it, are met by large numbers of their tenants - men, women and children - who testify their joy by acclaiming their masters and accompanying them home. "As there is no part of the world in which the peasants are more attached to their lords than in Scotland", continues Roderick, "we were almost devoured by their affection" (ii, p. 320). The homecoming takes an almost religious significance as those tenants nearest Don Rodrigo fall to their knees to kiss his hand or the hem of his garments, praying aloud meanwhile for his long life and prosperity. And if the tenants fulfil their role, than so does Don Rodrigo, for he gives orders for a feast for his dependents, who (importantly, if we consider Smollett's stress on the reciprocal nature of their relationship) "had not enjoyed such a holyday for many years before" (ii, p. 321). Smollett makes all his points here by careful use of language; the "joy" of the "peasants" - these "honest people" - who reveal their "affection" for the hero and his father, contrasts very obviously with the behaviour of the mercenary, dishonest servants that Roderick has encountered in London. With the return of Don Rodrigo and his son, the estate is free from the disorder which bedevils urban society; the people

are content, and the new masters give evidence of their concern for the tenants by ordering the feast. Smollett stresses that this is no new departure, but the restoration of a way of life threatened not only by changing social patterns within the town, but also by a general debasement of social and moral values affecting some of the gentry. This emphasis on the re-establishment of traditional patterns of behaviour is both the clearest indication that the social values of Roderick Random are those of the gentry and are anti-bourgeois, whilst thematically they prove the logical conclusion of the changes which have occurred in the hero's conduct. Even the way in which Smollett chooses to tie up the loose ends of the novel underlines the return by Roderick and Don Rodrigo to their traditional and rightful place in society. The hero and his father are granted the freedom of the town in which the former was educated, for instance; Mr. Syntax pronounces a Latin oration, "in honour of our family", as Roderick says, and Strap's family pay particular honour to the hero as Hugh's benefactor. This last - and seemingly ironic - remark is completely in character with Strap's deep-rooted respect for Roderick's rank, and the hero's narration concerning his "honest valet" concludes with the revelation that he and Miss Williams - they are now married - "daily put up prayers for our preservation" (ii, p. 322).

Roderick Random concludes almost as it began; its hero has not attained any new social rank, but has simply retained a position which was threatened by a combination of moral and social instability. The social values to which the conclusion of Smollett's

first novel unerringly point are traditional ones, reflected in the re-establishment of an obviously hierarchical rural system which contrastsvery strongly with the more socially mobile urban one. These systems differ not only in type, but also - and more importantly - in quality; order and happiness characterize the one, disorder and unhappiness the other, and in the ascendancy of the former, we see too the final predominance of the moral values of the hero.

We began our examination of the social vision of Roderick Random by discussing the picaresque nature of the novel, and we have seen not only how Smollett uses elements from Spanish fiction, but how he has adapted incidents in Gil Blas to form a more specific criticism of contemporary society. In translating a sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish genre into eighteenth century British terms, Smollett has made an important change in the social status of his hero. Unlike the Spanish picaros, Roderick is of good family in a class which holds both political and economic power. Despite his claim to these "advantages", much of Roderick's early experience is as disordered as that of any Spanish picaro. His misfortunes spring - as do those of the Spanish characters - from a mixture of moral and social disorder. Morally his experience is much like that of Lazarillo, Pablos or Guzmán; he too is (apparently) parentless, and suffers from both indifference and malice at the hands of family, acquaintance and employers. Unlike the Spanish picaros, however, Roderick is not affected by industrial stagnation and agricultural crises, but by the changing values of a world

which, in allowing greater social mobility, also involves, for the gentry, the very real possibility of loss of status. Roderick's dilemma, then, like that of his Spanish counterparts, is not simply an individual one, but (in his case) one common to a substantial group within the upper classes - the junior members of the families of the landowning gentry. Throughout his adventures, the major social threat to Roderick is the possibility of losing his status as a gentleman, and an intrinsic part of the disorder which affects him is the replacement of the values of the gentry by those of the bourgeoisie.

In preparing for the optimistic conclusion to his first novel, Smollett makes two stable and traditional relationships serve both to underline the disorder surrounding Roderick, and to enable him to learn which values to accept and which to reject. In his relationship with Narcissa, the hero's acceptance of the propriety of marriage for love, and not for money, is the first and most important step towards his complete rejection of bourgeois values - the latter represented by Smollett in terms of the substitution of traditional moral ties between individual and social classes, by financial ones. It is an important first step because it not only causes Roderick to reject the deceit - typical of town society - which has characterized his own behaviour in London, but also makes him abandon the pursuit of wealth for its own sake as his principal conscious goal, in favour of his aspirations to regain his lost social rank. Moreover, in giving him once more a long-term objective, his relationship with Narcissa enables the hero to liberate

himself from the disorder of town society, by freeing him from the exigencies of maintaining a life-style dictated by the distorted values of the bourgeoisie. Whilst Roderick's relationship with Narcissa emphasizes to both hero and reader the need for moral stability, and incidentally points the hero to search for social stability also, his relationship with Strap reverses these aspects of his quest. The master-servant relationship existing between Roderick and Strap primarily stresses the desirability of a return to the values of a traditionally structured social system (by contrasting the benefits to both of their mutual dependence, with the disorder of town society), whilst revealing to the hero the necessity of accepting the moral responsibilities, as well as the privileges, of his rank.

The conclusion of Roderick Random reveals most clearly the social vision of the novel. Though the book is, in part, a defence of traditional, gentry values against modern, bourgeois ones, it is by no means merely a defence of the political and economic privileges of the upper classes. Smollett attacks not only the values of the bourgeoisie, but also that part of the aristocracy, which, living in the town, has accepted these values; moreover, he condemns those amongst the gentry - represented by the foxhunter, Roderick's cousin, Narcissa's brother and Sir Timothy Thicket - who do not adequately meet their social responsibilities. In his novel, Smollett suggests to the reader that by replacing the moral ties which have traditionally linked individuals and social groups, by financial ones, the whole of society is being degraded,

and that although traditional society may be far from perfect, it - unlike bourgeois culture - does, even in the mid-eighteenth century, have the potential ability to satisfy the needs of all sections of the community. To the present-day reader, Smollett's vision of the gentry and traditional English society seems in many ways idealized, often absurdly so, and indeed this is a criticism which must inevitably be levelled not only at Smollett but at many of the conservative writers of the eighteenth century - Bolingbroke, Pope or Goldsmith, for example. Nor is such a process limited to Britain; in The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach, Ernst Fischer highlights a similar problem in Germany. "The German Romantics", he writes, "already seeing the bourgeois businessman as a repellent figure... tried to escape into an idealized feudal past. In doing so they were able to set certain positive features of that past against corresponding negative features of capitalism, e.g. the producer's, artisan's, or artist's close bond with the consumer, the greater directness of social relationships, the stronger collective sense, the greater unity of the human personality due to a more stable and less narrow division of labour".[14] From our vantage point in the twentieth century, we see not only that Smollett is indeed escaping into the past, but see how idealized that past was; with hindsight we also see how historically doomed such an escape was. It is, nevertheless, only by understanding Smollett's complete rejection of bourgeois values, that we can appreciate the significance of his emphasis on traditional moral values and the social importance of the gentry, with its ensuing

significance for his first work of fiction.

3: "Peregrine Pickle"

In many ways, Peregrine Pickle bears a marked resemblance to Smollett's first novel, and we may profitably examine it in a fashion similar to that employed for Roderick Random. As we have seen, both works may, with justice, be termed picaresque, and more importantly, we have found such a description critically useful; now we must begin our study of Peregrine Pickle with a consideration of its picaresque nature. We have noted the sense of moral and social disorder, which is an essential characteristic of Spanish picaresque fiction, in Roderick Random, where Smollett uses it to reveal the clash between the values of emerging urban bourgeoisie and those of the established, land-based gentry in eighteenth century Britain. Later, in The Continuation of the Complete History of England, Smollett was to comment of the increase in commerce and manufacture in 1748 (the date of the publication of Roderick Random) that it "was attended with an irresistible tide of luxury and excess, which flowed through all degrees of the people, breaking down all the mounds of civil policy, and opening a way for licence and immorality" (Continuation, i, p. 275). The rapid growth of the middle classes, and of their wealth, which this passage suggests, remains a target for Smollett's wide-ranging attack in Peregrine Pickle, as it was in Roderick Random (only in Humphry Clinker does the author give any considered thought, in fictional terms, to the proper role of trade in contemporary society), but it is

particularly the influence of bourgeois values on the aristocracy which concerns him in his second novel. If there were to be any genuine possibility of a return to the traditional society which Smollett suggests as the soundest basis for general human happiness, then it was clear that the aristocracy had to join the country gentry in reasserting the particular, if not exclusive, right of the landowner to political and economic power. This view - not the conscious defence of a narrow minority interest - which sees both real wealth and power as vested in land alone, is a theme running through Smollett's History, where it raises the strongest doubts about that work's pretensions to genuine objectivity. Considering the accession of George I in 1714, Smollett writes of the landowners' hope that the king "would cultivate and conciliate the affection of the Tories, who were the landholders and propietors of the kingdom, rather than declare himself the head of a faction which leaned for support on those who were enemies to the Church and Monarchy, on the Bank and monied-interest, raised on usury, and maintained by corruption" (Continuation, ii, pp. 295-6). By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Whigs - alone, at the accession of William III, identified with trade and the monied-interest - had absorbed much of the Tory aristocracy, leaving as defenders of traditional "Tory" values, only the minor gentry, the country gentlemen. It is largely for this reason that the terms "Whig" and "Tory" have only a limited usefulness in their application to mid-eighteenth century politics, as Sir Lewis Namier and subsequent historians have shown.

Bolingbroke makes the same point in A Dissertation upon Parties (1733-4), when he describes the distinction in terms particularly relevant to the period of Walpole's ascendancy: "nothing can be more ridiculous than to preserve the nominal division of whig and tory parties, which subsisted before the revolution, when the difference of principles, that alone could make the distinction real, exists no longer; so nothing can be more reasonable than to admit the nominal division of constitutionalists and anti-constitutionalists, or of a court and country-party, at this time, when an avowed difference of principles makes this distinction real".[1] The identification of much of the aristocracy with the Court (and the machinery of government) and its considerable financial involvement with the City (Johnson, when asked what was become of the gallantry and military spirit of the old English nobility, answered "it is gone into the city to look for a fortune" (Life, ii, p. 126)), was clearly a bitter blow for the gentry, since it removed their common interest with the wealthiest of the country's landowners. In Peregrine Pickle, Smollett shows himself aware of the importance of this change in allegiance to the very foundations of the traditional social structure of Britain, and he makes his denunciation of the distorted values of the urban aristocracy, centred on the Court, of particular importance to his second novel, which thus portrays, in fictional terms, a conflict related to, but not identical with, that in Roderick Random: the opposition of court and country.[2]

It is for this reason, and despite the fact that

we have previously considered Smollett's first novels together as examples of their author's adaptation of the picaresque novel form for his own purposes, that we must not minimize the differences between Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle. To miss the particular emphasis on the conduct (misconduct might be a more accurate term) of the urban aristocracy, would be to underestimate the perceptiveness of Smollett's vision of British society in his second novel. While the majority of Roderick's adventures involve "mean scenes" suitable to the hero's "low state", Peregrine's first escapades take place amidst the society of the landowning gentry, in public schools and on the Grand Tour. Only towards the end of the two books do the heroes inhabit the same world, that of London society. It is, however, only the milieux that Roderick and Peregrine inhabit which differ, not their social positions. By birth, both belong to the landowning class, though (with a certain irony on Smollett's part, as we shall see) it is Roderick who can boast the better family. The clash between the values of the bourgeoisie and those of the gentry in Smollett's first novel ends with the hero's retention of his status as a gentleman, a feat achieved by his rejection of mercenary values and his final firm acceptance of moral and not financial ties as the links binding society. The change between the two works is really one of emphasis, for even in his first novel, Smollett has recognized the destructive effect of the group that is the main target of attack in Peregrine Pickle. Where the aristocracy has adopted the values of the bourgeoisie - as in the cases of the lords Strutwell, Straddle and Swillpot,

for example - Smollett attacks it with great vigour. As his letters demonstrate, Smollett had no great affection for the aristocracy in his personal life. In a letter to John Moore, he regrets his lack of influence with them, but remarks that "Far from being used to the Great...I have not spoke to a Nobleman for some years", adding characteristically, "I live in the shade of obscurity, neglecting and neglected" (Letters, p. 42). The author's disdain of the aristocracy does not stem from an individual grievance or pique, however, nor do his novels merely constitute a blind defence of traditional values. Like the work of Swift, Pope or Bolingbroke, they use those values as positive criteria by which to judge social change in the eighteenth century. Smollett uses traditional values in Peregrine Pickle to attack that section of the aristocracy whose own behaviour has, in his eyes, been perverted by the adoption of middle class standards. For this reason, he no longer presents us with "modest merit struggling with every difficulty to which a friendless orphan is exposed" (Random, i, p. ix), but with a less sympathetic hero from the landowning gentry who personifies the encroachment of bourgeois on traditional values, and whose conduct leads us to fear that those values may ultimately triumph. In Smollett's first novels, therefore, we find both a rejection of the mercenary values of the bourgeoisie and a condemnation of the aristocracy where they have adopted those values. A century later, and also in two successive novels (Bleak House and Hard Times), Dickens reveals his antipathy to certain features of Victorian England by attacking not only aristocratically-

dominated politics and an archaic legal system, but also the abuses of a modern industrial society. It is for a similar reason that Smollett wishes not simply to reject the bourgeois ethic he dislikes, but to strengthen traditional values by condemning the immorality of the landowning class, in whose united and determined defence of those values he saw the best hope for society as a whole.

The social and moral values which concern Smollett in Peregrine Pickle are even more closely linked than in Roderick Random. The gulf which separates Peregrine's instinctive attachment to a traditional and generous morality from the immoral conduct induced by his social ambition is considerable, but it is in the hero's progress towards a recognition of this gulf that the novel develops, and in his attempt to bridge it, that it has its conclusion. Smollett's methods in allowing Peregrine to discover the truth about the moral and social stability he implicitly desires are similar to those employed in Roderick Random, although Peregrine (because of his apparently secure social position) is far less certain of what he does want than Roderick. This latter point is important, for whereas Roderick must fight to retain his position as a gentleman, and must attain that position before he is able to propose marriage to Narcissa, Peregrine has neither of these disadvantages. As a child he is brought up in a social environment from which Roderick is excluded, and he meets Emilia early in the novel and on an equal social footing (though he is unable to see this). Thus, although there are numerous - and typically picaresque - instances of moral and social disorder in the novel,

it becomes increasingly apparent that it is the hero himself, who - by his exaggerated social ambition - creates disorder around him. To return to our initial point, however, the means of attaining stability are similar. As Roderick's relationships with Narcissa and Strap suggest his potential ability to achieve the moral and social stability he seeks, so Peregrine's relationships with Emilia and Pipes foreshadow his eventual happiness. Like his predecessor, the hero of Smollett's second novel is unable to recognize this fact until the end of the novel, although less because of Roderick's "want of experience" than because of the "pride" which is his dominant characteristic, and which underlies his self-destroying social ambition.

To read Roderick Random is to discover a traditionalist's view of eighteenth century society, setting in opposition the moral values of the gentry against the financial values of the bourgeoisie. In Peregrine Pickle, we find not only a more perceptive vision of the social realities of mid-eighteenth century Britain, but a more persuasive defence of traditional society. Such a defence, Smollett would have us see, stems neither from a determination to retain privilege, nor from complacency, but from a belief in morality rather than in money - in social terms, in a triumph of country over court.

As in his first prose fiction, Smollett is at pains to establish the exact social position of his hero. Peregrine's grandfather, we learn, was a merchant who, "from small beginnings, had raised himself to the highest honours of the city, and acquired a plentiful

fortune" (p. 1). The middle class ancestry of Peregrine - in direct contrast to the much higher social position of Roderick's grandfather - is particularly interesting insofar as Smollett uses it to suggest a comparison of the social ambitions of his first two heroes. For both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, "pride" is an important concept in this respect, but one which alters radically between the two works. It is characteristic of Smollett's "instinctive" morality (which he expects to provoke an instinctive response from his readers), that he attempts no lucid definition of either variety of pride. For Roderick it means the force which prompts him to fight against considerable opposition for his right to the status of a gentleman; it resembles (though obscured by Roderick's many faults) a similar quality of Monimia in Ferdinand Count Fathom, who was "by birth, nature and education inspired with that dignity of pride which ennobles the human heart".[3] For Peregrine, "pride" means an excessive and complacent belief in both his personal qualities and his superior social rank, which prompts a potentially destructive social ambition. In their pursuit of happiness, the "great end" of human endeavour, both Roderick and Peregrine come close to grief; the former because he temporarily loses the pride which supports his attempts to regain his lost social position, the latter because he allows his morally debilitating pride too decisive a part in his conduct to all around him. For the country gentleman, Smollett suggests, stability and consolidation are more important than a pursuit of wealth which involves either a social descent into an intrinsically immoral bourgeois

society or a social ascent into a corrupt urban aristocracy. The family backgrounds of Roderick and Peregrine serve to heighten the reader's awareness of the direction in which each is moving.

Unsuccessful in trade, Peregrine's father makes the transition from town to country, and purchases the family estate. There is little of the direct censure of social mobility which animates a great deal of Roderick Random, in the novel, but this avoidance of criticism appears to be no more than a deliberate endeavour on Smollett's part not to prejudice the reader against the novel's hero even before he is born. Indeed, if unable to describe Gamaliel's extravagance and bad taste, Smollett seems determined to berate him for dullness. "Little subject to refined sensations", he writes, Gamaliel "was scarce ever disturbed with violent emotions of any kind. The passion of love never interrupted his tranquillity" (p. 2). As Smollett emphasizes, the bourgeois Mr. Pickle is not immediately at home in his different environment: "he did not fail to be extremely disconcerted by his first entrance into a scene of life to which he was totally a stranger" (p. 4). There are more important manifestations of the spread of bourgeois influence than the arrival of Gamaliel in the country, however. As Smollett comments, Mr. Pickle meets "with abundance of people in the country, who, in consideration of his fortune, courted his acquaintance" (p. 4). Even amongst the landowning class, money - regardless of any personal merit in its possessor - has an attraction and power of its own. Though so economically introduced here, this is to be one of the major themes

of the novel and one we see immediately in Mr. Pickle's marriage to Sally Appleby. Gamaliel's proposal (itself a humorous, if obvious, satire on the tradesman's mentality) results in a marriage prompted, on the one hand, by social ambition, and on the other by a desire for wealth. We have previously noted Smollett's rejection of marriage without love, in our discussion of his first novel, and it is of this union, implicitly criticized both morally and socially, that Peregrine is born. The author would have us recognize, in this respect, the relative importance of Gamaliel's entry into the landowning gentry in such a manner. It is true (and a principal grievance of the squirearchy) that social mobility was more frequent by the mid-eighteenth century, and we have noted social and economic pressures on the successful bourgeois to purchase a country estate. For the most conservatively minded, however (and we must include Smollett among their number), Johnson was quite clearly in the wrong when he declared that "'An English Merchant is a new species of Gentleman'" (Life, i, p. 491n.). Smollett makes his own feelings plain in The Present State, where, ranking "merchants and traders" in second place after freeholders among the "plebeians" (Present State, ii, p. 209), he denominates them, with a not unexpected condescension, as "a better kind of vulgar" (Present State, ii, p. 123). Nevertheless, though Smollett's attitude to Gamaliel is, at best, equivocal, and though the reader may at times recall the social origins of the novel's hero, no satire (or even authorial irony) ever intrudes upon our view of Peregrine; he is heir to a landowner, and it is as such that Smollett invites

us to regard him.

Insofar as the hero himself shares this view of his social position, it may seem absurd to regard Peregrine Pickle as a picaresque novel, and certainly, in social terms, Peregrine bears little relation to Lazarillo or Pablos de Segovia. As we have already seen, though, few individual elements of picaresque fiction can be considered essential to the genre, and both of those which are essential - sympathetic identification by the reader with the hero, and a sense of moral and social disorder - retain their importance. We have previously noted that instability almost invariably marks the childhoods of Spanish picaros. Either they are orphans - Lazáro, Cortado, or Alonso - or they suffer from neglect or an unnatural upbringing - Pablos, for example. Despite the difference in social background between Roderick and Peregrine and the Spanish picaros, the early experiences of both of Smollett's heroes are similar; the former being (apparently) orphaned, and the latter rejected by his parents. Unlike the "unnatural" behaviour of Roderick's relations the rejection of Peregrine by his mother is gradual. Smollett presents the increasing virulence of Mrs. Pickle's feelings towards her son with great skill. The hero is sent, at the age of four, to a day-school, in order that "(to use his good mother's own expression) he might be out of harm's way" (p. 53). The reader learns shortly afterwards of her indifference and the "abatement of her fondness", and when Peregrine returns from boarding-school, Mrs. Pickle is "perfectly weaned of that infirmity known by the name of maternal fondness" (p. 62). This gradual process of

rejection gathers speed, and two pages later, Mrs. Pickle's "vicious adversion" to Peregrine leads to her "unnatural and absurd renunciation" of him, and he is "exiled from his father's house", a process related in terms which will be perfectly familiar to those who remember Roderick's childhood. In a further similarity to Roderick, who also recognizes the insecurity of his position (depending, as it does, whilst at university, solely on Tom Bowling), Peregrine is conscious of his vulnerability, "and though the gaiety of his disposition hindered him from afflicting himself with reflexions of any gloomy cast, he did not fail to forsee that if any sudden accident should deprive him of the commodore, he would in all likelihood find himself in a very disagreeable situation" (p. 109). Like Roderick and his Spanish predecessors, Peregrine is very conscious of the instability of the world he inhabits. To exactly what extent we can attribute Peregrine's later behaviour - and particularly his inability to establish and sustain personal relationships - to this rejection by his parents, it would be unwise to speculate, for Smollett is not primarily a psychological novelist, but there is no doubt that the author intended to suggest some correlation between his hero's childhood experiences and his later actions. When Peregrine is put under the severe regime of a pedagogue and "regularly flogged twice a day", Smollett comments that "his disposition... was strangely perverted by the absurd discipline he had undergone" (p. 55).

An unpleasant experience of school is - like parental maltreatment - a part of the traditional

picaresque pattern, and Smollett does not neglect to emphasize this part of his hero's upbringing. Apart from the eighteen months he spends under the tutelage of the pedagogue, Peregrine also suffers from Keypstick's "large stock of avarice, ignorance and vanity". Brutality characterizes the youthful experience of the Spanish picaros, and Peregrine is obviously warmly repaid for his generally bellicose attitude, since "his own visage commonly bore some livid marks of obstinate contention" (p. 56). Throughout the remainder of Peregrine's boyhood - at Keypstick's, Winchester or the Garison - Smollett moves simultaneously further from and closer to, the picaresque fiction of Spain. Socially, his hero inhabits a very different milieu from that of his Spanish counterparts, but in his seemingly endless succession of tricks and escapades, he is much closer to their spirit than Roderick. Unlike the tricks of Smollett's first hero, Peregrine's - though often humorous - are sometimes gratutitously cruel and do little more than emphasize the novel's sense of moral disorder; only occasionally do they have any overt intention, as when Peregrine chastizes Keypstick, for example. There, as with Tom Bowling's whipping of Roderick's schoolmaster, Peregrine's imitation of the German's physical deformities is evidently intended to have a salutary moral lesson, for the hero "young as he was, took offence at [Keypstick's] want of reverence for his usher, over whom he sometimes chose opportunities of displaying his authority, that the boys might not misplace their veneration" (p. 57).

Despite the basic similarities of the childhoods

of Roderick and Peregrine, however, it is whilst the latter is at school that we see the major difference in character between them. In the "Preface" to Roderick Random, Smollett makes an overt plea for the reader's sympathy on behalf of his hero, and Roderick's first-person narration in the novel allows him to engage it the more easily. For Peregrine, Smollett makes no such plea, and although the third person narration remains largely sympathetic to the hero (in contrast to the ironic treatment of the narration in Tom Jones, or even the first-person narration in Moll Flanders), it does allow the reader a slight, and not unimportant, detachment. In terms of Smollett's presentation of character, Peregrine Pickle marks a significant advance over Roderick Random; the contrast between the hero's instinctive morality and increasingly immoral behaviour is more obvious, and the reconciliation of moral conviction and social ambition correspondingly more difficult for him. Moreover, insofar as we see in Pererine the embodiment of a traditional landowning society, so we must also see in him, that society's faults and the dangers it faces. From an early age, the hero's "natural" behaviour (his love for, and the love he inspires in, Julia, Trunnion or Hatchway, for example) is contrasted with the "unnatural" treatment he receives at the hands of his parents. Even so, Smollett appears to have considered his first portrayal of Peregrine too unsympathetic, and many of his more brutal or tasteless intrigues are omitted in the revised second edition of 1758. Whilst the first version remains undoubtedly superior, and gives a more honest view of the world as Smollett saw it, the revisions are not

entirely without point. Since the reader's sympathetic identification with Peregrine is an essential requirement of Smollett's method, a slight lessening of the book's brutality may be necessary (certainly in a more humane - or more squeamish - age) if Peregrine Pickle is not to be dismissed out of hand. In order to face the violence of Smollett's work, as one critic has rightly remarked, "one needs a sensibility as tough as Smollett's own";[4] without it one may conclude, along with Walter Allen, that Peregrine is a "heartless tough",[5] and thence care little for his fate. Yet to the reader who is prepared to accept Smollett's work on its own terms, the succession of violent incidents and practical jokes will appear, as it is, an essential element of Smollett's vision. As another critic has recently remarked: "The 'Smollett world' is violent, and Smollett's art is equally peremptory. It would seem that the violence of the incidents he chooses to portray is an integral part of his conscious art".[6] Smollett presents violence in his novels not to glorify it, but to reveal in the strongest possible terms the true nature of society which breaks down moral ties between its members. As that society becomes increasingly individualistic in its social life, then the attitude of "each man for himself" is a natural corollary in the moral sphere. In his attempt to describe the full effect of this lack of concern for others, Smollett is unwilling, in Peregrine Pickle, to ask his readers' indulgence for the hero (as he had done in Roderick Random) but he recognizes, nonetheless, that he cannot portray Peregrine too unsympathetically. The ambivalence that Smollett wanted his readers to

feel towards Peregrine - and towards the aristocratic society which attracts him - is suggested in a passage concerning the hero's schooldays where we read that:

> His pride rose in proportion to his power... [and] he contracted a large proportion of insolence, which a series of misfortunes that happened to him in the sequel could scarce effectually tame. Nevertheless there was a fund of good nature and generosity in his composition (pp. 56-7).

It is within the moral ambiguities of Peregrine's character and ambitions that Smollett shows us most forcefully the moral disorder of mid-eighteenth century Britain.

During Peregrine's education at Oxford, we see more obviously the difference between his social status and prospects and those of Roderick. On his arrival at university, the latter relates that: "I resolved to apply myself with great care to my studies, and enjoy the opportunity in my power" (Random, i, p. 27). How different from the attitude of Peregrine who "instead of returning to the study of Greek and Latin, in which he thought himself already sufficiently instructed...renewed his acquaintance with some of his old school-fellows, whom he found in the same situation, and was by them initiated in all the fashionable diversions of the place" (p. 113). In his descriptions of these fashionable diversions, Smollett places an emphasis on the negative aspect of his hero's pride, which, whilst closely related to his social success - with women, for instance - is also attended with less happy consequences. Having involved a club of serious-

minded student politicians in a street debauch, "Peregrine was too vain of his finesse, to conceal the part he acted in this comedy...and thereby intailed upon himself the hate and resentment of the community" (p. 116). The hero's inability to contain his pride, seen here in a relatively innocuous form, demonstrates itself shortly afterwards in such a way as to lessen the reader's sympathy for Peregrine. The hero not only regards Mr. Jumble's imposition - to paraphrase two appropriate lines of Virgil - "as a piece of unmannerly abuse levelled against his own conduct, but also as a retrospective insult on the memory of his grandfather, who (as he had been informed) was in his life-time more noted for his cunning than candour in trade" (p. 117). His revenge, typically, is to discover Jumble's parentage - he is the son of a brick-layer and a pie-maker - and to compose a satirical poem on the subject. In the course of the incident (and others like it), the reader becomes progressively more aware both of Peregrine's pride and of his exaggerated sense of social superiority, and Smollett reveals first one and then the other in their worst light in the sequel.

In the last chapter, we noted the close resemblance which Roderick bears to Smollett's portrait of a Scottish gentleman in The Present State; if we consider Peregrine's conduct at Oxford (Smollett specifies his attachment to horse-racing, drinking, debauchery, "midnight frolics" and his arrogant behaviour to both fellow-students and tutors - the latter exemplified by his treatment of Jumble[7]), then we remember once more The Present State, where Smollett concludes his description of people of fashion by remarking that

"On the reverse of their character, we likewise observe a disposition to gaming, riot, and excessive insolence of pride, and a strong propensity to contemptuous ridicule" (Present State, ii, p. 213). Peregrine may be a fictional creation, but it is apparent that Smollett finds neither his situation nor his behaviour unique; both relate closely to the author's view of the conduct of his hero's real-life peers. Although particularly emphasizing Peregrine's pride, the account of the hero's period at Oxford is not dissimilar from many eighteenth century accounts of a mispent education such as that James Miller describes in Of Politeness (1738), whose protagonist:

> Half seven years spent in billiards, cards and tippling,
> And growing every day a lovelier strippling;
> With half a college education got,
> Half clown, half prig, half pedant and half sot.[8]

Yet however unsympathetic Peregrine may appear to us at this juncture, Smollett does not wish us to lose all sympathy for his hero, for he writes: "Neither was [Peregrine's] whole time devoted to the riotous extravagancies of youth. He enjoyed many lucid intervals, during which he contracted a more intimate acquaintance with the classicks, applied himself to the reading of history, improved his taste for painting and musick...and...cultivated the study of natural philosophy" (p. 119). More importantly, he gives repeated evidence of Peregrine's better moral qualities, noting that his hero "knew not the art of with-holding his purse when he saw his companion in difficulty" (p. 119) - a "natural" goodness which he exhibits even at

the lowest point of his fortune, in the Fleet.[9]

Such instances of Peregrine's attachment to more serious concerns and moral values (particularly as they so often appear awkwardly inserted into the main body of the narrative) do no more than retain a modicum of sympathy in the reader for the hero; they do not (nor are they meant to) disguise his inability, or unwillingness, to recognize his moral and social responsibilities. When he receives letters from his aunt and uncle criticizing his conduct, Peregrine has doubts about what action to take: "Had his disposition been like that of most other young men, it would have been no difficult task to overcome his difficulties; but such was the obstinacy of his pride, that he deemed himself bound in honour to resent the letters he had received; and, instead of submitting to the pleasure of the commodore, expected an acknowledgement from him" (p. 138). Smollett's delineation of the character of Hawser Trunnion is one of the most successful features of Peregrine Pickle, and here the commodore, far from resenting his godson's sentiment, both apologizes to Peregrine, and offers him an extra allowance besides his already existing five hundred pounds per annum. Such indulgence on the part of the childless Trunnion is, unfortunately, as harmful as it is natural, and although momentarily dispelling Peregrine's "pride and indignation", it also contributes to his increasing neglect of the moral and social obligations of his position.

Smollett immediately stresses the importance of Peregrine's social aspirations, in his account of the hero's reactions to Trunnion's suggestion that his

nephew should travel: "far from being disgusted, he was perfectly well pleased with the prospect of going abroad, which flattered his vanity and ambition, gratified his thirst after knowledge, and indulged that turn for observation, for which he had been remarkable from his most tender years" (p. 142). Smollett's decision to send Peregrine on the Tour is an interesting one. Such travels are very different from those of Roderick; they establish Peregrine's social status quite firmly and are, to this extent, a move away from the picaresque tradition. Yet they are not so obviously purposeful as, say, Tom Jones' journey to London (made, after Upton, in pursuit of Sophia), and by removing Peregrine from the Garison and his country background, they form a useful introduction to the last part of the novel where the hero's aspirations lie amongst the urban aristocracy, in which he has no roots, and hence - to his mind - no obligations. Although it is for this reason that Peregrine's travels are most important thematically, Smollett neglects no opportunity to relate them to his general theme, and insofar as Peregrine abuses the opportunities he has to effect a personal improvement on the Tour, he reflects Smollett's criticism of that part of the aristocracy and gentry that will not face up to its responsibilities. The value of the Tour to the young men undertaking it (and thence to society in general) remained a topic of literary controversy throughout the eighteenth century, and for every Burlington, whose travels to Rome - and later, still aged only twenty-four, to Palladio's villas at Vicenza - led to a radical change in the

direction of English architecture, there must have been many, who, as Jonathan Wild's father puts it, "might have been sent as profitably to Norway and Greenland"[10] as to France and Italy. It is the latter's abdication of responsibility which Pope attacks in The Dunciad (Book IV, ll. 293-334), and which concerns Smollett in Peregrine Pickle.

Peregrine's belief in his own social superiority becomes, in France, an increasingly dominant feature of his character. Immediately on arrival at Calais, the hero's "natural haughtiness of disposition" leads him into conflict with the French customs, and his exaggerated and offensive precautions against theft lose him the personal respect he has previously inspired with ease. It is true, as Smollett notes, that "he was ashamed of his own petulance", but in a very short time he will be scarcely troubled at all by reflections of this kind. In a characteristically egotistical manner, Peregrine mistakes the natural frankness of an innkeeper's wife for a sexual invitation, and makes advances which oblige her to shout aloud for her husband. Though the ensuing fight ends with the wife insulted and the husband kicked downstairs, Peregrine's later repentance centres not on his own unworthy conduct but on the scratches he has received which confine him to his room for a whole week. The vanity which prompted his original mistake in this instance is closely related to his sense of pre-eminence, both of which reveal themselves in his conduct at Paris, where he is assiduous in his appearance in the public walks, and "He never doubted that his person would attract the notice of some distinguished

inamorata, and was vain enough to believe that few female hearts were able to resist the artillery of his accomplishments" (p. 207; my emphasis).

The preoccupation with social rank - later to become an obsession with the hero - distinguishes his behaviour in the French capital. Invited to the home of a nobleman, Peregrine meets "his lady, and several persons of fashion" and is "quite captivated by their affable behaviour and the vivacity of their discourse; and after having been honoured with particular marks of consideration, took his leave, fully determined to cultivate such a valuable acquaintance" (p. 209). For the first time in the novel we now see both the true nature of the urban aristocracy which is the target of the hero's social aspirations, and how unfitted he is for it. Smollett surely allows himself a hint of irony when he reveals that Peregrine cannot maintain his "honourable connexions" because he is unable to afford his gambling losses. Gaming - particularly as a characteristic vice of the urban aristocracy - assumes a prominent place throughout Smollett's second novel. Like other conservative writers (the country party ideology was notoriously xenophobic) Smollett deprecated the spread of French habits to Britain; he later wrote, in his Travels, that "France is the general reservoir from which all the absurdities of false taste, luxury, and extravagance have overflowed" (Travels, p. 55). His attack on gambling in France relates especially to Peregrine's view of it as a "polite" accomplishment. The author emphasizes that his hero (for the moment) still holds on to his "natural" qualities, uncorrupted by "art",

by noting Peregrine's discovery that "every person of rank, whether male or female, was a professed gamester, who knew and practised all the finesse of the art, of which he was intirely ignorant" (p. 209). Later, in his Travels, Smollett was to raise the same point concerning the "grand monde" in France: "In mentioning cards", he writes, "I ought to observe, that they learn to play not barely for amusement, but also with a view to advantage; and, indeed, you seldom meet with a native of France, whether male or female, who is not a compleat gamester, well versed in all the subtleties and finesses of the art" (Travels, p. 58). Smollett has previously used the idea that cheating at cards may be regarded as a "polite" accomplishment as an indication to the reader of the wider corruption of aristocratic society; in Roderick Random, for example, the hero is obliged to suffer considerable losses at the hands of his intended bride, Melinda. It is still far too early in the novel for Peregrine to recognize the implications of this instance of corruption in society, and though he does conceive a "disgust at the mercenary conduct, as well as the shallow intellects of the ladies", his reasons for abandoning them are more pragmatic. In the "brilliant assemblies of France", Peregrine's accomplishments are of little account and the French regard him as "a youth of a very phlegmatic disposition". "No wonder then", writes Smollett, "that his pride was mortified at his own want of importance" (p. 209). The irony of the hero's situation is complete here, for he not only fails "to profit by his talents among the fair sex", but - despite his apparent rejection of mercenary

conduct - is obliged to pay a "Fille de joye" for pleasures he is otherwise unable to obtain, an irony emphasized by Smollett's unusual, and almost Defoe-like, stipulation of twenty Louis as the amount of Peregrine's monthly expense.

Such ironies are lost on the hero, however, and both his vanity and his belief in his social superiority continue unchecked. On receiving the news that Trunnion is ill, Peregrine "who had resided about fifteen months in France, thought he was now sufficiently qualified for eclipsing most of his cotemporaries in England, and therefore prepared for his departure with infinite alacrity" (p. 223). Peregrine's growing vanity and pride - which is paralleled by a numbing of his moral sensibility - underlies many of the incidents of his homeward journey through France and the Low Countries. Increasingly, his vanity distorts his entire view of other people, as, for instance, in his attempted seduction of a French gentlewoman. He declares his love, and "Though by a man of a less sanguine disposition, her particular complaisance would have been deemed equivocal...he gave his own qualifications credit for the whole" (p. 283). Even having failed in an attempt to rape the woman, he "confided so much in his own talents...that he resolved to make another effort" (p. 286). It is shortly after this attempt that Peregrine completes his stay in Ghent by attending the execution of two youths who were hanged for "ravishing a whore". Such oblique comment on the behaviour of the hero is a feature of this section of the novel and one which Smollett uses to demonstrate Peregrine's equivocal attitude to moral defects.

Smollett's attitude is here close to that of Fielding, who, writing in his "Preface" to the Miscellanies, proclaims "Nor do I know any thing which can raise an honest Man's Indignation higher than that the same Morals should be in one Place attended with all imaginable Misery and Infamy, and in the other, with the highest Luxury and Honour".[11] The ability to recognize moral defects in others but not in themselves, is a characteristic of both Roderick and Peregrine. Here, the latter recognizes and punishes the "ridiculous vanity and presumption" of the doctor, and the intellectual "arrogance and barbarity" of the painter, but he is unable to achieve any detached view of his own conduct.

The sense of moral disorder so important to the picaresque vision is constantly present in Peregrine Pickle, but often in a significantly altered form. Of the more conventional manifestations of disorder - in which Roderick Random abounds - there are many. The reader sees "unnatural" behaviour in the treatment the hero receives from his parents and brother, and in a different way, in the homosexuality of the foreign noblemen whom Peregrine encounters at the Roman banquet. Both of these aspects of moral disorder feature largely in Smollett's first novel, as does the hero's tendency to be deceived - at least temporaily - by appearances. Similarly, the false enthusiasms of the doctor and Pallet, the lack of taste displayed by the Club of Authors (Smollett here follows an idea of Le Sage in Gil Blas) or the wilful ignorance of the Yelpers are all minor manifestations of the typically picaresque disorder that we examined at consider-

able length whilst discussing Roderick Random; v. above pp. 87-118. More damaging in its effect on Peregrine is the deception he encounters in London, to which - Smollett suggests - his basic goodness renders him particularly vulnerable. When on one occasion he does refuse a loan which he realizes will never be repaid, we read that "It would have been well for our hero, had he always acted with the same circumspection: but he had his unguarded moments, in which he fell a prey to the unsuspecting integrity of his own heart" (p. 612). Most importantly in the novel, however, and marking an advance in Smollett's handling of his material within the picaresque novel form, it is Peregrine himself who is responsible for creating disorder, or, at least, for making it apparent. The corrupt clergyman, for example - a familiar figure in Spanish picaresque fiction, and present in Roderick Random - reappears in Peregrine Pickle, but here it is the hero who initiates the corruption which thereafter forms the basis of his relationship with the Capuchin, when he offers him a purse of ten guineas. Similarly, the broken promises of the Capuchin's charge to contact Peregrine in Brussels, stem originally from no more than an explicit desire on her part to avert the "most unbridled transports of passion" which arise from "such a violent spirit" as is that of the hero. Pickle subsequently "gave utterance to his fury, in a thousand imprecations and invectives against the writer, whom he dishonoured with the appellations of a coquette, a jilt, an adventurer, who, by means of a pimping priest, had defrauded him of his money" (p. 310), but in this instance the corruption and

inconstancy which are familiar symptoms of moral disorder to the reader of picaresque fiction, stem very largely from the immorality of the picaro himself.

The moral effect of Peregrine's introduction into aristocratic society is nowhere more evident than in his self-appraisal on returning from the continent: "Now that our hero found himself on English ground, his heart dilated with the proud recollection of his own improvement since he left his native soil" (p. 352). Smollett elsewhere makes a comment on those undertaking the Grand Tour, those "raw boys, whom Britain seemed to have poured forth on purpose to bring her national character into contempt: ignorant, petulant, rash, and profligate" (Travels, p. 251), and if the irony of Peregrine's remark is not sufficiently apparent to the reader, Smollett as narrator is moved to make one of his very few explicit comments on the hero. "Sorry am I", he says, "that the task I have undertaken, lays me under the necessity of divulging this degeneracy in the sentiments of our imperious youth, who was now in the heyday of his blood, flushed with the consciousness of his own qualifications, vain of his fortune, and elated on the wings of imaginary expectation" (p. 353). But if the hero's "improvement" does not gain him the reader's sympathy, it does recommend him to London's aristocracy, amongst whom he was particularly welcome "on account of his person, address, and bleeding freely at play" (p. 354). Peregrine's reception in the beau monde serves only to increase his ambition and when the season begins at Bath, he is "panting with desire of distinguishing

himself at that resort of the fashionable world" (p. 365). There, together with Godfrey, he uses a sharper's own methods to defeat "those villainous pests of society" at billiards. Peregrine gives us a reminder of his generosity by presenting a "handsome benefaction to the hospital" from his winnings, but he fails to learn anything from this incident about his own moral conduct. In this he clearly represents the urban aristocracy which he aspires to join; far from alienating him from their society, his exploits, says Smollett, constitute "on the contrary, such a recommendation, which (as I have already hinted) never fails to operate for the advantage of the possessor" (p. 370).

The scene at Trunnion's death-bed is both one of the most successful and most important in the entire novel. We see there, in Smollett's description of his hero, the contradictions within Peregrine's character; his faults - perverted values - are in evidence, but overwhelmingly he displays the humanity he so often reveals when detached from the society of the urban aristocracy:

> The young gentleman, whose heart overflowed with gratitude and affection, could not behold such a spectacle, unmoved. He endeavoured to conceal his tenderness, which in the wildness of his youth, and in the pride of his disposition, he considered as a derogation from his manhood; but, in spite of all his endeavours, the tears gushed from his eyes, while he kissed the old man's hand; and he was so utterly disconcerted by his grief, that when he

attempted to speak, his tongue denied its office (p. 391).

Peregrine's humanity will shortly become less evident, however, for by Trunnion's death, he inherits thirty thousand pounds, and "The possession of such a fortune, of which he was absolute master, did not at all contribute to the humiliation of his spirit, but inspired him with new ideas of grandeur and magnificence, and elevated his hope to the highest pinnacle of expectation" (p. 395). Peregrine is now in the social position of Roderick at the very end of Smollett's first novel, but his fortune has been acquired too easily to allow him to appreciate its true value. Though he now becomes "our young squire" and receives visits from neighbouring landowners, Peregrine has not sufficient experience of the world to settle gratefully (as Roderick does) on his country estate. His ambitions lie elsewhere; he takes leave of both friends and rural society, and "repairing to the great city, purchased a new chariot and horses, put Pipes and another lacquey into rich liveries, took elegant lodgings in Pall-mall, and made a most remarkable appearance among people of fashion" (p. 396). Smollett again notes the ascendancy of mercenary values in the city and their corrupting influence upon the aristocracy, when he points (as he did in Roderick Random) to his hero's twin ambitions: "to make prize of a rich heiress, or opulent widow" or "by the interest he might acquire among the nobility [to] be favoured with some lucrative post" (p. 397).

Peregrine's behaviour is soon dominated by the excesses of the society in which he moves. The intelligent critic of the theatre we have seen in France gives

way to the coxcomb who enters the theatre when the audience is intent upon the performance, in order to make the greater effect, addressing all those with whom he has the slightest acquaintance and even bowing at a distance to some of the nobility. "This ridiculous ostentation", says Smollett, "was a weakness that, in some degree, infected the whole of his behaviour" (p. 401). The perverted values of urban society are also more seriously reflected in Peregrine's actions; in his encounter with Emilia at the theatre, for instance:

> Though his heart beat the alarm with the utmost impatience at sight of his Emilia, he was for some minutes deterred from obeying the impulse of his love, by the presence of some ladies of fashion, who, he feared, would think the worse of him, should they see him make his compliments in public to a person of her figure. Nor would the violence of his inclination have so far prevailed over his pride, as to lead him thither, had not he recollected, that his quality-friends would look upon her as some handsome Abigail, with whom he had an affair of gallantry, and of consequence give him credit for the intrigue (p. 398).

At this point, Peregrine's pride has gained the ascendancy over his love, and the distorted values of aristocratic society now regulate his external conduct. He likewise gives evidence of the perversion of his "natural" qualities by the art of the town, in his behaviour on learning - at a dinner-party - of a

widow's plight. Unwilling to stand out against his fellow-guests' uncharitable behaviour, he contributes no more than half a crown for her relief. Only later, and in private, does he reveal his true generosity, by presenting the widow with twenty pounds and by acting as godfather to one of her children. Like Pope's Allen (or Matthew Bramble), Peregrine might be said to "Do good by stealth, and blush to find it Fame",[12] but for very different reasons!

Throughout the final part of Peregrine Pickle, Smollett closely links the social ambition and moral decline of his hero. He introduces the former theme by commenting that Peregrine "still continued to maintain his appearance in the beau monde; and as his expence far exceeded his income, strove to contract intimacies with people of interest and power: he shewed himself regularly at court, paid his respects to them in all places of public diversion, and frequently entered into their parties, either of pleasure or cards" (pp. 571-2). This is the reward which the Friend promises the Poet in Advice:

> Enroll'd a member in the sacred list,
> Soon shalt thou sharp in company, at whist
> (ll. 175-6),

but although Smollett severely criticizes the corruption of this society, and Peregrine's acceptance of it, he is at pains to demonstrate that, at least initially, his hero does not entirely share its mercenary values. Thus when Peregrine offers to release an earl's son from a debt of fifty thousand pounds, the latter's father "who perfectly well understood the value of money, and was no stranger to the

characters of mankind, stood amazed at this sacrifice" (p. 574). But though this, and similar episodes reveal an initial independence in the hero's attitude, he begins before long to surrender to the worst features of the society in which he moves. When he turns poet, and - more importantly - patron, Peregrine is soon the recipient of extravagant praise from those who hope to benefit by his munificence. Pope describes such flatterers in An Essay on Criticism:

> Of all this Servile Herd the worst is He
> That in proud Dulness joins with Quality,
> A constant Critick at the Great-Man's Board,
> To fetch and carry Nonsense for my Lord
> (ll. 414-7),

as does Smollett in his own poetry, and both are right to fear their effect, for we read that Peregrine's "vanity even relished this incense; and though his reason could not help despising those that offered it, not one of them was sent away, unowned by his munificence. He began to think himself, in good earnest, that superior genius which their flattery had described" (p. 576). Unable to see the extent to which he has given way to such corruption, the hero allows himself to be drawn into the extravagance of aristocratic society by joining a set of young nobleman "who had denounced war against temperance, œconomy, and common sense, and were indeed the devoted sons of tumult, waste, and prodigality" (p. 581). But, insists Smollett, the main fault, even here, lies not with the hero, but with the pernicious effect of the urban aristocracy whose life he shares: "Though Peregrine, in his heart, detested those abandoned

courses...he was insensibly accustomed to licentious riot" (p. 582). The hero, in fact, has periods of lucidity in which he recognizes the shallowness of the urban aristocracy - his trick of turning a gypsy into "a young lady of birth and education" suggests his discernment of the superficiality of the accomplishments of polite society[13] - but unconsciously he accepts the more damaging of its values. Like Roderick, Peregrine becomes preoccupied with money for its own sake and takes to gambling at horse-races. As Smollett wrote later, "A spirit of gaming runs riot with such violence at a horse-race, that one would imagine all the spectators were actually possessed" (Present State, ii, p. 217), and Peregrine loses, by stages, at first three and then six thousand pounds. Undeterred, his hopes increase with his ill luck, and at the beginning of winter he goes to town, fully persuaded that his fortune must inevitably change, and that next season he will reap the fruits of his experience. "In this confidence", writes Smollett, "he seemed to drown all ideas of prudence and œconomy; his former expence was mere parsimony, compared with that which he now incurred" (p. 608). Not only gambling but also speculation in commerce engross Peregrine's attention. Whereas Smollett has described the hero's previous praise of trade - delivered cynically to Emilia's uncle - as hypocrisy, Peregrine is now "seized with the desire of amassing", and he "ventured fifteen hundred pounds upon bottomry, being tempted by the excessive premium" (p. 611). In Peregrine's own acceptance of the mercenary values which both his background and natural moral qualities have previously

led him to reject, Smollett reveals to the reader the continuing encroachment of bourgeois values within the aristocracy.

The hero's relentless quest for social advancement remains a dominant force in his behaviour. When he receives a suggestion that he should stand for member of parliament, Peregrine "intoxicated with the ideas of pride and ambition, put all his talents to the test, in the execution of this project" (p. 614). But fortune is turning rapidly against the hero, and, ordered to withdraw from the election, he finds "all the vanity of his ambitious hope humbled in the dust" (p. 615). Smollett is making two separate and important points. Firstly, he condemns Peregrine's attempt to use politics simply as a vehicle for his greed and ambition, oblivious of his social responsibilities. Given the machinery of patronage which Walpole skilfully constructed during two decades of power before his fall in 1742, there were ample rewards to recompense those who aided the ministry in the Commons. And if there were rewards available, there was no shortage of those ready to accept them, a situation which prompted Pope to write (in Dialogue I of his Epilogue to the Satires):

> See thronging Millions to the Pagod run,
> And offer Country, Parent, Wife, or Son!
> Hear her black Trumpet thro' the Land proclaim,
> That 'Not to be corrupted is the Shame'
>
> (11. 157-60).

For those supporting the ideals of the country party, and opposed to the City interests which Walpole espoused, such corruption was necessarily anathema (at

least while they were in opposition) and for them, the independence of the back-bench member of parliament becomes his most praiseworthy attribute; thus Matthew Bramble boasts proudly in Humphry Clinker that "Whilst I sat in parliament, I never voted with the ministry but three times, when my conscience told me they were in the right" (Humphry Clinker, p. 98).

Smollett, then, attacks those - like Peregrine - who seek patronage; he also condemns those - like Lord Steerwell - who exercise it. The inconstancy of politicians ("the proud lord who smiles a gracious lie" as Smollett writes in Advice) was not simply a theoretical concept, as Smollett discovered to his cost in later years, when seeking a place in a warm climate for the sake of his health. Relating his unsuccessful attempt to go as physician to the army in Portugal, Smollett writes "The Secretary of war professed great Friendship and assured me I might command his best offices. I asked the Place. He expressed great Concern that I had not applied a week before. He said both the Physicians were appointed. This was true, but two other Physicians have been appointed since. You see how much I may depend upon the Friendship of this Gentleman" (Letters, p. 108). Confronted by a similar experience, Peregrine recognizes the means by which he can extricate himself from this situation, attacking both that section of the aristocracy centred around the court, and party politics. "He curs'd", says Smollett, "the whole chain of his court connexions, [and] inveighed with great animosity against the rascally scheme of politicks, to which he was sacrificed" (p. 615). For almost the

first time, Peregrine begins to examine his social ambition and its consequences, but although he "seriously reflected upon the uncertainty of human affairs" and on his own "folly and extravagance", he is unable to free himself of the perverted moral and social values he has adopted. As Smollett commented on his hero much earlier in the novel: "No man was more capable of moralizing upon Peregrine's misconduct than himself; his reflections were extremely just and sagacious, and attended with no other disadvantage, but that of occurring too late" (p. 217). Never is that remark more apt than at this juncture; now Peregrine is too close to total ruin to do other than become a minister's dependent, part of a chain of corruption centred around the court. In the hero's predicament we see Smollett's view of the fate of British society as it continues to reject traditional moral values in favour of the economic (and, for Smollett, corrupt) values of the bourgeoisie. It is a view by no means unique to Smollett; in the Epistle to Bathurst, Pope writes pessimistically:

> 'At length Corruption, like a gen'ral flood,
> (So long by watchful Ministers withstood)
> Shall deluge all; and Av'rice creeping on,
> Spread like a low-born mist, and blot the Sun'
> (11. 137-41).

Already in Peregrine Pickle, Smollett has intimated what Britain may be like as its life continues to be based increasingly on the court-based aristocracy, and less on the land-based gentry. Using France as an example of a corrupt political system centring on monarch and court, Smollett has a French gentleman

relate that "he was in possession of a most romantic place in one of the provinces, and deeply enamoured of a country life; and yet he durst not reside upon his own estate, lest by slackening in his attendance upon the great, who honoured him with their protection, he should fall a prey to some rapacious intendant" (p. 211). Like Pope, who wrote "In Moderation placing all my Glory/While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory",[14] Smollett on several occasions protested his political independence,[15] but in his explicit opposition of court and country, he is writing very much in the tradition of those Tories who were thrust into opposition at the succession of the Hanoverians and the acendancy of the Whigs after 1714, and whose view of society is, as we have seen, best expressed by Lord Bolingbroke. In his On the Policy of the Athenians, Bolingbroke compares contemporary society to the Athens of Pericles, who, he writes:

> by the licentious distribution of bribes and bounties amongst the people, soon extinguished all sentiments of their former honesty and love of their country...[even among] the best families in Athens, and soon made them so necessitous, that forgetting their ancient honors and the dignity of their birth, they were not ashamed to become the known pensioners of Pericles, living in as abject a dependence upon him as the meanest of the people.
>
> Thus was universal corruption spread over the whole state.[16]

By his dependence on the minister, Peregrine is losing

his self-respect and revealing an attachment to wealth *per se* (rather than using it as a means of consolidating his social position as a country landowner), and adding to the corruption of the society to which he belongs. Both Bolingbroke and Smollett emphasize the connection between such corruption and other abuses supposedly characteristic of the age - a surfeit of vice and general extravagance, for instance. The former's attack, in *The Idea of a Patriot King*, on those concerned with "the acquisition of wealth to satisfy avarice, and of titles and ribands to satisfy vanity"[17] might seem peculiarly appropriate if applied to Peregrine at this stage of the novel. Similarly, Smollett's description in his *History*, of Britain in 1751 (the year of the publication of *Peregrine Pickle*), perfectly describes the world inhabited by his hero; the author speaks of "crimes, arising from the profligacy of individuals, which reflected disgrace upon the morals and polity of the nation...[which] exhibited a most amazing jumble of virtue and vice, honour and infamy, compassion and obduracy, sentiment and brutality" (*Continuation*, iii, pp. 317-8).

In Peregrine's dependence on the minister, we see most clearly the contrast between his exaggerated social ambition and his social and moral decline. The remainder of the novel, until the hero's liberation from prison, has two major concerns: one, with the reflections on the extent of his fall - a recognition of the chaos of the picaresque world, the other, with his ultimate realization of the responsibilities attendant on his social position. The former point - though important - may be dealt with briefly. In *Lazarillo de*

Tormes, as we have already noticed, the eponymous narrator comments on "how awful it is to fall if you are highly placed" (Lazarillo, p. 28). There is no better illustration of the truth of that sentiment for Peregrine than in Smollett's description of him in jail; Peregrine "waked to all the horrors of reflection. All the glory of his youth was now eclipsed, all the blossoms of his hope were blasted, and he saw himself doomed to the miseries of a jail, without the least prospect of enlargement" (p. 678). Of the hero's final acceptance of his moral and social responsibilities, more must be said, and it is to the part which Peregrine's relationships with Emilia and Pipes play in this acceptance, that we now turn.

We have previously considered Smollett's use of Roderick's relationship with Narcissa as a means of revealing to the hero his need for moral stability, and in Peregrine Pickle, he uses a similar technique. In the character of Peregrine, Smollett shows the moral instability of the urban aristocracy, and in the hero's relationship with Emilia, we see not only the extent of his corruption and the folly of his ambition, but also his final acceptance of a traditional morality.

When first introducing Emilia, Smollett describes her in the same conventional and idealized terms that he has previously used in his portrait of Narcissa, a picture which, as we have noted, greatly resembles that of Daraja in Guzmán de Alfarache. But though Emilia's beauty is similar to Narcissa's, her social position in relation to that of her admirer, is very

different. When Roderick first meets Narcissa, he is acting as servant to her, and only his ambition to regain his position as a gentleman enables him to marry her at the end of the novel. In complete contrast, Peregrine's ambition - deriving from a mistaken sense of social superiority - nearly destroys his attachment to Emilia, which, as Smollett comments, "was stronger than he himself imagined" (p. 380). The author reveals his hero's pride - cause of both his ambition and vanity - in relation to Emilia very soon after Peregrine has declared his love, when he learns that she is "without any visible dependance, except on her own conduct and qualifications" (p. 97). In fact, as Mrs. Gauntlet later stresses, Emilia is "no upstart, without friends or education, but a young lady as well bred, and better born, than most private gentlewomen in the kingdom" (p. 421), but this is not how Peregrine sees her. We learn that the account of Emilia's position "alarmed his pride; for his warm imagination had exaggerated all his own prospects; and he began to fear, that his passion for Emilia might be thought to derogate from the dignity of his situation" (p. 97). Although for the moment, the struggle between the hero's interest and love is resolved in favour of the latter, his pride has not gone unnoticed by Emilia. When Peregrine declares his love for her, she declines to reciprocate because she sees beneath his outward tenderness, a levity of pride which she dares not trust with a similar declaration. In the course of events, it is a wise decision, for although at the hero's second meeting with Emily, the sight of her "rivetted the chains of his slavery, beyond

the power of accident to untie", Peregrine takes a long time to discover the fact, and (to an even greater extent than Roderick's) his subsequent progress reflects the misguided subservience of his love to ambition and to the mercenary motives which characterize the urban aristocracy.

During Peregrine's stay in France, Smollett implicitly criticizes his hero's conduct to Emilia on a number of occasions. Despite the "vows of eternal fidelity" he makes to her in a letter written at Dover, Peregrine gets no further than Calais before attempting the seduction of Mrs. Hornbeck, and his subsequent progress through Europe contains numerous amorous intrigues. That Smollett is criticizing his hero (though this criticism is never overt) is evident in his ironic juxtaposition of Peregrine's successful seduction of Mrs. Hornbeck and his writing of a letter to Emilia from Paris, in which he "repeated all his former vows of constancy and love" (p. 204). Even more morally reprehensible is the change which excessive ambition works in Peregrine's love for Emilia. We have noticed how he aspires to "some distinguished inamorata", and at the end of his stay in Paris, this aspiration is even more important to him. When he receives a note from Emilia, "his imagination was engrossed by conquests that more agreeably flattered his ambition... and his vanity had, by this time, disapproved of the engagement he had contracted in the rawness and inexperience of youth; suggesting, that he was born to make such an important figure in life, as ought to raise his ideas above the consideration of any such middling connections, and fix his attention upon objects

of the most sublime attraction" (pp. 217-8). As in Roderick Random, Smollett uses frequent repetition to emphasize the importance of this attitude to his hero, and on Peregrine's return from the continent, he writes: "Tho' he was deeply enamoured of Miss Gauntlet, he was far from proposing her heart as the ultimate aim of his gallantry, which (he did not doubt) would triumph o'er the most illustrious females of the land, and at once regale his appetite and ambition" (p. 353). In London, this ambition knows no bounds, and Peregrine couples his extravagance with an explicit reliance on mercenary motives. Smollett comments that his hero "imagined himself sufficiently qualified to retrieve his fortune in various shapes, long before he could have any idea of want or difficulty. He thought he should have it in his power, at any time, to make prize of a rich heiress, or opulent widow; his ambition had already aspired to the heart of a young handsome duchess dowager" (p. 397). As we have seen previously, in Roderick Random, marriage made solely for financial motives is - for Smollett - a prime example of the ascendancy of bourgeois values, and as such a target for criticism. In our discussion of Smollett's first novel, we suggested, alongside his general dislike of any relationship based on financial values, some possible personal reasons for the author's insistence on the moral importance of marrying for love and not for money. In fact (and Smollett makes it especially apparent in Peregrine Pickle), marriage had become, during the course of the eighteenth century, more financially motivated than hitherto, with newspapers carrying advertisements for marriage partners, which

openly stipulated the amount of dowry required. Steele revealed the innovatory nature of this situation when he wrote, in 1711, in The Tatler, that "the Marriage-Settlements which are now used have grown fashionable even within...Memory".[18] When the bourgeois values underlying such settlements are seen to have infected the behaviour of the aristocracy, then they are obvious targets for Smollett's attack, and his description of Peregrine's search for a wealthy wife gives credit to Steele's declaration, again in The Tatler, that "a fine Woman, who has also a Fortune, is set up by Way of Auction".[19] Roderick's aspirations to marriage with an heiress are condemned as immoral and contrasted with the marriage for love of Don Rodrigo, and later with the hero's own union with Narcissa. Similarly, in Peregrine Pickle, Smollett describes both the love-less, financially motivated marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Gamaliel Pickle and the love-match of Godfrey and Sophy. There is, moreover, a further obvious contrast in the account of the two marriages of Lady V——, whose interpolated memoirs reinforce many of the novel's values. Though the hero is aware of these differences, however, it is only at the very end of the novel that he realizes his own need of personal relationships, and the importance of basing them on moral, and not financial, ties.

Smollett's account of Peregrine's relationship with Emilia makes the connection between social and moral values increasingly apparent. We have already seen the effects of the hero's exaggerated sense of social superiority in his sexual treatment of other women. Those whom he regards as his social inferiors,

he considers legitimate targets for seduction, whether they are local women living in the vicinity of the Garison, Mrs. Hornbeck or any of a number of women who attract him in France. As Peregrine's social ambition increases, so his moral values become more distorted, and he begins to consider even Emilia in the same terms as his earlier conquests. Smollett first makes the link explicit when he remarks that Peregrine's "ridiculous pride had almost effaced the remembrance of his amiable mistress, or at least so far warped his morals and integrity, that he actually began to conceive hopes of her altogether unworthy of his own character and her deserts" (p. 218). Unworthy as his hopes may be, they begin to obsess his thoughts concerning Emilia, and on his return to England, Peregrine decides "that his passion would be prejudicial to the dignity of his situation, if it could not be gratified upon terms which formerly his imagination durst not conceive" (p. 353). In Peregrine's behaviour towards Emilia, Smollett reveals many of the faults of urban society. We have previously seen that the deceptive nature of appearance is one among several features which combine in the novel to give rise to the picaresque sense of chaos, as it does in Roderick Random. Like Roderick, Peregrine participates in this dishonesty, in his attempts to seduce Emilia; we see hypocrisy in his pæan to trade - delivered for the benefit of Emilia's uncle - and by means of Smollett's careful use of language in the hero's encounter with Emilia at the theatre, when he advances "with an air of eagerness and joy, tempered with modesty and respect, and expressed his satisfaction

at seeing her, with a seeming reverence of regard" (p. 398; my emphases). Most damaging in its effect on Peregrine, however, is his preoccupation with money, and his growing belief in its power to override moral considerations. In an effort to forestall the hero's final attempt at seduction, Emilia mentions marriage to Peregrine; his answer is to reject it as "vulgar fetters" and offers in its place bank-notes for two thousand pounds. It is an act which, by Smollett's values as we see them throughout the novel, reveals - in Peregrine's reliance on financial rather than moral motives - a complete victory of bourgeois values over the traditional values of the gentry.[20]

This is the nadir of Peregrine's moral decline; during the remainder of the novel he comes slowly to understand his moral irresponsibility, and begins the process of improving his conduct. Morally, the biggest stumbling block to his reformation remains his pride. Even after his attempted rape of Emilia, he is "too confident of his own qualifications and address to despair of forgiveness" (p. 410), but this vanity is accompanied by a dim recognition of his error in treating Emilia as a social inferior. During the illness subsequent to the attempted rape, Peregrine, "revolving all the circumstances of her conduct, found it so commendable, spirited, and noble, that he deemed her an object of sufficient dignity to merit his honourable addresses, even though his duty had not been concerned in the decision" (pp. 419-20). Such a comment - arrogant as it is - does, nevertheless, reveal that Peregrine can at last see that qualities other than those of wealth and social rank are important.

Initially, however, it is still far easier for Peregrine to see faults in others which he fails to recognize in himself. Thus, when Emilia will not immediately accept him as a husband, he protests at the "cruelty of her unjustifiable pride".

As an increasing disregard for moral values accompanies Peregrine's social ambition, so a growing appreciation of his need for personal relationships divorced from any financial consideration accompanies the steady loss of his fortune. Accidentally meeting Sophy in London, the hero "felt strange longings of returning friendship towards Godfrey; and the remembrance of Emilia melted his heart" (p. 620). As is the case with Roderick and Narcissa, the relationship between Peregrine and Emilia is important in turning the attention of the hero away (albeit slowly) from his economic preoccupations and back to moral ones - the latter expressed primarily in his desire for marriage. Unlike Roderick, however, Peregrine has, by his disregard for moral values, estranged himself from the object of his love, and so though he speaks of Emilia, while he is in prison, with awe, as the object of his inviolable love and veneration, he disclaims all hope of regaining her regard. Even when convinced that she still loves him, Peregrine cannot accept Emilia as his wife, because he has lost his fortune. In part, this behaviour of Peregrine is consistent with the character that Smollett has given him throughout the novel; his pride is tempered, but not completely broken. More importantly, it reveals the hero's changed attitude towards money. Wealth is not unimportant, but it must be used correctly. Roderick realizes this

when he declines Narcissa's offer to marry him regardless of fortune, and Peregrine similarly refuses to propose anything which might "interfere with the interest of Emilia".

Both of Peregrine's twin concerns - moral and social - are linked to his relationship with Emilia. In his rejection of her for reasons of social and financial ambition, the hero displays a moral degeneracy which, Smollett suggests, is a natural feature of a society whose values are predominantly economic. By finally recognizing the paramount importance of his love for Emilia, Peregrine is able to reject the extravagance and cupidity which are the hallmarks of an urban aristocracy corrupted by bourgeois values. Instead, he can find the happiness he seeks by conscientiously fulfilling his role as a country landowner.

The social values of Roderick Random are largely revealed in the hero's relationship with Strap, and Peregrine Pickle follows a similar pattern in displaying those values in Peregrine's relationship with Tom Pipes. In both novels the social values advocated by Smollett as bases for a healthy society are the traditional ones of a land-based gentry. The social distance between Peregrine and Pipes is even greater and more obvious than that between Roderick and Hugh, as the language of the book reveals. Pipes is always the "faithful valet", the "trusty squire" or the "faithful adherent" (fidelity and subservience are his characteristics), whilst Peregrine remains the "young master". But, as in Smollett's first novel, it is the servant who, of

his own choice, lives by traditional values founded in the mutual dependence of different social classes. Like Strap, Pipes - particularly at the end of the novel - provides the hero with his only contact with an apparently lost social stability, and it is through him that Peregrine comes to understand those values which eventually regulate his own behaviour.

In the first part of Peregrine Pickle, it is the difference in attitude between master and servant which is remarkable, for whilst the latter recognizes his rightful social position and is happy in it, the former allows his happiness to be destroyed by excessive ambition. Pipes' attachment to Peregrine stems not only from a sense of duty, but also from love for him; a fact evident from his reaction on the latter's return from school to the Garison: "Tom Pipes expressed uncommon satisfaction on this joyful occasion; and coming up to Perry, thrust forth his forepaw, and accosted him with the salutation of 'What chear, my young master? I am glad to see thee with all my heart'" (p. 63), and when Peregrine sets off for Winchester, "Tom Pipes, in consequence of his own petition, [was] put into livery, and appointed footman to the young squire" (p. 78). The hero's behaviour to his servant is, at times, less admirable, and when planning his Tour, he ignore's Tom's inviolable attachment to him. Peregrine needs a servant, but, we read, "Pipes being ignorant of the French language, as well as otherwise unfit for the office of a fashionable attendant, it was resolved that he should remain in garison; and his place was immediately supplied by a Parisian lacquey engaged at London for that purpose" (p. 165). This

early indication that Peregrine does not appreciate the value of Pipes is followed by Smollett's revelation that his hero has scarcely begun to understand his responsibility towards Tom. When Pipes reappears to save the ship on which Peregrine is sailing to France, the latter promises "to take him again into his service, from which he should never be dismissed, except by his own desire" (p. 187). In fact, despite the loyalty Pipes displays - even, at times risking personal injury for his master - Peregrine peremptorily dismisses him in France, refusing to reinstate him even when asked to do so by Jolter, Pallet, the physician, and the Chevalier whom Tom is supposed to have offended. Like Strap in Smollett's first novel, Pipes reappears when the hero has most need of him, saving him from castration. Tom displays, moreover, not merely loyalty and a lack of rancour about the treatment he has received, but a genuine and generous disinterestedness which Peregrine - at this point in the novel - does not really understand. "Here am I", says Pipes, "without hope of fee or reward, ready to stand by you as long as my timbers will stick together; and if I expect any recompence, may I be bound to eat oakum and drink bilge-water for life" (p. 317). It is not without irony on Smollett's part that Peregrine, in thanking Tom for his help, assures him in words very similar to those of his last broken promise, "that it should be his own fault if ever they should part again" (pp. 317-8).

Though Smollett emphasizes the importance of Pipes to Peregrine, the influence of urban society causes a deterioration in the hero's conduct towards

all about him - including Tom - which not even the dying commodore's injunctions can prevent, and at one point he comes perilously close to killing his servant. Peregrine's remorse completely precludes the possibility of similar behaviour in the future, but it is evident that he is no closer to understanding the relationship between Pipes and himself. Even before his hero's journey to France, Smollett has introduced this theme into his novel, a theme which culminates only in the Fleet, when Peregrine eventually learns the reciprocal nature of the links binding all human relationships - both personal and social. When Tom saves Sophy from a fire at an inn, she rewards him with a gift of money for purchase of a periwig. Smollett writes that "Tom having consulted his master's eyes, refused the present", whilst Peregrine "begged that Miss Sophy would not endeavour to debauch the morals of his servant...because he himself had such a particular value for the fellow, on account of his attachment and fidelity, that he should be sorry to see him treated on the footing of a common mercenary domestick" (p. 146). Smollett attacks the more general corruption engendered by a dependence on bribes or financial rewards of any kind in both his first novels. In Roderick Random, he specifically attacks those members of the aristocracy who, like Lord Strutwell, allow, or even force, their servants to demand such payment from visitors in return for the privilege of being allowed to enter. In the episode cited above, Peregrine evidently recognizes the undesirability of encouraging such behaviour, but his sentiments at this juncture form an ironic contrast with his own conduct

later in the novel. Not only does he lose sight of the fact that Tom's attachment to him is far more important to his servant than any hope of financial gain, but in numerous episodes he actively participates in spreading corruption by bribing the servants of others; indeed it is only half-way through the novel, when endeavouring to bribe a nun, that "for the first time, he found the art of corruption ineffectual" (p. 327).

When, in the course of the novel, Peregrine (like Roderick) comes increasingly under the influence of bourgeois values and shows himself preoccupied with money per se, it is left to Pipes (as it was to Strap) to demonstrate the relative unimportance of economic motives in social relationships. Destitute in the Fleet, the hero reveals both his attachment to Tom and his complete ignorance of the ties which bind them. When Pipes arrives at the prison offering to share all the money he possesses with Peregrine, Smollett suggests - by means of the latter's reply - his hero's total incomprehension of the values underlying the traditional society of the gentry. We read that Peregrine,

> being very much affected with this fresh instance of his attachment, expressed his satisfaction at seeing he had been such a good œconomist, paid his wages up to that very day, thanked him for his faithful services, and, observing that he himself was no longer in a condition to maintain a domestick, advised him to retire to the garison (p. 683).

There is no clearer indication of the social values of the novel as a whole than in Pipes' reply to Peregrine in which he reveals his own instinctive understanding of, and loyalty to, the values of a hierarchical society, whilst explicitly rejecting the mercenary, bourgeois values to which his master has, for so long, paid allegiance.

> Pipes looked blank at this unexpected intimation, to which he replied, that he wanted neither pay nor provision, but only to be employed as a tender; and that he would not steer his course for the garison, unless his master would first take his lumber aboard. Pickle, however, peremptorily refused to touch a farthing of the money, which he commanded him to put up; and Pipes was so mortified at his refusal, that, twisting the notes together, he threw them into the fire without hesitation, crying, 'Damn the money!' (p. 683).

Although Peregrine allows Tom to leave, his subsequent response indicates a first step towards an eventual understanding of his own social role. Smollett indicates, however, that - as so often - his hero is able to see in others what he cannot recognize in himself. The story of a doctor who is discovered to be a Spanish grandee, which Peregrine relates to his fellow-prisoners, is an obvious reflection of the hero's own relations with Pipes, Hatchway and Godfrey. In the story, the surgeon's wife, on learning of her husband's true rank, fears that he will now wish to leave her; Peregrine concludes his account by remarking that the

doctor "immediately dispelled her apprehension, by assuring her, that as she had shared in his adversity, she should also partake of his good fortune" (p. 735). Though the application of this tale to its teller may be obvious to the reader, it is left to Jack Hatchway to make the connection directly, when - having informed Godfrey of the hero's role in obtaining his commissions - he says of the hero: "but a'wool drive under his bare poles, without sails and rigging, or a mess of provision on board, rather than take the same assistance from another man" (p. 750). Smollett's concern with both social and moral values is most apparent when, as here, he links the two. Peregrine must learn to recognize the element of mutual dependence in his relationships with Pipes and with his friends, Hatchway and Gauntlet. In genuinely meeting his responsibilities towards Tom, Peregrine must see that social relationships - insofar as they promote the common good - do not depend on economic, but on moral ties. In personal relationships - of increasing importance to the hero at the end of the novel - he must similarly accept the importance of mutual dependence. In the past, Peregrine's own generosity has been accompanied by a stubborn and foolish pride which has precluded his acceptance of help even as "a genuine tribute of friendship". Indeed, he has already rejected Hatchway's offer of financial aid, "for he could not bear the thought of being so notoriously obliged by any person upon earth" (p. 741). The hero's conquest of his pride, which results in a complete reappraisal of both social and personal relationships, is no easy task, and its accomplishment marks the resolution of those difficulties which bar

the way to Peregrine's attainment of happiness. It is a crucial moment in the novel, and Smollett ensures that not only Hatchway and Pipes, but also the hero and the reader, understand its importance:

> Peregrine taking [Jack] cordially by the hand, seated him upon one side of his bed; and after having made an apology for that reserve, of which he had so justly complained, asked, if he could conveniently accommodate him with the loan of twenty guineas. The lieutenant, without opening his mouth, pulled out his purse; and Pipes, who overheard the demand, applying the whistle to his lips, performed a loud overture, in token of his joy (p. 755).

Pipes' role is essentially complete at this point (and he scarcely reappears in the last pages of the novel) but his part has been an important one. Not only does his strong attachment to Peregrine, and to traditional social values, give the reader grounds for optimism that Pickle will eventually accept his rightful social position and its attendant responsibilities, but it is by means of their relationship that the hero learns to do so.

By adopting the life of a country gentleman at the end of Smollett's first novel, Roderick is consciously rejecting bourgeois values; by his similar choice, Peregrine is not only rejecting these values, but also those of the urban aristocracy. Smollett has already hinted at the hero's return to his father's estate in the last pages of Peregrine Pickle, by means

of a revêrie in which Peregrine's moral and social concerns are united, and where he dreams of "pastoral felicity, in the arms of the lovely Emilia, remote from those pompous scenes, which he now detested and despised" (p. 758). The social emphasis is clear, but the rural idyll described here is still self-indulgent, suggesting the retirement envisaged by Pope in the Imitations of Horace rather than the socially orientated life of the country landowner posited in the Moral Essays. It is a view which, by the end of the novel, Peregrine has altered considerably. There he retires to his father's estate, respected by his neighbours and - as Smollett shows on several occasions - loved by his tenants, whose favourite he has always been; a situation very similar to that which Pope describes approvingly in the Epistle to Burlington -

> His Father's Acres who enjoys in peace,
> Or makes his Neighbours glad, if he encrease;
> Whose chearful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
> Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil (ll. 181-4)

with the social role of the landowner being made even more explicit by the suggestion that Peregrine should offer himself as a member of parliament for the county. The hero's own view of the aim of society has, in fact, already been articulated and is very close to that of Bolingbroke. In The Idea of a Patriot King, the latter suggests that "our happiness [is] dependent upon society; and the happiness of society dependent on good or bad government",[21] and later that "The good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government".[22] In discussing the Annesley case, Peregrine also speaks of society: "the sole end of which

is, to protect the rights, redress the grievances, and promote the happiness of individuals" (p. 732). It is precisely to pursue this end, suggests Smollett, that the land-based gentry (among whom we must now count Peregrine) exist as a social class.

Like Bolingbroke and Pope, Smollett considered himself above faction and party strife. With them, and others attached closely or loosely to the ideals of the country party, Smollett shared the attitude that faction derived from the assiduous pursuit of their own financial interests by the Whig administration or court party (consider, for example, Pope's simple division of politicians into "Courtiers and Patriots" in The Dunciad[23]). Although his own idealized view of the past - of an organic society - remains a defence of the privileges of landownership, and - by implication - of a Tory political ascendancy, Smollett did not see it as such; rather he considered it a defence of a society based on moral values rather than financial ones. In Peregrine Pickle, whilst retaining the picaresque novel form as an effective, and peculiarly apposite, means of revealing the moral and social disorder he saw in contemporary Britain, he alters the emphasis of his attack away from the bourgeoisie (unlike Roderick, Peregrine is, for most of the novel, in no danger of losing his status as a gentleman) and on to the urban aristocracy, who, in defence of their own interests, have adopted bourgeois values and standards. It is this more acute analysis of the source of the dangers facing the traditional land-based society in which he believed, which marks the greatest advance, in social terms, of

Peregrine Pickle over Roderick Random. In probing more deeply into the analysis of character, particularly in his characterization of the hero, Smollett evidently feels more sure of his own ability, and denies Peregrine the overt sympathy Roderick gains both by first-person narration, and by the general affliction he suffers from a largely external disorder. This latter feature is certainly not lacking in Peregrine Pickle, but it is in the disorder created by the hero's own social ambition and moral wayward-ness that Smollett shows us most forcefully his vision of the unstable and unhappy society he fears will result if, in the conflict between court and country, the former should finally triumph over the latter.

4: "Ferdinand Count Fathom" and "Sir Launcelot Greaves"

An understanding of the importance of Smollett's conservative social vision - of a rigid, hierarchical system based on land ownership - is fundamental to a full appreciation of both *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, and we have noted Smollett's success in adapting the picaresque novel form to express a major social dilemma of the eighteenth century. Both works are much more than social documents, however, and we have also seen that both are - in their different ways - very successful *gua* novels. The former, with its fluent narration, entertains with its wealth of minor characters, and is convincing in its portrayal of location and of its central figure's move towards both moral and social self-awareness. The latter is equally enjoyable for its rapid succession of incident, but the length of the work tends to make Smollett repetitious and *Peregrine Pickle* lacks its predecessor's merit of adding appreciably to our knowledge of the hero, or the world he inhabits, with every event. The question of length arises particularly in relation to the interpolated "Memoirs" of Lady V——, which though thematically relevant in their portrayal of the immorality of the aristocracy, and in their frequent application to Peregrine himself, create a disturbing imbalance in the work as a whole. *Peregrine Pickle* does, however, mark a considerable advance over *Roderick Random* in its working out of both personal, moral problems and of communal, social problems, in terms of individual character - in this case, that of Peregrine - rather

than more simply in the conflict between the hero and his world. Smollett's added confidence in his creative ability extends to other aspects of the work, and whereas Roderick and Strap exist almost alone as developed characters (Gawky, Mackshane, Oakum or Morgan are little more than sketches - albeit revealing ones), Peregrine Pickle produces not only the hero, but also Pipes, Hatchway, Cadwallader Crabtree and one of the most memorable figures in all eighteenth century fiction - Hawser Trunnion. Most importantly for our present purposes, however, Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle reveal a consistent, though developing, social vision which Smollett makes centrally important to both works. In looking at Ferdinand Count Fathom and Launcelot Greaves, we shall find that the same view of society is also common to these novels. If both are weaker than their predecessors, it is (as we shall see) because of Smollett's failure to articulate his vision successfully in the different forms of the novel which he attempts.

There are excellent reasons for Smollett's move away from the picaresque novel form after Peregrine Pickle. We have noticed that whilst consistent in spirit, that novel marks a departure from the typical novela picaresca, in terms of the hero's rank and the environment in which he moves, and it is not unreasonable to assume that Smollett had recognized the limitations on what he could profitably say afresh in that form. In this he was most probably influenced by his close knowledge of Gil Blas which Le Sage published in three stages (in 1715, 1724 and 1735), each part revealing a lower level of inspiration. This falling-

off was not due to any decline in Le Sage's ability, but to the consolidation of Gil's social position (we see him throughout the last part of the novel as an established and respectable gentleman), which proves stultifying for the picaresque novel. Smollett, having portrayed the social pressures being exerted both from below and from above on the landed gentry in the eighteenth century, cast around for a new and congenial form for his ideas (although he did not find it until Humphry Clinker), in order that his work might not suffer the fate of Gil Blas, nor the social criticism it contains lose its incisiveness.

Ferdinand Count Fathom and Launcelot Greaves have, however, never enjoyed the popularity, nor received the critical acclaim awarded to Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle or Humphry Clinker. The former, published in 1753, has been damned for - amongst other things - its cardboard characters, the banality of its conclusion and its lack of a moral structure,[1] whilst the latter, which appeared serially in the British Magazine throughout 1760 and 1761, has not only been subjected to similar criticism of its characters but has continually suffered from the inevitable comparison with its model, Don Quixote.[2] The antithetical natures of the works' eponymous central characters have - quite naturally - led some critics to consider them in opposition, and to concentrate on the clash between Good and Evil discernible both in the individual novels, and as suggested in the contrasting natures and motives of Launcelot and Ferdinand respectively. Such an approach - despite the eight year gap which separates the publication dates of the works - is both valid and

useful, but unnecessarily limiting if regarded - as so often - simply as a moral conflict. Moral values in Smollett's novels are - as we have seen in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle - closely linked to social ones, and by examining the latter, we gain an insight into both the strengths and limitations of the novelist's approach to his fiction.

The emphasis on the clash between Good and Evil in social terms is important, for even P-G Boucé, whose approach to both Ferdinand Count Fathom and Launcelot Greaves is as rewarding as any, and who sees the conflict as existing on a triple level - individual, social and metaphysical - treats the social dimension least satisfactorily. The failure to recognize the crucial importance of social criticism in Ferdinand Count Fathom is due, at least in part, to a disproportionate interest in Smollett's use of the novel form, which critics have seen both as a conscious attempt at experiment,[3] and as a failed imitation of Fielding's ironic style in Jonathan Wild.[4]

Smollett's attempt to define "a Novel" certainly suggests that we face a new consciousness on the part of the author about the nature of his own prose fiction; in fact, the given definition[5] applies far more closely to Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle than to Fathom, for the "principal personage" who attracts the reader's attention, unites the incidents and at last closes the scene "by virtue of his own importance", does not exist in the novel - at least, not in the form such a remark would suggest. Ferdinand, the "principal personage" of the first fifty-six chapters, disappears almost completely during the next eleven (for a total of 85 pages

out of 367[6]), reappearing only in a position subordinate to that of Renaldo, and it is the latter who "unwinds the clue of the labyrinth" and closes the scene. This is an important deviation from Smollett's apparent conception of his work, and the reasons for it derive entirely from his particular view of society, which underlies his third novel as surely as it does his first two.

The decision to make Fathom, "from the purlieus of treachery and fraud" (p. 3), the first principal character in fact represents a far less radical break with Smollett's earlier fiction than it might at first seem, for in every essential respect, Ferdinand's character and social situation are simple inversions of those of Roderick or Peregrine, and whilst the novel's viewpoint alters, its values remain identical. If this reversal of viewpoint in Fathom is considered as an experiment on the part of the author, it must also be seen as a failed one. The increased importance latterly attached in the novel to the colourless Renaldo, whose function - like that of Roderick or Peregrine - is to embody the work's positive values, is an implicit admission of this fact. It might perhaps be argued that at times - and in important ways - Ferdinand's behaviour is itself little different from that of Roderick or, particularly, Peregrine - in his deceit, trickery or pursuit of wealth for its own sake, for example - but Ferdinand is not, pace Robert Spector's submission,[7] a picaresque hero, for he at no time commands the reader's sympathies and such disorder as exists in the novel is in large part of his own intentional creation. Moreover, both Roderick and

Peregrine display not only the negative side of their natures, but also positive aspects - in their humanity and generosity, for instance - whilst Ferdinand reveals only a persistent and wilful inhumanity. The difference in our perception of the novels' central characters is due, in part, to the natures of their actions, and in large measure to the different narrative techniques which Smollett uses. In contrast to Roderick's relation of his own adventures and the sympathetic third-person narration in Peregrine Pickle, we find, in Fathom, a narrator who frequently inserts his own moral commentary into the main body of the novel. Thus Ferdinand is "crafty", "chicken-hearted", a "betrayer" and a "consummate traitor", and after the supposed death of Monimia, we find a comment: "Perfidious wretch! thy crimes turn out so atrocious, that I half repent me of having undertaken to record they memoirs" (p. 242), the like of which would be unthinkable in Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle, even, for example, at the lowest point of Peregrine's moral decline - his attempted rape of Emilia.

In the direct and rigid opposition of Ferdinand and Renaldo lies the major weakness of the novel. With one leading figure almost completely evil (Smollett repeatedly presents Ferdinand in demonic terms) and the other near perfect (the author suggests a parallel with the chivalrous nature of Don Quixote), Smollett is able to point to the moral of the whole without revealing that development of the hero's character, within a moral and social framework, which strengthens both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle. Smollett, in fact, could profitably have studied Fielding's

declaration in Jonathan Wild, that "Nature is seldom so kind as those writers who draw characters absolutely perfect. She seldom creates any man so completely great, or completely low, but that some sparks of humanity will glimmer in the former, and some sparks of...evil will dart forth in the latter".[8] Although we do not need to see the novel as a failed attempt to imitate Fielding, it remains true that had Smollett had the desire (or the ability) to treat Ferdinand with the irony which Fielding displays towards Jonathan Wild, or that with which Defoe describes Moll Flanders (an irony which at times does fiercely illuminate Fathom's character), he would have obviated the need for the eminently forgettable Renaldo, and the book's moral achievement would have been much greater. In fact, whilst the conclusions of the earlier novels can be seen as consistent with Smollett's given moral concepts (however simple these may be), that of Fathom is completely unacceptable in moral terms. It can only be justified in relation to Ferdinand's final acceptance of a traditional social system, and of his own place within it, revealing once more the importance of Smollett's view of society to his fiction.

We cannot view Launcelot Greaves in such clear terms as Ferdinand Count Fathom, and of Smollett's first four novels, its presentation of the author's social vision is the least easily defined and, perhaps as a result of Smollett's work on his Complete History of England, one which moves, albeit hesitantly, towards the more complex and balanced view of Humphry Clinker. More importantly, however, that view is also the cause

of a tension between the work's philosophical and satiric intentions which results in the novel's relative failure.

Although we are not able to discern with complete accuracy Smollett's reasons for choosing to write a quixotic novel, several points are quite clear. Firstly, his involvement with the translation of Cervantes' masterpiece - published in 1755 and receiving a second edition in 1761 - must have suggested the idea to him as a possibility. Secondly, and with the serial, magazine nature of publication in mind, the evident popularity of such works must have been a real incentive; besides the numerous editions of Don Quixote in the eighteenth century, other authors - Charlotte Lennox (The Female Quixote, 1752) and Richard Graves (The Spiritual Quixote, 1773) - also wrote contemporary variations on the theme. Finally, and in the event, unfortunately, Smollett was also attracted by the philosophical issues raised by Cervantes.[9] Madness and sanity, illusion and reality are areas dealt with by both Cervantes and Smollett, though in comparison the latter only skirts their problems; but Cervantes, in his portrayal of Quixote, is also concerned with the conflict between intention and achievement, whilst Smollett, although at times suggesting himself aware of the problems, is ultimately unable to take the detached view of Launcelot necessary in such a situation. In simple terms, the problem is this: whilst Don Quixote's ideals are right - giants and pagan armies should be defeated, captive princesses should be rescued - his perception of reality (and hence his achievement) is defective, and, in consequence, he

suffers defeat at the hands (or arms) of windmills, shepherds and monks, and dies, finally, disillusioned. It is Smollett's social vision, and particularly his preoccupation with the values of the landed gentry, which make him, having first raised the problem of perception of reality in relation to his hero, ultimately avoid it. Though the social and political values of the novel are presented by more than one character, they are too closely related to Launcelot himself for the knight to become anything other than a conventional hero - an embodiment of Good, as Ferdinand is an embodiment of Evil, or for anything but a conventional ending - one which owes much to Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle and Renaldo's triumph in Ferdinand Count Fathom. The gradual weakening of the quixotic idea leads eventually to the complete abandonment of Launcelot's knight-errantry and his assumption of the single role of the country gentleman, and with the disappearance of the hero's madness, we also lose the philosophical dimension of the novel, though there is some ironic humour in Launcelot's return to sanity being promptly followed by his immurement in a madhouse. Smollett seems to be aware of this failure to reconcile the two major aspects of his novel and there is little dramatic conviction in the re-establishment of Launcelot on the family estate, whilst the multiple marriages and general forgiveness amongst the characters would fit more easily into Shakesperian comedy than they do into Smollett's fiction.

Launcelot Greaves is not without its interest, however, nor - in its presentation of social and political realities - without its very real merits,

for though the essence of Smollett's view of society remains unchanged, his method of describing it alters. In Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle and Ferdinand Count Fathom, Smollett does present the country estate in opposition to the corrupt values - moral and social - of urban life, but he is predominantly concerned with the latter; the satirist is too preoccupied with exposing the abuses of the city to give more than an idealized glimpse of what rural life actually means. If the country estate is no less idealized in Launcelot Greaves, its social and moral virtues are described in some detail. Such description is an undoubted strength of Smollett's presentation of his vision, since, in a novel whose hero suffers no real social misfortune (in terms of loss of estate or status), it provides a strong positive contrast to the (for Smollett) negative features of eighteenth century society - the detrimental effect on the nation's life of, for example, the bourgeoisie, the urban aristocracy, social mobility or party politics - which are the subject of his satire. It is by the success of this social and moral contrast (which is, to some extent, a development of the Renaldo-Fathom clash of Good and Evil) that, for all its quixotic trappings, we must eventually judge the novel.

Ferdinand Count Fathom and Launcelot Greaves are, then, complementary novels - and flawed ones. Although they share a common preoccupation with the society of eighteenth century Britain and with its defects, they approach that issue from opposing directions, and it is from the narrowness of their approach that their flaws derive. By constructing Fathom around the character

of an ambitious servant whose impulses are, for the most part, evil, Smollett gives a more pessimistic view of his society than he wishes, as his unsuccessful attempt to redress the balance with Renaldo confirms. By shying clear of the problems of a quixotic hero, in Launcelot Greaves, Smollett leaves himself with, as central character, a model landowner whose moral impulses are completely for the good, and whose achievements largely match his intentions. Neither situation is, of course, entirely desirable for a novelist, and yet if the works' flaws are complementary, so too are their virtues. In concentrating on the darker side of human nature and eighteenth century society in Ferdinand Count Fathom, Smollett leaves his readers in no doubt as to the extent and seriousness of the dilemma of the landowning class faced with its possible disintegration at a moment of flux. And, if a defence of the traditional social order be thought no more than a defence of privilege, Launcelot Greaves, with its detailed descriptions of rural life and its contrasted presentation of power in the hands of the gentry and bourgeoisie, is an excellent means of demonstrating the moral value of conservatism. How far the two novels are successful in their own right is the problem which now confronts us.

We have already seen, whilst looking at Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, Smollett's concern for a prompt and detailed description of his central characters' social positions. In Fathom, we find an account of Ferdinand's ancestry, which, though similar in its method of presentation, reveals a very different world

from that of the landed gentry - a world represented here by Renaldo, heir and eventual owner of a castle and estate in Hungary. Ferdinand's mother, one of the book's more memorable characters, is a dissolute and vicious camp-follower with Malborough's army, and the central character a bastard, fathered by an unknown private soldier. Smollett is quick to point out the contrast between the social position of Fathom and those of his earlier heroes. "This mirrour of modern chivalry", he begins, with what subsequently proves to be heavy irony, if not outright sarcasm, "was none of those who owe their dignity to the circumstances of their birth, and are consecrated from the cradle for the purposes of greatness, meerly because they are the accidental children of wealth" (p. 6). The contrast with Smollett's earlier heroes is not only one of social position, but also of moral attributes (Smollett implicitly suggests a correlation between the two), and is emphasized within the novel by the opposition of Ferdinand and Renaldo, who boast, respectively, "an amazing fund of villainy and ingratitude" and "every virtue that dignifies the human heart" (p. 40). The former, though remarkable for his deportment and vivacity is intellectually a "meer dunce", whilst Renaldo, though socially awkward, resembles Roderick or Peregrine more closely in being both intellectually and athletically superior. Ferdinand's later success in sustaining his intellectual pretensions is explicitly attributed by Smollett to a "sort of elecution, much more specious than solid" which enables him to turn "the most superficial tincture of the arts and sciences" to good effect (p. 148).

Ferdinand's place in society is comparable not to that of Roderick or Peregrine, as Smollett repeatedly emphasizes when he refers to, for example, "the defect of his pedigree", but to that of Strap or Pipes - the former comparison being closer and one which springs quickly to mind. At the moment of Ferdinand's absorption into old Count Melvil's family, the latter foresees in his future services "a fund of gratitude and attachment" (p. 16) that will make him a useful servant and Smollett remarks that in his own country (Melvil is a Scot), the count "had often seen connections of that sort, which having been planted in the infancy of the adherent, had grown up to a surprising pitch of fidelity and friendship, that no temptation could biass, and no danger dissolve" (pp. 16-7). Readers of Smollett's novels can scarcely fail to think here of the Roderick-Strap relationship, and the parallel is strengthened by Count Melvil, who considers Ferdinand as a "faithful attendant", a phrase used in Roderick Random to describe Strap.

The recognition and complete understanding of Ferdinand's social position is of the utmost importance to the reader, for the tension within the novel stems far less from the artificial moral opposition of Fathom and Renaldo than from the clash between the former's social position and his ambition. Ferdinand's social ambition is one of the most consistent features of his character throughout almost the entire novel. The obstacles to his success in this ambition are made apparent to him in Vienna. "This", writes Smollett, "was no other than the obscurity of his birth, and

the want of a title, without which no person in that country lays claim to the privileges of a gentleman" (p. 44), and when his true social rank is known, Ferdinand quickly finds himself excluded from parties to which Renaldo is invited. Fathom's nature is such, however, that he is convinced of his ability to build up a "splendid fortune" once having established himself, and he alights upon a plan of visiting Paris in order to qualify him to play "a more important part" on the British scene. During the succeeding sixty pages, Ferdinand passes himself off as a "private gentleman" (on three separate occasions), a "gentleman of family", a "man of family", the "head of a noble family of Poland", a "French gentleman" and a "gentleman of a noble house in Germany",[10] whilst "behaving with that sort of complaisance which seems to be the result of engaging condescension in a character of superior dignity and station" (p. 90), to such good effect that he is universally regarded as "a man of quality".

Social mobility is, in fact, one of the main themes of Ferdinand Count Fathom, and the novel's moral concerns are largely bound up with it. The theme is explicitly stated on a number of occasions. Even in the first chapter, the author says of Ferdinand, "and God forbid, that in the mean time, the nature of his extraction should turn to his prejudice, in a land of freedom like this, where individuals are every day ennobled in consequence of their own qualifications, without the least retrospective regard to the rank or merit of their ancestors" (p. 8). Such a remark will most probably, on first reading, pass unnoticed

or be accepted at face value. Only when the identical sentiment makes its reappearance two hundred and twenty-six pages later (a circumstance which argues well for Smollett's attention to structure) do we recognise its full ironic force. The following passage, in which the protagonist is Monimia's landlady, Mme. de la Mer, is valuable for a number of points, and is worth quoting in full:

> The defect in [Ferdinand's] birth she represented as a circumstance altogether foreign from the consideration of his merit; especially in a nation where such distinctions are as little respected as they will be in a future state. She mentioned several persons of note, who basked in the sun-shine of power and fortune, without having enjoyed the least hereditary assistance from their fore-fathers. One, she said, sprung from the loins of an obscure attorney, another was the grandson of a valet de chambre, a third was the issue of an accomptant, and a fourth the off-spring of an woolen-draper: all these were the children of their own good works, and had raised themselves upon their personal virtues and address; a foundation certainly more solid and honourable, than a vague inheritance derived from ancestors, in whose deserts they could not be supposed to have bore the least share (p. 234).

The argument presented here is immediately suspect for two reasons: firstly, it is put forward in support of an attempt at seduction, and secondly, it is so

obviously inapplicable to the villainous Fathom. Once we recognise that Ferdinand's "defect in his birth" is generously matched by his demerits, the whole passage must be viewed in a completely ironic light. Moreover, if we enquire further into the several "persons of note" mentioned, we find an interesting reflection on Smollett's own prejudices. The first three mentioned are Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, Henry Fox (Lord Holland) and Ainslabie.[11] The first, deeply involved with the Court and Treasury Whigs, owed his ennoblement to Walpole's use of patronage for party ends - an expedient much criticized by Smollett, as we have seen - and specifically to his desire to give support in the Lords to the Duke of Newcastle, Smollett's bête noire. Henry Fox (whom Smollett later attacked in The History of an Atom as Foksi-roku) was rescued financially by a clandestine marriage, after squandering his inheritance, and was recognized and feared, particularly by Newcastle, as a possible contender for the king's favour, as a prominent member of a rival Whig faction; he was also, later in 1753, to become a bitter enemy of Hardwicke. Ainslabie, meanwhile, was an ambitious but stupid Chancellor of the Exchequer, and had been deeply implicated in the South Sea Bubble, going to the Tower as a direct result. From Smollett's viewpoint, Mme. de la Mer's list is not one which, in toto, gives much support to the idea of social mobility.

The deleterious effects of Ferdinand's social ambition are made explicit from the time he is eighteen, when he endeavours, with the aid of his lover, Teresa, to ingratiate himself with his patron's daughter, in

order to marry her. In Smollett's treatment of Ferdinand's ambition in terms of marriage, we see again, as in both Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, his belief in marriage for love, and his contempt of the intrusion of mercenary motives into this area of human affairs. We are in no doubt as to where Fathom stands, for there is no mention of love for Renaldo's sister, but he "foresaw manifold advantages to himself, in becoming son in law to count Melvil, who, he never doubted, would soon be reconciled to the match, if once it could be effectuated without his knowledge" (p. 24). Ferdinand's mercenary attitude to love is made even more explicit when, in an attempt to turn his conquest of the maid Teresa to his own advantage, he "hinted his design upon the young lady's fortune" (p. 29) and Smollett emphasizes his perverted moral and social values when Fathom entertains Renaldo's sister with such stories "as he thought would justify and recommend the levelling power of love, that knows no distinctions of fortune" (p. 25). Miss Melvile, foreshadowing Monimia's conduct, resists Fathom's attempts at seduction in a manner becoming a member of the gentry in Smollett's fiction; it is not without significance that Ferdinand's conquests are almost universally from amongst the bourgeoisie: Wilhelmina (the jeweller's daughter) and her mother, Elenor (a curate's daughter), a soap-boiler's daughter and a clergyman's wife, at least one of whom is attracted to Fathom, by "ideas of vanity and ambition"; only Celinda, the natural daughter of a gentleman, falls somewhat outside this pattern.

Smollett is here combining social and moral

criticism of his central character, and Ferdinand's ambition and his mercenary nature are closely linked throughout the novel. In Vienna, Fathom's pride - an excessive belief in his personal qualifications[12] - is revealed in his attempt to "insinuate himself into the good graces of some married lady about court, or lay an opulent dowager under contribution" (p. 44), whilst at Tunbridge, he aspires to "captivate the heart of some heiress or rich widow, whose fortune would, at once, render him independent and happy" (p. 245). Even when circumstances force Fathom to abandon his hopes of simultaneous wealth and social advancement, he retains his perverted attitude to marriage - hoping at first "to keep himself afloat, with the portion of some tradesman's daughter, whom he meant to espouse" (p. 269), and later clandestinely marrying an apparently wealthy widow who recognizes only belatedly that "though his pretence was love, his aim was no other than a base design upon her fortune" (p. 275).

We do not see marriage only in this negative sense, however, and in the relationship of Renaldo and Monimia, Smollett shows us (in opposition to Ferdinand's attempts at social or financial self-improvement) a view of marriage based solely on love. Indeed, the pressures on Melvile, temporarily penniless, to marry for money are made explicit when friends, disapproving of his attachment to "the fair beggar", made light of "that intimate union of hearts which subsisted between the two lovers, and which no human consideration could dissolve" (p. 204). Like the pressures on Roderick to accept a social position

amongst the middle class, the pressures on Renaldo to marry for financial gain reveal the most pernicious effect of the bourgeois insistence on the importance of wealth *per se*. Smollett emphasizes that love *should* be the true foundation of marriage both in the story of Diego de Zelos and at the conclusion of the novel. In the latter instance we see the problem in a bourgeois context, when a London merchant wishes to bestow his daughter on a "thirty thousand man" rather than allow her to marry the man she loves - "a young gentleman of good family and uncommon merit". Following the suggestion of Joshua Manasseh that the father should give financial support to his daughter once she has married the man she loves, Renaldo represents "the family disquiets, and dismal tragedies, produced from such mercenary and compulsive matches; and in conclusion related the story of don Diego and his daughter" (p. 348) - an expedient which effectually (and from the reader's viewpoint, rather too easily) does the lovers' business.[13]

Smollett often displays his own values in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* by means of positive incidents - such as the one described above - set in contrast to Ferdinand's negative, immoral behaviour (so obviously, at times, that the book is weakened as a result). Social criticism within the novel is not, however, confined to the conduct of its central character, but extends to cover, in different ways, the author's favourite targets: the urban aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (particularly brokers and money-lenders), together with their vices - gaming, ostentation and vanity - and their perverted moral values. The social

success which Ferdinand enjoys for much of the novel is less dependent on any "infernal arts" that he practises than on his ability to exploit the weaknesses of those amongst whom he moves, and the superficiality of a society which, impressed by Fathom's glittering exterior, fails to notice the void beneath it.

Ferdinand has a pessimistic - somewhat Mandevillian - view of human nature which is reinforced by his experience of Viennese society: "He had formerly imagined, but was now fully persuaded, that the sons of men preyed upon one another, and such was the end and condition of their being" (p. 40). It is a view which is ultimately refuted in the novel by the conduct of Renaldo, and by that of Joshua and Mme. Clement, but if not true of human nature in general, it might be regarded as largely true of urban society, most of all in Great Britain. The nature of that society, and the lack of discernment which its members reveal, is stated firmly by Ratchkali, who describes the English as "wealthy and mercantile, of consequence liberal and adventurous, and so well disposed to take a man's own word for his importance, that they suffer themselves to be preyed upon by...a bungling set of imposters" (p. 146). For Smollett, as for Johnson, London is

> ...the needy Villain's gen'ral Home,
> The Common Sewer of Paris and of Rome
> (London, ll. 93-4),

and it is of the Fathoms and Ratchkalis to be found in London that Johnson wrote

> Obsequious, artful, voluble and gay,

On Britain's fond Credulity they prey

(London, ll. 111-2).

Thus it is that Ferdinand increases his fortune not only by the sale of jewels at inflated prices (in which he is aided by the lapidary Ratchkali), but also by persuading his gullible acquaintances of the merits of all manner of arts and crafts, whether violins, paintings, sculpture or antiques, whatever their real worth. "Nothing was so wretched among the productions of art", writes Smollett, in a passage which recalls Peregrine's amazement at the gullibility of the Yelpers, "that he could not impose upon the world as a capital performance, and so fascinated were the eyes of his admirers, he could easily have persuaded them that a barber's bason was an Etrurian Patera, and the cover of a copper pot, no other than the shield of Ancus Martius" (p. 151).

Such episodes, supported and extended by Ferdinand's various appearances as physician, philosopher, politician and officer, tell us as much about the nature of London society as about Fathom's mendacity or criminality. Indeed, the central portion of Fathom consists very largely of an attack on the urban aristocracy as fierce as anything in Peregrine Pickle, although its effectiveness is inevitably reduced by the absence of any conflict between the aristocracy and a sympathetic hero. The nature of London itself lies at the root of much of the immorality portrayed. In planning his seduction of Elenor, for instance, Ferdinand notes that "she was a perfect stranger in the great city; circumstances on which he soon formed the project of her ruin" (p. 140). Ratchkali's view of the

capital is as pessimistic (for the reader) as is that of Mandeville. The latter writes: "one of the greatest Inconveniencies of such vast overgrown Cities as London or Paris [is] that they harbour Rogues and Villains as Granaries do Vermin",[14] an opinion with which the Swiss concurs: "'In a word, this metropolis is a vast masquerade, in which a man of stratagem may wear a thousand different disguises, without danger of detection'" (p. 146). Ratchkali's description of London is typically Smollettian in its insistence on the distorted values of urban society; people of fashion, he reports, are so "ignorant, indolent, vain and capricious" that they are easy to deceive, and are generally so immoral that an exposed adventurer suffers no more than their contempt of his skill. In such an environment, Ferdinand is at home; London's vices are also his, and the city's values often work to his advantage. When news of Trapwell's suit against Fathom is made known, we find that public knowledge of his adultery, far from operating to his disadvantage, "added a fresh plume to his character, in the eyes of all those who were not before acquainted with the triumphs of his gallantry" (p. 171), a circumstance which recalls Melinda's cheating at cards (in Roderick Random), which also acts to her credit rather than to her disgrace.

In fact, in Fathom, as so often in his fiction, Smollett singles out gaming for particular criticism, and the author soon gives us cause to remember that Ferdinand's earliest recorded attribute is skill in fives, billiards, draughts, backgammon, chess, cards and dice. Smollett initiates his attack on gambling - associated in the novel with perverted moral standards -

by relating Ferdinand's aid in cheating Renaldo at Vienna, and he continues by describing how Fathom himself falls prey to a confederacy headed by Sir Stentor Stile, at Paris. The full force of his criticism is saved for London, however, and one of Ferdinand's first observations in England is that the art of gaming is reduced to "a regular system", while he later perceives that "the spirit of play having overspread the land, like a pestilence, raged to such a degree of madness and desperation, that the unhappy people who were infected, laid aside all thoughts of amusement, œconomy or caution, and risqued their fortunes upon issues equally extravagant, childish and absurd" (p. 244). The fall of a coin, longevity of relations and the sex of an unborn child are all the subjects of wagers, as is the chance of survival of a waiter struck down by an apoplectic fit at a gaming-house. Those critics who have lamented the absence of Smollett's comic touch in Fathom might look again at this passage, surely one of the best (and most savage) pieces of black humour in eighteenth century fiction. The peer who makes the original wager of a thousand pounds on the waiter's death insists that his recovery must be effected without the aid of a doctor, and when the landlord objects to his potential loss, "his lordship obviated the objection, by desiring that the fellow might be charged in the bill" (p. 244). It is in such oblique criticism of the urban aristocracy that we see Smollett at his best, condemning the complete surrender to bourgeois values to which their conduct testifies, not least in a supreme evaluation of money per se, with its apparent ability to nullify

all moral or human considerations. This incident does not affect Ferdinand directly, but in another, similar episode, he finds the perverted values of court society working against his own advancement. It is true, as he conjectures, that the aristocracy have not sufficient self-respect to repudiate him, once exposed, for his former pretensions to nobility (at least, for as long as he can contribute to their amusement). When Ferdinand does present himself at court amongst those who had previously been his intimates, however, he finds them "utter strangers to his person, which they had actually forgot, amidst the succession of novelties that surrounded them; or, if they did recollect his name, it was remembered as an old fashion which had been many months out of date" (p. 243). Not only gambling fever, but also the public craving for novelty (which characterize human beings in terms of financial worth or fashion) mark the behaviour of the urban aristocracy, says Smollett, who quickly returns to reinforce his point in a further episode. Like those scullions who (Smollett writes) capture the public imagination as poets and are then discarded when they leave the scullery, Ferdinand is unable to gain a living as a physician, for those who sought his opinion at the Hot-Well, in his character as a count, reject him completely as a doctor. "Such is the caprice of the world in general", laments the novel's narrator, who now increasingly comments on British society in his own voice, "that whatever bears the face of novelty captivates, or rather bewitches the imagination, and confounds the ideas of reason and common sense" (p. 247).

The strain of building Ferdinand Count Fathom

around a supposedly entirely evil central character becomes, by the London section of the novel, as obvious to the reader as it evidently was to Smollett. It is difficult to transmit a sense of indignation about a society - however corrupt - which only obstructs the progress of the completely immoral Ferdinand. Renaldo therefore comes to prominence, and it is by means of his experience that Smollett chooses to attack the values and conduct of that quintessential capitalist, the money-lender. We are in no doubt as to the character of the usurer whom Renaldo visits in Chapter XLVII, however surprised we are to find that he is a "young sprightly beau, trimmed up in all the foppery of the fashion" (p. 224), but Smollett strengthens his criticism by refraining from direct attack and substituting in its place a most devastating irony. The petit maître, recognizing the surprise of Renaldo and Ferdinand at his appearance, informs them that he has both received a liberal education and held an army commission, during which time his contempt for the trading part of the nation led him to fight a duel rather than accept a broker's son as companion, "but", he concludes, "I have long ago conquered all those ridiculous prejudices. I soon observed, that without money there was no respect, honour, or convenience to be acquired in life; that wealth amply supplied the want of wit, merit and pedigree, having influence and pleasure ever at command; and that the world never failed to worship the flood of affluence, without examining the dirty channels thro' which it commonly flowed" (p. 225).

The experiences of Ferdinand and Renaldo amply demonstrate the truth of such sentiments in relation

to society's respect for money *per se*, sentiments well documented in other eighteenth century literature. We read, for instance, in Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), that "now-a-days, it is money, not birth, that makes people respected",[15] but unlike the morality of Mackenzie's character who concludes resoundingly "the more shame for the times", the morality of the usurer is more dubious. His first money-lending enterprise is to loan two hundred pounds to a brother-officer, on condition that the latter insure his life. Having spent the money within six weeks, the borrower turns highwayman, is caught, sentenced to death and cuts his own throat to avoid public execution, and the insurers are thus obliged to pay the money-lender. It is in his laconic comment concerning the success of his first venture - "I happened to be lucky" - that we see again Smollett's ironic portrayal of the triumph of money over humanity in bourgeois society. In the restrained manner he increasingly adopts in his later works, Smollett underlines the disregard for human happiness and even human life to which the dominant capitalist ethic leads. The irony of Smollett's approach is further in evidence when, with the money-lender's tale complete, even Ferdinand congratulates him, "with many florid encomiums upon the usurer's good sense and humane disposition" (p. 226).

It is not only to expedite the plot, but also to bring some relief to the almost total pessimism of this part of *Fathom*, that Smollett introduces the humane Jewish broker, Joshua Manasseh, from whom Renaldo obtains the financial aid that he requires to return to Hungary. Despite Tuvia Bloch's suggestion to the

contrary, in her article "Smollett and the Jewish Naturalization Bill of 1753",[16] it seems probable that the choice of a Jew as benefactor arose from Smollett's humanity and a desire "to do justice to a calumniated race" as Scott suggested.[17] Such an aim would be entirely consistent with Smollett's belief, first expressed in 1747 in Reproof -

> Jews, Turks or Pagans, hallow'd be the mouth
> That teems with moral zeal and dauntless truth!
>
> (ll. 27-8)

and later by Don Diego in Fathom, that "real goodness is of no particular persuasion" (p. 363). Tuvia Bloch's suggestion - that Smollett was attempting to support the promotors of the so-called Jew Bill, with a mind to the economic benefit resulting from such a measure - is so implausible if considered in the context of Smollett's entire output (or even of Fathom alone), that it is surprising to find any critic accepting it.[18] The bill, passed by a Whig administration (and quickly repealed by them), was seen from the outset to have its value - if any[19] - in increased financial support for Whiggism ("the politics of stock-jobbers" as Dr. Johnson called it (Life, ii, p. 117)). Tuvia Bloch herself points out - without quoting - Smollett's very different attitude to the bill in the Continuation of the History of England, where he writes that the measure was "supported by some petitions of merchants and manufacturers, who, upon examination, appeared to be Jews, or their dependents; and countenanced by the ministry, who thought they foresaw...a great accession to the monied interest, and a considerable increase of their own influence among the individuals of that

community" (Continuation, iii, p. 346). Attacks on Jews in Smollett's fiction would seem to relate only to their dominant role (real or imaginary) in finance; it is as usurers and not as Jews that they arouse his dislike. In fact, the tone of the attack on the financial interests in this novel is echoed in the Continuation of the History of England, where money-lenders are "low" and "sordid" and "prey upon the vitals of their country". It is neither for his profession nor his race (and certainly not to promote the Jewish Naturalization Bill), but for his humanity, and the relief it provides, that Manasseh assumes an important role in Ferdinand Count Fathom. Even when Fathom's villainy is most insidious in its effect, Joshua's conduct leaves room for hope that good will finally triumph.

Ferdinand's eventual fall is foreshadowed several times during the course of the novel. As Renaldo must regain the position of landowner of which he has been unjustly deprived, but to which he is entitled both by birth and by personal attributes (in this he closely resembles Roderick Random), so Fathom must accept the lower social rank which is his. On numerous occasions, Ferdinand might seem to have successfully usurped the place amongst the gentry which he covets, but just as often he is defeated, either by revelation of his true rank, or by his own weaknesses, which, for the most part, are also those of the urban aristocracy. The discovery of his humble birth in Vienna excludes him from parties for the young count, and forces him to seek acceptance in "an inferior path of life" - though one much higher than is his by right. By way of contrast,

it is Fathom's addiction to gaming which is the immediate cause of his downfall in Paris at the hands of Sir Stentor. Smollett, however, stresses the social consequences of Fathom's moral weakness, when he notes that Ferdinand chiefly regrets being "robbed of all those gay expectations he had indulged from his own supposed excellence in the wiles of fraud" (p. 107), particularly since his poverty obliges him to retire to an obscure street and take employment as a musician. It is Fathom's renewed gambling which arouses suspicion about his true social position in London, and which leaves him particularly vulnerable when caught - as he has caught others - by Trapwell. Taken to jail, Ferdinand finds himself "deprived of his reputation, rank, liberty and friends; and his fortune reduced from two thousand pounds, to something less than two hundred" (p. 181), and on his release from prison, his neglect by his former aristocratic companions obliges him to seek a living as a doctor. His lack of success in the profession, forcing him to temper his social aspirations yet further, also leads Ferdinand, for a time, to consider a profitable marriage within the bourgeoisie. "He now regretted", writes Smollett, "the opportunities he had neglected, of marrying one of several women of moderate fortune, who had made advances to him, in the zenith of his reputation; and endeavoured, by forcing himself into a lower path of life than any he had hitherto trod, to keep himself afloat, with the portion of some tradesman's daughter, whom he meant to espouse" (p. 269). When even this proves beyond Fathom's capabilities, his misfortunes prompt him to reflections similar in

purpose to those of Roderick or Peregrine at the lowest points of their fortunes. In a passage which ill accords with his sentiments throughout three-quarters of the novel, Ferdinand laments his desertion of the paths of integrity and truth and his persistent scheming to betray his fellow-men. Nevertheless, Smollett intends us to take Fathom's sentiments seriously at this moment, as he hints by stressing Ferdinand's acceptance, for the first time in the novel, of his rightful place in society. Fathom, we find, proposes to search out Renaldo and serve him with that "fidelity and affection" which the old count attributed to him at the beginning of the novel. It is in this same moral tone that Ferdinand Count Fathom ends, and Ferdinand is discovered in misery and disgrace, with "all his prospects of gaiety... now vanished", subject to severe remorse.

That the novel is primarily concerned with social, and not moral, values is clear from this conclusion. Morally it is (to say the least) inconsistent, for though Ferdinand may regret his conduct towards Renaldo and Monimia, the other victims of his treachery are quietly forgotten. Celinda, for instance, disappears after we learn that, following her seduction by Ferdinand, she has accepted a footman as her lover (compare the similar fate of the hero's vindictive cousin in Roderick Random), and, disowned by her father, has become a whore. In a different way, Fathom's callous inhumanity reveals itself in his willingness - at a price - to administer to a patient a medicine so potent that it will kill her (to the benefit of her merchant husband), or cure her (to the good of Ferdinand's reputation); yet such disregard for human life plays

no part in his subsequent fate. Only in social terms can the conclusion be seen as consistent with the values of the novel as a whole. Ferdinand's eventual position is, in fact, very close to that of the faithful Hugh Strap, whose social rank is so similar. Both marry a former prostitute or courtesan (and at least Ferdinand has the advantage of having originally debauched Elinor), both are set up for the future by their patrons (although Roderick is, rightly, more generous), and both give ample evidence of their humility and gratitude: Roderick recalling that Hugh "daily put up prayers for our preservation" (Random, ii, p. 322), while Ferdinand voices his desire (referring here to the Melviles) to "pray incessantly to heaven for their prosperity" (p. 361). Fathom's recognition and acceptance of his inferior social station becomes more explicit in the novel's last pages. We see him at Renaldo's house "plainly dressed...with his head and body bent towards the earth", seeking permission to see the count's face, to acknowledge his crimes and ask for pardon. Having obtained that pardon, Ferdinand departs from the metropolis to the north of England and a place "well adapted to the circumstances of his mind and fortune" with "all his vice and ambition...now quite mortified within him" (p. 366). With a final explicit linking of Ferdinand's moral and social deficiencies ("vice and ambition"), Smollett leaves Fathom who, in the final paragraphs of the novel again resembles both Strap and Pipes more than Roderick or Peregrine in one important particular - he is completely forgotten.

The emphasis in the entire last quarter of the

book is not, in fact, on the titular hero, but on Renaldo. His fortune provides an obvious contrast to Ferdinand's, relating closely to that of Roderick or Peregrine. Like the former's, Melvile's estate and fortune have been usurped, and with their loss, Renaldo also, and perhaps more importantly, risks a similar loss of status. Smollett emphasizes the seriousness of such a situation early in the novel, in a way which brings Roderick's dilemma to mind.[20] The description of Monimia in Chapter XLIII, shows her in all particulars - age, appearance, attributes - as closely related to (and almost indistinguishable from) Narcissa and Emilia, but in London, with her lack of obvious wealth, she has none of their advantages and is at grave social risk. Renaldo's attachment to her is frowned upon by his friends who "in the consummation of their prudence, ventured to hint a proposal of providing for her in the service of some lady of fashion" (p. 204). A similar fall in rank is Renaldo's potential social fate, and only Joshua's aid enables him to begin regaining the position he seems to have unjustly forfeited. It is Melvile's retention of his rightful social rank which (though the two are not presented simultaneously) emphasizes Ferdinand's fall from the position he has unjustly obtained, and which reinforces the novel's social values. For Renaldo, as for Roderick and Peregrine, social status is of paramount importance, and when Serafina attracts the attention of the beau monde, Melvile takes pleasure in refusing to present his wife to those who had previously neglected her.

It is obvious that Smollett wished to write an

ending to Ferdinand Count Fathom similar in all important respects to those of his earlier novels. The relative weakness of his attempt stems mainly from the absence of an English rural estate to which his couple can retire. Since an example of the novel's ideal social unit is lacking, Melvile's awareness of his responsibility - and the love he inspires in his grateful tenants - cannot easily be shown, and Smollett transfers the scene to the occasion of the count's marriage, with uneasy results:

> Tho' the scene of this transaction was remote from any inhabited neighbourhood, the church was surrounded by a crowd of people, who with uncommon demonstrations of surprize and admiration, petitioned heaven to bless so fair a couple. Such indeed was their eagerness to see them, that some lives were endangered by the pressure of the crowd, which attended them with loud acclamation to the coach, after the bridegroom had deposited in the hands of the minister, one hundred pounds for the benefit of the poor of that parish, and thrown several handfuls of money among the multitude (p. 344)

a surprising reception for a pair previously unknown in the area!

The rejection of town for country - with all that it implies for Smollett - previously a simple matter to describe, must be suggested in some other manner. We read, therefore, that although numerous schemes were devised to bring Serafina into the life of the

"great metropolis", "she resisted with unwearied obstinancy. Her happiness centered in Renaldo, and the cultivation of a few friends within the shade of domestic quiet" (pp. 364-5). Social position is restored, the snares of the capital rejected and the couple are - in a phrase which suits the contrived nature of the novel's conclusion - "as happy as good fortune could make them" (p. 367). The events of the last part of Ferdinand Count Fathom avert the danger of the collapse of the social order - of the fall of the gentleman and landowner, Renaldo, paralleled by the ascent of his social inferior, Fathom - and with the restoration of social equilibrium, Smollett also leaves the reader with the promise of moral stability.

The basic weakness of Launcelot Greaves arises from Smollett's inability to reconcile the two roles of Launcelot as quixotic hero and as a model country gentleman in the line of Roderick, Peregrine and Renaldo. At the beginning of the novel he avoids the problem of such reconciliation by giving his expository material to Tom Clarke (whose father was steward to the Greaves family). By means of his narration, Smollett shows us both Launcelot's madness and his mature exercising of the responsibilities of his rank, without our feeling any contradiction between the two. He describes the knight both physically and in terms of character. Physically (the description is very conventional), Launcelot is aged about thirty, strong, handsome, and of noble aspect, and Tom Clarke goes on to describe him as "the best-natured, worthy and generous gentleman". We also learn the origin of

the hero's madness, but much of our knowledge of Launcelot is concerned not with his decision to set up as a modern Don Quixote, but with his exemplary conduct as a country gentleman, a role to which he returns at the end of the novel.

Like his father, Sir Everhard, Launcelot is respected not simply for his social position and estate (though Smollett specifies its worth as five thousand pounds a year) but for his conduct in that position. He is, says Tom Clarke, "respected by all his neighbours, as much for his personal merit as for his family fortune" (p. 19). When still heir to the estate, Launcelot shows his concern for the tenants, and an awareness of the obligations of his position, when he gives support to a woman whose property has been seized in lieu of rents, obliging his father to hear her story in full, to such good effect that the latter declares himself "a protector, not an oppressor of the needy and unfortunate", and offers relief to his tenant and her children. Such benevolent paternalism is also typical of Launcelot's behaviour, even in his youth, and we read that he "portioned poor maidens, and set up young couples that came together without money" (p. 23). The theme of protection and mutual obligation is central to the vision of the country estate in Smollett's fiction, and its virtues are suggested by an emphasis on the ready acceptance of this traditional social system by the tenants as well as by Launcelot. Their contentment is revealed in the picture of the May-day holidays in Chapter III - which in tone and detail foreshadows the opening of Goldsmith's The Deserted Village - where both girls and

"young peasants" appear dressed in their best to dance, whilst "The old men and women, in their holiday-garments, stood at their doors to receive their benefactor, and poured forth blessings on him as he passed" (p. 23), before Launcelot regales the whole village at his own expense. Although the passage's emphasis on pastoral felicity might suggest that it stems largely from the imagination, it would seem from other of Smollett's writings that he intended it as a faithful representation of rural life at its best. Describing Scotland in The Present State, he asserts that "the country lads and lasses, assembling at a wedding, fair, or market, dance all day long with great activity and glee, being to all appearance much more happy than those who contemplate their poverty with contempt" (Present State, ii, p. 14). Greaves' concern for his tenants also embraces an awareness of their need of decent housing and food (in his Travels Smollett frequently remarks that the English farm labourers are far better housed and fed than their French counterparts[21]), and Smollett concludes his description of village life with the combination of realism and idealism that such a portrayal must inevitably have contained in the mid-eighteenth century: "In a word, the poor's-rate was reduced to a meer trifle, and one would have thought the golden-age was revived in Yorkshire" (p. 24).

Launcelot's behaviour is not, however, despite Tom's assertion that "he made the guineas fly in such a manner, as looked more like madness than generosity" (p. 21), the result either of lunacy or sheer altruism. His conduct towards his tenants stems from a belief that the country estate should be the basic social unit

of the nation, and that his generosity must be matched by the tenants' acceptance of the master-peasant relationship that it implies. Thus Greaves cannot "endure a common beggar, that was not either in a state of infancy or of old age" (p. 21), and as so often, the idea of social mobility provokes Smollett to his most virulent writing. In the prose equivalent of a Rowlandson or Gillray cartoon, Smollett castigates those farmers who keep footmen, saddle-horses and chaises, whilst their wives appear, "their clumsy shanks, like so many shins of beef...cased in silk-hose and embroidered slippers: their raw red fingers, gross as the pipes of a chamber-organ" to play the harpsichord (p. 21). He attacks the practice of setting up assemblies in the villages, where the master of ceremonies might be a hog-butcher or (in Chapter XI) a grave-digger. With these people Launcelot "avoided all concerns...even when they endeavoured to engage his attention" (p. 21), preferring his role of "bounteous benefactor" and "careful overseer of the poor".

Sir Launcelot Greaves is not only the "young squire", however, but also a lunatic knight-errant, and Smollett must endeavour to fuse the two sides of the character he has presented to the reader. In part, he opens with a promising idea, for the landowner who, whilst despising the rich and ambitious yeomanry, prefers and protects the "lower sort of people" - with their joyful acquiescence in the workings of a traditional social system - is, perhaps, not very far removed from the knight who declares himself opposed only to "the foes of virtue and decorum". But the sense of social responsibility that makes him care

for the tenants of oppressive landlords and redress the injuries of the honest clergyman of Chapter IV, also leads him, at times, to overstep the bounds of discretion. In one instance, he uses threats to force a rich farmer's son to marry the cottager's daughter that he (the son) has debauched - the only example of such a marriage in Smollett's fiction, and one so alien to the author's values, that it is difficult to decide which is the stronger - Launcelot's dislike of the seduction, or his madness.

In the earliest of Launcelot's adventures - with the huntsmen or the party of recruits, for example - we find what amounts to a weak imitation of Don Quixote; the incidents described are similar, but we learn little of the hero's character, and there seems to be no real conflict between his two personæ. At worst, the travellers he meets regard him as an eccentric landowner, as we see by the change of opinion in his favour when the soldiers discover "that he was really a gentleman of fashion and fortune" (p. 50). Even in most of the more extended and central episodes, Smollett is only able to explore the roles of Greaves as country gentleman and knight-errant; his lunacy - though it inspires his errantry - plays no part in his success or failure. In Launcelot's tussle with the magistrate, for instance, the values we see are those of the gentry, the preoccupations Smollett's. Social mobility, and its detrimental effect on the well-being of society is the subject of the chapter (XI). The scene takes place in a town (an obvious contrast to the well-ordered country estate) where the magistrate exercises a power not dissimilar to that of a landowner, and it is against

the magistrate's supposed duty "to preserve tranquillity" (as Smollett notes in The Present State[22]) that we must consider his behaviour. In contrast to Launcelot, who exercises power by virtue of heredity, Gobble has ascended to his position by means abhorrent to Smollett for a variety of social and moral reasons. He is, firstly, a petit-bourgeois - his father a tailor, himself a journeyman hosier - and his knowledge of the law stems only from the conversation of "hackney-writers and attorneys' clerks of the lowest order". His acquisition of wealth derives from his marriage to his master's widow for her money, and his pride and her vanity together persuade him "to retire from business, that they might live genteelly in the country", a move not uncommon in the eighteenth century, but one which does not (as Smollett stresses in relation to Gamaliel Pickle) make one a gentleman. Gobble's preferment as magistrate also results from an abuse which Smollett frequently attacks - the venal use of patronage. The nobleman who signs his commission does so to cancel a substantial debt he has incurred, and by such means Gobble attains a position in which his insolence and the abuse of his authority are only equalled by his wife's ostentation. Smollett has already hinted at the dangers of this situation to a well-ordered society when Ferret remarks that "it could not be expected that the vulgar would be honest and conscientious, while the great were distinguished by profligacy and corruption" (p. 42), a sentiment later echoed by Horace Walpole: "How should the morals of the people be purified, when such frantic dissipation reigns above them?"[23] Smollett's portrayal of Gobble is not without its comic

side; he is a "little, affected, pert prig" who endeavours to gain dignity by assuming an air of consequence "in which pride, impudence and folly were strangely blended", but the catalogue of his oppression emphasizes that the magistrate is dangerous as well as absurd. Mrs. Gobble's attempted defence of her husband, in which she draws attention to the selective abuse of his authority confirms his social unsuitability. The upstart magistrate's respect, we find, is not even for rank, but for wealth: "'Mr. Gobble, thanks be to God, can defy the whole world to prove that he ever said an uncivil word, or did a rude thing to a gentleman, knowing him to be a person of fortune. Indeed, as to your poor gentry and riff-raff...he has always behaved like a magistrate, and treated them with the rigger of authority'" (p. 96). Launcelot rightly suggests that Gobble has, in fact, "tyrannized over the poor, and connived at the vices of the rich'" (p. 96), and in this case the knight's crusading zeal successfully redresses the wrongs done to the townspeople whilst debarring Gobble from holding the rank of magistrate again - although Smollett reserves the worst fate for the ex-hosier and his wife until the end of the novel, when we find they are both turned Methodists!

The theme of social mobility, including Smollett's contention that superior rank demands certain moral qualities that go beyond mere appearance, is continued in the episode of the officer-apprentices in Chapter XIII. The two young men, dressed as officers, not only assault Crabshaw, who is trying to defend Launcelot's supper, but also press their unwelcome attentions

on, and finally threaten, two ladies staying at the inn. Launcelot's chivalry shows him again in the role of gentleman and upholder of decorum. "I could not have believed", expostulates the knight, "that persons who have the appearance of gentlemen...could behave so wide of the decorum due to society, of a proper respect to the laws, of that humanity which we owe to our fellow-creatures, and that delicate regard for the fair-sex, which ought to prevail in the breast of every gentleman" (p. 109). But the two men, as Greaves discovers when he challenges them to a duel, are neither gentlemen nor soldiers, but two London haberdashers, travellers for orders, and as such they are not fit objects for Launcelot's anger, it being left to Tom and Crabshaw to punish them with a beating. Both here, and in his defeat of the local farmers - the "boorish" and "insolent" plebeians - it is as a champion for the values of the gentry that Launcelot acts, and acts successfully; his knight-errantry is no more than an eccentric putting into practice of his social beliefs, in which his lunacy and consequent perception of reality play no part.

To consider only these episodes, however, would be to miss the fact that Smollett does show himself to be interested in the problems of his hero's madness and its effect on his actions and on their success. It is in relation to Launcelot's views and behaviour concerning politics that Smollett first makes an attempt to exploit the real possibilities of his quixotic hero. The extensive political discussion in Launcelot Greaves is interesting and important both for the insight it gives us into Smollett's political

thinking, and for the ambiguity which arises from the use of more than one spokesman for his views. During the early part of the novel, the hero's lunacy is revealed largely by means of his political opinions, particularly as we see them in contrast to those of Ferret - the party-writer based on Smollett's own political opponent, Dr. John Shebbeare.[24] The novel is set - as numerous details make clear - during the Seven Years' War, and more precisely after Pitt's accession to the position of Secretary of State (his decisive appointment was on June 29th 1757), and much of the political argument concerns the Whig ministry's conduct of the war. Ferret's complaints against the nation, the militia, the government and its ministers stem as much from misanthropy as from conviction, but his criticism is not without validity. He protests, in Chapter II, against the standing army and the intolerable expense of England's involvement in the wars of Hanover, particularly given the impoverished condition of a substantial part of Britain's population. Launcelot's first reaction to these charges is interesting, for he refutes them completely, calling them "false and insidious", and maintaining the war to be just and necessary, supported by truly British principles, and conducive to the increased wealth of the country and the well-being of her people. He concludes by proclaiming all those who think otherwise to be traitors, and in particular condemns the unknown (to him) Ferret. Much of this argument is identical to that of Smollett in his Continuation of the History of England; where Launcelot declares that the war is "prosecuted with vigour, and crowned with success...

that our conquests are equally glorious and important... our people are happy" (pp. 15-16), the History states that "The whole nation reposed the most unbounded confidence in the courage and discretion, as well as in the integrity of the minister, who seemed eager upon prosecuting the war with such vigour and activity as appeared almost unexampled in the annals of Great-Britain" (Continuation, iv, p. 259). It should not, however, be concluded from this similarity that Launcelot is Smollett's only spokesman, and the author hints as much when, after Greaves' attack on Ferret, he writes that "These last words were pronounced with a wildness of look, that even bordered upon frenzy" (p. 16). The suggestion that Launcelot's unquestioning defence of the ministry is, in part, due to his madness is reinforced when he meets Ferret again, in Chapter X. There, Ferret (now turned apothecary) is selling medicines, and - impelled by his obsession - haranguing the crowd on politics. His basic theme, as before, is the destructive nature of England's involvement with Hanover, intended to please George II; "high German quacks", he claims, have reduced the nation to such a state that "she can no longer pursue her own interest; or, indeed, rightly distinguish it" (p. 79). The Whigs among Ferret's audience suggest that he should be punished for "his presumption in reflecting so scurrilously on ministers and measures" (p. 81), but Launcelot, though agreeing with this opinion, now reveals his true objection to Ferret, and thereby gives evidence of his returning sanity. Though the party-writer's argument is now no different from that originally expressed, the knight, far from threatening him with violence,

cannot help admitting "that he had mixed some melancholy truths with his scurrility" (p. 81). Launcelot's objection is, in fact, not to Ferret's views, but to his abusive way of presenting them, and he might have ascribed the writer's virulent outbursts (as Smollett did Shebbeare's) to "the unguarded effusions of mistaken zeal, couched in the language of passion and scurrility" (Continuation, iv, p. 409). Smollett has been revealing his hero's mental disorder by means of his excessive reliance on the conduct of the ministry, and we find his own political opinions in a synthesis of the view of Launcelot and Ferret. Those opinions are, in simple terms, admiration for Pitt's success in uniting the country, support for the conduct of the war in most respects and a fervent desire to rid Great Britain of the mill-stone of Hanover, and the expense of fighting its wars.

Despite the antipathy which Smollett displays towards the Whigs throughout much of his fiction, historical writing and correspondence (in a letter dated January 2nd 1758, he describes "whig ministers and their abettors" as "a Set of Sordid Knaves" (Letters, p. 65)), there is little contradiction between his support for the political views of the country gentry and his admiration of the Whig administration of Pitt. True to the "patriotic" nature of his views, he persisted in regarding himself as entirely independent, and in July 1758, he wrote to his friend William Huggins, à propos of his Complete History, "I have kept myself independent of all Connexions which might have affected the Candour of my Intention. I have flattered no Individual; I have cultivated no Party" (Letters, p. 69).

Both this assertion and his support for Pitt are consistent with Smollett's genuine belief in a political philosophy stemming in large part from Bolingbroke, and from the notions of a Patriot King and united country, the latter an ideal which underlies the whole election episode in Sir Launcelot Greaves. It was Pitt's achievement in uniting the nation in the prosecution of the war, without the need for widespread corruption, which won him Smollett's admiration, and which Smollett the historian celebrates in his writings:

> Now appeared the fallacy of those maxims, and the falsehood of those assertions, by which former ministers had established, and endeavoured to excuse, the practices of corruption. The supposed disaffection, which had been insisted on as the source of parliamentary opposition, now entirely vanished; nor was it found necessary to use any sinister means for securing a majority, in order to answer the purposes of the administration (Continuation, v, p. 371).

Smollett puts his personal feelings forward concisely in a letter to John Harvie, written on December 10th, 1759, at a time when he must have been considering his new novel. "The people here are in high spirits on account of our successes", he writes, "and Mr. Pitt is so popular that I may venture to say that all party is extinguished in Great-Britain. That Minister is certainly in this respect the most surprising phenomenon that ever appeared in our hemisphere" (Letters, p. 87). He does append one qualifi-

cation, however, which in Launcelot Greaves forms Ferret's main argument: "If he had broke the spell by which we are bewitched to the continent, I would have pronounced him the greatest man that ever lived" (Letters, p. 87). Smollett must, in fact, have had some hope that Pitt might break the links with Hanover, for the latter had voted in Parliament in 1755 against a measure granting further financial aid to the Electorate (and Pitt's change of heart on the issue after he gained power led both to Smollett's disillusionment and to a ferocious attack on the minister as Orator Taycho in the Atom). In any case, the substance of this double argument - admiration for Pitt and dislike of the connection with Hanover - recurs frequently in the Continuation of the History of England. In summarizing the reign of George II, Smollett writes that, from the moment of Pitt's appointment, "all clamour was hushed; all opposition ceased" (Continuation, v, p. 370), and he condemns former ministers (with their willingness to countenance involvement with Hanover) as "a succession of venal ministers, all of whom in their turns devoted themselves, soul and body, to the gratification of [the King's] passion, or partiality, so prejudicial to the true interest of their country" (Continuation, v, p. 368).

The political discussion in Launcelot Greaves is interesting, therefore, for three reasons. Firstly, it shows again Smollett's interest in putting forward his own political and social views in fictional form, and it reveals the exact nature of those views in 1760 and 1761. Secondly, Smollett has moved further

along the road towards suggesting his personal values by means of more than one spokesman - a technique of multiple viewpoint brought to fruition in Humphry Clinker. Thirdly, the same political discussion suggests Smollett's awareness of the philosophical questions arising from his hero's madness and his perception of reality, particularly social reality. Of these three points, the most central to the work as a whole is the third, and it is the unfortunate weakness of Smollett's quixotic novel that only in the election episode do we really see the dramatic possibilities raised by the conflict between Launcelot's social values and the errantry inspired by his lunacy.

Like the political episodes concerning Launcelot and Ferret, the election fixes the reader's attention firmly on contemporary social issues. The immediate reason for its inclusion in Launcelot Greaves was most probably the stimulus of the Oxford election of 1754, of particular importance for the eighteenth century parliamentary system, which Smollett describes in detail in The Continuation of the History of England. The election, in which the sheriff returned all four candidates (as a result of which none could take their seats) was characterized by all the worst abuses of eighteenth century politics, notably, corruption in all forms and the flouting of voting regulations - including the importation of electors from outside the borough. Moreover, in contrast to the apparently increasing unity of the nation, the contested election brought renewed faction by highlighting areas of political disagreement. What Smollett later wrote in

his Continuation of the History of England about the Oxfordshire election might be applied with equal accuracy to the contest described in Launcelot Greaves:

> Never was any contention of this kind maintained with more spirit and animosity, or carried on at a greater expence. One would have imagined that each side considered it as a dispute which must have determined, whether the nation should enjoy its ancient liberty, or tamely submit to the fetters of corruption (Continuation, iii, p. 428).

Yet although Smollett would appear to stand - as he would have claimed - above party, his own views, expressed by Launcelot, are little more than an apology for the country party philosophy, albeit in its most idealized form. That those views stem largely from Bolingbroke is evident from the chapter-heading - "Which may serve to shew, that true patriotism is of no party" - a surprising sentiment for one who wrote in almost melodramatic terms of George I that "It was the misfortune of this Prince, as well as a very great prejudice to the nation, that he had been misled into strong prepossessions against the Tories...the whole nation was delivered into the hands of the Whigs" (Continuation, ii, pp. 299, 301).

It is true, of course, that, impressed by Pitt's personality and conduct of the war, Smollett is critical of the Tory, as well as the Whig, candidate in the election episode in Launcelot Greaves, but whereas he castigates the former for his ignorance, he attacks the latter for his venality, and there is no doubt as to which Smollett regards as the more pernicious. We

can best summarize the difference in attitude to the Tories and Whigs in Launcelot Greaves, by reference to The History of an Atom, where the former are presented as the Shit-tilk-ums-heit (more fool than knave) party, but the latter as the She-it-kums-he-til (more knave than fool) party. Sir Valentine Quickset is one of a number of rustic, xenophobic, fox-hunting, hard-drinking landowners in Smollett's fiction (following Narcissa's brother or Sir Timothy Thicket in Roderick Random or the character impersonated by Sir Stentor Stile in Ferdinand Count Fathom), less admirable members of a social group represented at its best by Launcelot himself. The fox-hunter is, of course, a familiar figure in much eighteenth century writing; Addison portrays him in The Spectator and The Freeholder, and Fielding gives us another view in Tom Jones. Smollett is particularly critical (as much so as Addison, though for rather different reasons), and he writes in The Present State that "Hunting is the sport of country gentlemen; and those whom the world distinguish by the appellation of fox-hunters can attend to no other avocation. They seem to be infatuated with the diversion. Their whole lives are spent in following the hounds, riding, leaping, and hollowing, as if they were mad, and after the chace, in carousing and riot; so that they are become as savage as the beasts they pursue" (Present State, ii, p. 217). Sir Valentine's qualifications, as he conceives of them, are a dislike of foreigners (to which his objection to the link with Hanover is a mere corollary), an estate of five thousand a year, spent at home in "old English hospitality" (of which Matt Bramble has more

to say in Humphry Clinker[25]), and a dislike of all ministries. In Sir Valentine's proud boast that none of his ancestors have given a single vote for the court since the revolution, Smollett points to both the dilemma of the Tory party, and in his eyes, its major weakness. Condemned, by the accession of George I and by Walpole's creation of the machinery of patronage to seemingly perpetual opposition, the Tory politicians had been forced to adopt a completely negative attitude within Parliament, since there was no possibility of its policy - low taxation, financial probity, stiffer land-qualification for voters, more frequent parliaments and an end to corruption in elections - being accepted by the executive which exercised effective political power. In Smollett's condemnation of this negative feature of Tory tactics, we see both his sincere attachment to the values of the country party (not a universal merit amongst its adherents), and his recurring lack of political realism, displayed most obviously in his hope that the policies of the country party might one day be successfully pursued.

However critical Smollett might be of the choice of an "illiterate savage" as candidate for the Tories, there is no doubt that he sees the Whig candidate as a far more dangerous figure. The earliest knowledge that Launcelot gains about Isaac Vanderpelft reads like a catalogue of the abuses which Smollett has attacked elsewhere - both in his fictional and historical writings. Vanderpelft, the Jew, is "immensely rich" (this being particularly hard for many of the squirearchy to bear, as they saw their lifestyles becoming insignificant beside those of their social inferiors),

and worse, his fortune has been acquired by stock-jobbing, that "fraudulent and pernicious practice", as Smollett writes elsewhere.[26] His success in the election depends almost entirely upon the deficiencies of the contemporary electoral system, with its manifold possibilities of corruption. He benefits from the patronage of the aristocracy[27] - a duke - and the bourgeoisie[28] - the mayor, "a manufacturer [who] had received a very considerable order for exportation, in consequence of which, it was believed, he would support Mr. Vanderpelft with all his influence and credit" (p. 73). Vanderpelft has, furthermore, distributed large sums of money amongst the electors and thereby gained a majority of the yeomanry (consider the description of their behaviour in Chapter III), and copy-holders, for the Whigs. The great importance which Smollett attaches to this, the last link of a chain of corruption deriving from the monarch himself is very clear. For him, corruption is a matter of the utmost gravity, and in the novel we find little of the direct humour about the electoral process which is present in, for instance, Fielding's play Don Quixote in England (1734). Even a single election like the one in question is of significance for the liberty of the whole nation; Smollett the historian declares that "The scenes of corruption, perjury, riot, and intemperance, which every election for a member of Parliament had lately produced, were now grown so infamously open and intolerable, and the right of voting was rendered so obscure and perplexed by the pretensions and proceedings of all the candidates for Oxfordshire in the last election, that the funda-

mentals of the constitution seemed to shake, and the very essence of Parliaments be in danger" (Continuation, iv, p. 248).

Launcelot's reaction to Sir Valentine and Mr. Vanderpelft is predictable. In rejecting the Tory candidate he is concerned only with the ignorance and rusticity which deprive the fox-hunter of an understanding of the principles of his party and which might, "with no evil intentions of his own", find him "a dangerous tool in the hands of desperate faction" (p. 76). But such a man, continues Launcelot, warming to Smollett's favourite theme, "is neither so mischievous nor so detestable as the wretch who knowingly betrays his trust, and sues to be the hireling and prostitute of a weak and worthless minister" (p. 77). Greaves continues to attack Vanderpelft for his lack of a well-established family, his Judaism, his usury, and, once more, for his potential willingness to serve any ministry for reward, and, in his own use of bribes, for the part he plays in spreading corruption throughout the nation. Only here, after using Launcelot as the instrument of his attack on both candidates, does Smollett really grasp the possibilities of his hero's lunacy, as, for a brief moment, the knight thinks he may suggest the type of candidate whom the electors should choose: a man of "honesty, intelligence and moderation", but amongst the factious voters, the theme of moderation finds little support, and Launcelot's idealism is drowned in a torrent of missiles and abuse. In The Idea of a Patriot King, Bolingbroke had written: "the true image of a free people, governed by a Patriot King, is that of a patriarchal family,

where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit".[29] Perhaps, despite his continuing allegiance to such a view, Smollett is here admitting that for Britain in the 1750s, as for Launcelot, this is the illusion, faction the reality.

Despite the success of this episode in establishing Launcelot as a genuinely quixotic figure, and not merely an eccentric gentleman, Smollett seems to lose heart, and his knight soon reverts to no more than a hero in the mould of Roderick or Peregrine, though without the contradictions of their characters, or their social dilemmas. Perhaps Smollett was afraid that not only Launcelot's achievement, but also the validity of his social vision, might be brought into question, were his lunacy allowed to continue, and the social observations of the end of the novel reveal themselves in a far more conventional manner. The second half of Launcelot Greaves centres on the hero's pursuit of Aurelia (although, as in Smollett's earlier novels the conclusion is primarily concerned with social stability) and Smollett quickly abandons the quixotic device over which he no longer has control. Within the space of thirty-five pages (in the Oxford edition), Launcelot's madness and knight-errantry wane and finally disappear. "Ever since his interview with Aurelia", we read, "his fondness for chivalry had been gradually abating" (p. 135); he disclaims having ever accepted the chivalric idea of challenge and combat, and faced with the challenge of squire Sycamore for Aurelia's hand, he declines, preferring to speak "not in the character of a lunatic knight-errant, but as a plain

English gentleman" (p. 158), finally leaving his armour with the inn-keeper at Bugden, before journeying into London.

Smollett's criticism of eighteenth century society throughout the remainder of Launcelot Greaves is similar to that found in his earlier novels, often as deeply felt, but less organically related to the work as a whole, and therefore less effective. Marriage for money is again the subject of attack, particularly when appearing not as a purely bourgeois trait but as the primary motive of a gentleman. In contrast to Launcelot's love for Aurelia, fourth in the line of Smollett's idealized and lifeless young heroines, Sycamore is animated by his interest in her money: "Being generally needy, from extravagance, he was stimulated by his wants" (p. 115), but after Launcelot defeats him in combat, the issue is forgotten, for without describing the social pressures on Sycamore - which would put him in a situation similar to that of Roderick - Smollett is unable to make any relevant moral or social point. More successful (and particularly interesting for its foreshadowing of Humphry Clinker) is Smollett's attack on the affectation, false sensibility, vanity and extravagance of the urban aristocracy as revealed in the female prisoner whom Launcelot sees during his visit to the King's Bench. The woman, who also serves as a firm contrast to Aurelia, is related closely to some of the best families in England, was formerly a resident of the court end of the town, and still dresses "in all the frippery of the fashion" (this is particularly ironic since she owes her presence in the prison to her extravagance). Like Melinda in

Roderick Random or many of the urban aristocracy in Peregrine Pickle, she is deficient in real delicacy and attempts to conceal the fact by affectation. Like Mrs. Baynard (who also bankrupts herself by her extravagance) in Humphry Clinker, "she could not without horror behold an entire joint of meat; and nothing but fricassees and other made-dishes were seen upon her table" (p. 173); this preference for elaborate French cookery over English culinary simplicity appears with some frequency in Smollett's writings (particularly his Travels) where it suggests both deficiency of taste in those who have it, and serves as a further example of the corrupting influence of imported French habits. Even in jail, the unnamed woman of fashion contrives to retain similar affectations, and when Launcelot expresses a wish to give her some money, he is gently rebuked by his guide: "The liberal hand of charity should be extended to modest want that pines in silence" (p. 174). It is also in the King's Bench that Smollett returns to attack the distorted values of a society which esteems wealth above rank or patriotism. He shows the "barbarity" of a rich city merchant whose daughter marries a naval captain, a "gallant officer", without her father's permission. The trader is sole creditor of a bankrupt for whom the captain has unwisely stood security, and he not only has his son-in-law imprisoned, but also rejects his daughter and suffers his grandson to die. As an inserted tale, it continues the themes of bourgeois irresponsibility and of marriage for love, and provides an unhappy contrast to the story of the merchant's daughter at the end of Ferdinand Count Fathom (v. above p. 223).

Revealing as these episodes are in detailing the larger picture of eighteenth century society which Smollett's fiction gives us, they are of subsidiary interest to the major social theme of the novel. We have already noticed the importance of Launcelot's role as a landowner, but his knight-errantry and, subsequently, his pursuit of Aurelia have taken him away from his estate and it is with his return there that Smollett concerns himself throughout the novel's conclusion. Greaves' position as a gentleman has never, in fact, been completely forgotten, and a variety of relationships have emphasized the ideal social structure throughout the novel. Crabshaw's relationship with his master might have seemed the obvious way for Smollett to underline the traditional social order (in contrast to the worlds of the urban aristocracy or bourgeoisie) and to some extent it does serve this purpose. Timothy owes too much to Sancho Panza, however - in his speech, his attachment, his commonsense, his simplicity and his suffering as a result of Launcelot's errantry - to inherit the role of Strap or Pipes as the faithful and contented servant. His loyalty is in no doubt, but it is only when Launcelot abandons his quixotic guise that this is made explicit. The love which the knight inspires in all his retainers reveals itself most overtly in their reaction when he is released from the madhouse. Crabshaw, we find, "was not the last to signify his satisfaction at his master's return. After having kissed the hem of his garment, he... rejoined his fellow-servants, who were resolved to celebrate the day with banquets and rejoicings" (pp. 195-6). A more fully developed master- (or mistress-)

servant relationship, that of Aurelia and Dolly, continues this familiar theme from the earlier novels, and in very similar terms. Dolly, like other personal attendants in Smollett's fiction, is referred to frequently as "faithful", whilst the author notes her affection and attachment to Aurelia. It is Dolly whom Launcelot trusts to gain news of Aurelia in London, a task most agreeable to her, for "she was attached by the strongest ties of affection" to her mistress, a statement amply borne out by her reaction when Aurelia is set free: "Am coom to live and daai with my beloved leady!" (p. 197). Such loyalty (like that which we see in a less servile manner in the behaviour of Tom) reminds the reader throughout the course of the novel of the nature of the society to be found on the country estate. Although Launcelot's position as a gentleman is never threatened (as are the positions of Roderick, Peregrine and Renaldo), the relationship does emphasize the sense of mutual obligation which, for Smollett, should characterize all social relationships.

The idea of mutual obligation - faithful service and benevolent paternalism - is seen repeatedly in Launcelot Greaves. When Launcelot recovers his sanity, he decides to take care of Dolly's fortune, and later relates his plan to her. Having discovered the mutual love of Tom and Dolly (the late revelation of Dolly's real social status removes Tom's - and the reader's - fear of an unsuitable match), Launcelot offers the former the stewardship of his estate, and a house and farm on it. He then addresses Dolly: "'You can boast of virtue, fidelity and friendship. Your attachment to lady Greaves, neither she or I shall ever forget'"

(p. 208) and declares that Aurelia will stock Tom's farm, while their marriage will be celebrated at Greavesbury-hall. Such paternalism is a typical feature of Smollett's novels, but is particularly characteristic of Launcelot Greaves. The soldier injured in one of Launcelot's earliest adventures finds a place for life on the knight's estate, whilst two of the victims of Gobble's tyranny, Greaves Oakley and his mother, receive respectively a ready stocked farm on the estate, and the post of house-keeper at Greavesbury-hall.

Although the second part of Launcelot Greaves has been concerned largely with the hero's pursuit of Aurelia, Smollett stresses the importance of his social vision to the novel as a whole, by returning to the theme of Launcelot as landowner at the work's conclusion. We have noted that Smollett describes Aurelia in conventional terms, but she is by no means commonplace, for her beauty, we read, is "excelled by her good sense, and her virtue superior to both" (p. 205). Miss Darnel is most noteworthy - like Smollett's other heroines - for her lack of resemblance to her peers. Launcelot finds her "untainted by that giddiness, vanity, and affectation, which distinguish the fashionable females of the present age...uninfected by the rage for diversion and dissipation; for noise, tumult, gewgaws and extravagance" (p. 205),[30] a description given added credibility by the simplicity of Aurelia's wedding-dress - a marked contrast to the surfeit of gold, silver and diamonds which Smollett ironically calls the "elegant taste of the times".

As in Smollett's earlier fiction, the couple reject the city in favour of a return to the country,

and a party quickly sets out for Greavesbury-hall. Whether the ending suffers from speed of writing or lack of conviction is not clear; perhaps it is a mixture of both, but Launcelot's return to his estate, the multiple marriages - Launcelot and Aurelia, Tom and Dolly, Capt. Crowe and Mrs. Oakley (the last completely unmotivated) - and the pardon extended to Ferret, who joins the group, take us, presumably unintentionally, close in spirit to the pastoral episodes of Don Quixote or to the festive conclusion of, for example, The Two Gentlemen of Verona. If the final pages of Launcelot Greaves are less convincing than the endings of Smollett's earlier novels, it is because Launcelot's position as landowner is never really threatened, and his homecoming does nothing to bring optimism and order to a chaotic world as it does in the earlier fiction. What it does do, however, is to focus our attention firmly on the social values of the novel and to emphasize Smollett's belief in the viability of the country estate as the fundamental social unit for the mid-eighteenth century. During Launcelot's progress to Greavesbury-hall, bells are rung for him, corporations congratulate him, and when still five miles away from the house, he is met by a crowd of five thousand people ready to welcome him and celebrate his marriage. The knight's influence, moreover, extends far beyond his wedding-day, and he fulfils his role both as a model for his neighbours and as a benevolent landlord:

> The perfect and uninterrupted felicity of the knight and his endearing consort, diffused itself through the whole adjacent

> country, as far as their example and influence could extend. They were admired, esteemed, and applauded by every person of taste, sentiment, and benevolence; at the same time beloved, revered, and almost adored by the common people, among whom they suffered not the merciless hand of indigence or misery to seize one single sacrifice (p. 210).

This, then, is the ideal behaviour of the country gentleman, whose management of his estate tends to the happiness of all who live on it, in contrast to the unhappiness of the urban aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and those who live in close proximity to them. Launcelot Greaves is not, as a whole, a good novel, but the firmness and consistency of its social vision is a great strength, and Smollett ultimately suggests his optimism over the future of the traditional social structure in his final sentence, when he notes that his hero's happiness "soon received a considerable addition in the birth of a son, destined to be the heir and representative of two worthy families" (p. 211).

The traditional, conservative view of eighteenth century society which underlies Smollett's fiction is as strong in Ferdinand Count Fathom and Sir Launcelot Greaves as in Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle, and the relative failure of these third and fourth novels is only incidentally due to its continuing importance. Rather, their weaknesses arise from Smollett's failure to find an adequate substitute after his abandonment of the picaresque novel form (in which he evidently felt he had nothing fresh to say). In Fathom, lacking

the ironic style necessary for a work centering on a completely immoral character, Smollett belatedly increases the relative importance of Renaldo, and succeeds only in producing a weak and artificial moral opposition between the count and Ferdinand, for which his success in effective social contrast cannot adequately compensate. Turning, in Launcelot Greaves, to a quixotic novel, Smollett lacks the ability to distance himself sufficiently from his hero to develop successfully the dramatic and philosophical possibilities of the conflict between Launcelot's two roles, as lunatic knight-errant and country gentleman, and the result is a pallid imitation of his earlier works. Nevertheless, though their wholes amount to less than the sum of their parts, both Ferdinand Count Fathom and Sir Launcelot Greaves are enjoyable, and, at times, impressive novels. They retain, if only episodically, vitality and the ability to transmit Smollett's sense of indignation and moral outrage at the abuses and failings of contemporary society. For this, for their value as attempts to find different ways of successfully fusing form and content (realized, at last, in Humphry Clinker) and for the positive, if unrealistic, vision of society that they contain, both Ferdinand Count Fathom and Sir Launcelot Greaves deserve to be read and appreciated.

5: "Humphry Clinker"

From December 1761, when the last episode of *Sir Launcelot Greaves* appeared in *The Nation*, until the publication of *Humphry Clinker*, in June 1771, Smollett concerned himself unremittingly with a variety of work - journalistic, travel, historical, political, satirical and fictional. Though the entire decade preceding Smollett's death saw him plagued by serious illness, which he attempted to alleviate by means of trips to France and Italy and to Bath, he worked unceasingly; from May 1762 to February 1763, he edited *The Briton* in defence of Lord Bute's administration; in October 1765, he published the last volume of the *Continuation of the Complete History of England*; in May 1766, he saw his *Travels through France and Italy* appear; in 1768, he produced the first issue of *The Present State of all Nations*, and in the following year *The History and Adventures of an Atom* was advertised for sale; he was working on *The Universal History* until his death. In view of his absorption with both literary tasks and with his own health, it is not surprising that the influence of the events of the previous ten years is plainly visible in Smollett's final and greatest novel, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*.

Humphry Clinker is, to begin with, the most obviously "different" of all Smollett's fiction, with even its ambiguous title revealing a move away from the conventional "Adventures" of his earlier books. It is an epistolary novel with no obvious hero (the

character who gives his name to the work is not even a letter-writer), a work that describes eighteenth century Britain with a vividness equalled only by Defoe's Journey through Great Britain (yet which no one could mistake for a conventional travel book). Though the impressions we gain from Humphry Clinker are certainly different from those we receive from his earlier fiction, this change reflects not a radical alteration in Smollett's intentions, nor in his vision of society, but a less instinctive, more analytical reaction to contemporary problems, combined with a greater awareness of the possibilities of the novel as a medium. For all its good humour, Humphry Clinker scarcely represents a lessening of intensity in Smollett's feelings about those aspects of society or politics which he felt to be socially or morally damaging - indeed some passages suggest exactly the reverse - but the novel does reveal the influence of Smollett's non-fictional work, and its effect of modifying his opinions. In terms of subject matter too, Smollett is on different ground, for he is no longer writing about a young man in precarious moral and social circumstances (like Roderick, Peregrine or Renaldo), nor about a young and slightly crazed knight (like Launcelot), but - primarily - about a middle-aged landowner such as these earlier characters might have become after twenty years or more. In point of social situation, therefore, Humphry Clinker begins where Smollett's earlier prose fiction leaves off, and this fact, though elementary, is an important one to remember when considering the epistolary method which Smollett uses for his last novel. We have already noted the critical

tendency to mention (however apologetically) Smollett's supposed indebtedness to picaresque fiction in Humphry Clinker, but to apply the term "picaresque" to the travel element in the novel is as misleading as to apply it to Travels through France and Italy. Humphry Clinker is not picaresque fiction, and the picaresque novel would, in any case, be a most inappropriate form for a work centering on a landowning valetudinarian. The world of the picaro is that of youth, of some poverty, of social and moral disorder which directly affects the central character, a world where the picaro has little or no control over his fate, and where the reader is less concerned with the long-term intentions of the hero, for such intentions are usually circumvented by events, than with the picaro's response to his chaotic experience. In view of the shortcomings of both Ferdinand Count Fathom and Launcelot Greaves (shortcomings which, I have suggested, Smollett recognized too late in the novels to eradicate successfully), it is perhaps surprising that, far from trying to repeat the formula of his first two novels, Smollett made another and finally triumphant attempt to find a different but appropriate form for his fiction.

There are at least three main reasons for Smollett's use of the epistolary method in Humphry Clinker. Firstly, as P-G Boucé observes in Les Romans de Smollett, there was a definite vogue for that type of writing; between 1770 and 1774, eighty-one epistolary novels were published.[1] Secondly, Smollett had already written one book using this technique, and the experience gained from the use of the method in his Travels, together with a consciousness of existing demand,

perhaps prompted him to consider a repetition in Humphry Clinker. Thirdly, and most importantly, however, was the realization that multiple viewpoints would not only provide one means of facilitating delineation of character in the novel, but would also provide a near-perfect vehicle for Smollett's observations about contemporary society. In Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle, the viewpoint of the book is that of the heroes, given either directly, or by means of third-person narration basically sympathetic to the hero. Although these were deliberate attempts by Smollett to give one view of social reality, they obviously have little claim to objectivity, and we have noticed how Smollett tries to distribute his own values among more than one character in Launcelot Greaves. In Humphry Clinker, he uses the epistolary method, with two or more writers commenting on the same incidents, to suggest a more objective approach to the differing aspects of social life described in the novel. The proviso - "suggest" - is crucial, for although in Humphry Clinker, one view of the world no longer appears to dominate the novel, the reality is rather different. Smollett had not become, during the previous decade, as open-minded about social change in the contemporary world, as the opinions delivered by characters of different ages, sex and social position would suggest. Often, in fact, the very opposite is true, for the values which Smollett himself posits in the novel are by no means a synthesis of those put forward by his characters. Instead, they stem largely from the values suggested by Mathew Bramble, whose opinions find support (both positively and negatively,

as we shall see), in the attitudes of his family, and by means of their experience upon the journey, as well as through one of Smollett's favoured media - the interpolated story.

From the opening sentence of Matthew Bramble's first letter, Smollett signals his intention of using the epistolary method as a means of suggesting character; the impressions we gain of the letter-writers in their first epistles determine, to a large extent, our later judgement of the efective worth of their opinions. "The pills", expostulates Bramble, "are good for nothing - I might as well swallow snowballs to cool my reins - I have told you over and over, how hard I am to move; and at this time of day, I ought to know something of my own constitution" (p. 5). The image of the testy valetudinarian, preoccupied with his health, is so persuasively delineated at the beginning of the novel that it is difficult for us to recognize the extent to which the squire's preoccupation with his own bodily ills changes in the course of the novel. The reasons for the change which takes place in Matthew's character are several: the invigorating effect of the presence of the youthful Jery and Lydia is important, as is the unexpected change in Tabitha's nature, whilst the fidelity of the simple Clinker helps to soften the corruption of values which the squire discerns throughout his journey. Certainly the party's visit to Scotland plays an important role in completing Matthew's good humour (as he confesses to Dr. Lewis in, for example, his letters of September 15th and October 26th), and, more prosaically, the weather is also important. Though

an April start may be necessary if the party are to tour Scotland and return home before winter, it is far from suitable for the squire. As Smollett writes in The Present State, "The spring begins in April... nevertheless, the winter weather continues to prevail with great severity....It is in this season that the easterly wind begins to blow with the most disagreeable effect...upon the human body, blasting the promise of the year, and affecting the valetudinarian with melancholy, rheums, and aches" (Present State, ii, p. 156). Whatever the cause of the eventual change in Bramble's demeanour, his physical condition continues to play an important part in the manner in which he expresses his opinions, if not in forming those opinions. Even so, Smollett wishes the other and more important side of Bramble's character to predominate at once. At home in Wales, Matthew is a landowner, and, it immediately transpires, a benevolent, generous and humane one. He arranges to sell his corn to the poor at less than market value, presents a widowed tenant with a cow and forty shillings to clothe her children (waiving her rent until such time as she is easily able to pay) whilst ensuring that his benevolence remains hidden. Squire Bramble is the ideal country landowner. With Roderick, Peregrine and Renaldo (and even, to some extent, with Launcelot) the intelligent and responsible conduct of the landowner on his estate remains only a promise for the future. Given the self-awareness which Smollett's earlier heroes gain from their experiences, we can be fairly certain that they will run their estates conscientiously for the benefit of all who live on them, but with Matthew we know that

he has pursued his social duties with care.

Thus, in a very short first letter, Smollett presents the extremes of Matthew's character; at times testy and choleric, the squire's volatile disposition makes him equally ready to reveal great humanity without ostentation. Though his passion often seems to remove all objectivity from his opinions, we need at all times to beware of confusing the validity of his views with his method of expressing them, a point which Jery recognizes soon after first meeting his uncle. He writes, in his letter of April 24th, that Matthew's "observations on life are equally just, pertinent and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart, which is tender, even to a degree of weakness" (p. 28).

Throughout the novel, the letters of Jery come nearest to those of Bramble in terms of the validity of the opinions they contain, and their subsequent dependability as a guide to Smollett's own opinions, for the author's treatment of Matthew's young nephew is rarely ironical. Almost invariably (and particularly after the introductory letters in which he describes the uncle he scarcely knows), Jery - just down from Oxford, detached, and perhaps just a little too self-assured - reveals views which coincide closely with Bramble's. When they differ, and such instances are usually on important issues, Jery always comes to accept the greater wisdom of his uncle.

Liddy's opinions (and her letters constitute the third largest segment of the novel) are, in their descriptions of Bath and London particularly, both at one with the character which Jery gives her in

his first letter (of a young girl "remarkably simple, and quite ignorant of the world" (p. 8)), and at variance with the views of her uncle. Though Matthew often discusses, and sometimes argues, with Jery, we find no direct conflict of Bramble's ideas with those of his niece (for Smollett was scarcely a believer in the equality of the sexes, at least in matters of social contention), and Liddy at all times enjoys the benevolent solicitude of the squire, who, for instance, suppresses his own dislike of city life in order to allow Liddy a comprehensive view of both Bath and London. Young ladies had been Smollett's least successful fictional creations before Humphry Clinker, but Liddy, with a less decisive role to play than Narcissa, Emilia or Serafina, works better than any, being intentionally pale, over-anxious and naive. In keeping with this character, Lydia describes her impressions in such a manner as to leave us in no doubt as to the objective worth of her views, which tend to support those of her uncle if only by contrast.

To the central figure of her brother - the benevolent landowner - Tabitha Bramble also provides a decisive contrast (especially at the beginning of the novel), being both mean in her personal actions and insensitive to her social responsibilities, for she is as illiberal where money is concerned as Matt is generous. This is not, as Smollett emphasizes, simply a personal matter, without social consequence. It is fortunate for the tenants of the Brambleton estate that Tabitha has no say in its running, for, though Smollett presents her in largely comic terms, her behaviour indicates a general unawareness of the

obligations attached to her social position. Thus Smollett juxtaposes Matthew's gift of the Alderney cow to his widowed tenant with Tabitha's anxious enquiry about the price its calf raised. We pass through thirty-eight pages of the novel (in the Oxford edition) and almost four weeks, before Tabby's second letter, but her opening sentence suggests that the cow has never been far from her mind: "I am astonished, that Dr. Lewis should take upon him to give away Alderney, without my privity and concurrants - What signifies my brother's order? My brother is little better than Noncompush" (p. 44). Both Matthew's faults, and the solution to them, are all too obvious in his sister's eyes: he will "ruinate" the family with his charities, but as to the lost cow's milk, the answer is plain, the servants can make butter from sheep's milk or go without. Such is the benevolence and social responsibility of Tabitha Bramble, and it is against her behaviour (and, more seriously, that of Squire Burdock, Lord Oxmington and Mr. Baynard) that Smollett invites us to consider Matthew's conduct.

If Tabitha Bramble serves as a means of judging her brother's behaviour, then Win Jenkins acts as a point of reference for the book's nominal hero, but non-letter-writer, Humphry Clinker. In contrast to her fellow-servant, Win (though she never descends to the depths plumbed by the servants of Bath or London, from whom she specifically dissociates herself), seems always in danger of surrendering to the bourgeois values of urban life. It is a danger which, if we may judge by her (and the novel's) final letter, marriage to Humphry does little to remove. Though she

is, on more than one occasion, most perceptive, her faults make her views an unsuitable yardstick by which to judge others, for her opinions are as unpredictable as her spelling.

In Smollett's ideal society, the good servant deserves considerate protection, and it is Bramble's generous and responsible behaviour as a master that we discover first about him. Our initial impression, which we gain from Matt's own correspondence, receives confirmation in Jery's opening letter, when after giving a generally unfavourable impression of his uncle (perhaps to amuse Sir Watkin), he concludes, "perhaps, I may like him better on further acquaintance: certain it is, all his servants and neighbours in the country, are fond of him, even to a degree of enthusiasm" (pp. 8-9). Not only the letters of Bramble, but also the first of Liddy's, suggest the reasons for this enthusiasm. Describing her guardians' reactions to her intrigue with Wilson, she contrasts the behaviour of her aunt and uncle: "My aunt continues to chide me severely when we are by ourselves....My uncle, who was so dreadfully passionate in the beginning, has been moved by my tears and distress; and is now all tenderness and compassion" (pp. 9-10), and Bramble's compassion extends beyond the confines of his immediate family to the larger family of servants and tenants. In the closing lines of his second epistle to Dr. Lewis, he returns to the business of his estate: "If Davis voluntarily offers to give up the farm, the other shall have it; but I will not begin at this time of day to distress my tenants, because they are unfortunate,

and cannot make regular payments: I wonder that Barns should think me capable of such oppression" (p. 14), sentiments very similar to those expressed by Launcelot and Sir Everhard Greaves, Bramble's immediate predecessors as model landowners in Smollett's fiction.

Whilst emphasizing this important, and frequently reiterated, point - that the gentry have a special responsibility towards their tenants - Smollett also wishes to stress that benevolence should not be a virtue exercised solely in the country nor only by certain people; all those who have the financial means have a charitable duty to perform. Such charity is not, however, to be practised indiscriminately (as Smollett showed in Launcelot Greaves, in the knight's decision not to help the aristocratic bankrupt in the Fleet and his refusal to support healthy adult vagrants). In Humphry Clinker, he reveals the difference between responsibility and irresponsibility in a comic contrast between Matthew and Tabitha, for when the latter detects her brother secretly giving twenty pounds to the impoverished widow of an ensign, her immediate reaction is to accuse him of "concupissins" and "extravagance". Tabitha's choice of the term "extravagance" is both humorous and peculiarly inapt, for she immediately proceeds (with the same platitude with which Mrs. Potion dismisses Roderick) to proclaim that twenty pounds would buy her a new suit of flowered silk and all the requisite trimmings. If we consider the almost abject gratitude of the widow, then it is difficult not to sympathize with Smollett's frequently expressed fears about the moral consequences of the rage for fashion and novelty among the gentry, about the

consequences of real extravagance.

The reasons for Smollett's stress on the responsibly-run country estate, and the wider responsibilities of one social group to another in the early letters, reveal themselves in the first direct social criticism detailing the defects of urban society, which - implicitly contrasted with the ideal society of Brambleton-hall - is of central importance to the whole of Humphry Clinker. Bramble himself suggests that his letter of April 23rd marks a new departure in his correspondence, when he opens the epistle by referring to his writings as "the lamentations of Matthew Bramble", the first use in the novel of a metaphor which recurs on several occasions. Biblical allusions are comparatively rare in Smollett's fiction (two notable ones are the repeated references to England as the Canaan of all able adventurers, and the comparison of the British - blindly subservient to the interests of Hanover - with the people of Nineveh, in Fathom and Greaves, respectively), but they are often particularly appropriate. Certainly the allusion that Smollett makes to the "Lamentations of Jeremiah" and his linking of Bramble to the Jewish prophet is apt in two ways. Firstly, like Bramble, Jeremiah was a sensitive man, and his writings reveal the anguish that many of the events of his life caused him. He asks, as does Matthew, "Why is my suffering continual ?" (XV, 18).[2] But the connection between the Welsh squire and the prophet extends further than their similar characters, for Jeremiah was a great social critic of the Israelites, continually preaching a return to a lost morality, critical of contemporary society, a prophet foretelling the destruction of

Judah, never believed, but whose prophecies, unpopular as they were, proved always accurate. Humphry Clinker is, of course, a comic novel, and Matthew Bramble is scarcely a prophet with a redemptive mission, but it is no coincidence that this analogy of the hypersensitive prophet, the critic of contemporary morality and social values, with Bramble, should appear just before the squire's first lengthy critique of the effect on moral and social behaviour of the changes taking place in the society of eighteenth century Britain.

Some of Bramble's strictures on the new Bath must appear to us now as, at best, misanthropic. In fact, they are all very much in character, for the criticism of the Circus or the Crescent show the conservative squire as a staunch defender of the most severe form of Palladianism (which had effectively died with Burlington in 1753). Although it survived as an architectural style at least until the end of the century, Palladianism increasingly allowed the deviations from a strict classicism and simplicity, of which Matthew here complains. Such remarks form only a small part of the squire's criticisms, however. It is the growth of Bath rather than the nature of its buildings, that leads to the expression of one of Bramble's (and Smollett's) main themes, to be reiterated frequently in the course of the novel.

Firstly, there is the noise, a feature of Bath to which Jery also draws attention in his first letter, when he describes the clamour of the bells in the city. Bramble laments that "this place, which Nature and Providence seem to have intended as a resource from distemper and disquiet, is become the very center of

racket and dissipation. Instead of that peace, tranquility and ease...we have nothing but noise, tumult and hurry" (p. 34). The physical growth of the town itself comes in for comment. As Defoe, in his Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, ponders on the expansion of London in the early eighteenth century, so Bramble remarks, "What sort of monster Bath will become in a few years, with those growing excrescences, may be easily conceived" (p. 36). For Bramble, even so, this is no more than a symptom of changes occurring in society itself. All the abuses to which the commercial revolution, with its increased opportunitities of social mobility, has opened the way, attract the attention of Smollett's satire throughout his fiction. Yet though we might think that by 1770, the commercial revolution was well and truly won, Smollett is nowhere more virulently critical of it than in his final novel. It is as though (recognizing that Humphry Clinker would be his last work of fiction) he was resolved to show that the increasing acceptance of the middle classes within polite society had not diminished his dislike of their presence and influence, and that he, at least, would not come to terms with corrupt values and depraved taste. Even in 1770, Smollett was not, of course, alone in his dislike of the encroachment by the bourgeoisie on areas of social life which had previously been reserved for the gentry, but he was almost unrivalled in the intensity of his feelings, which cannot - as a reading of his History will assure us - be attributed in Humphry Clinker solely to the character of Matt Bramble. Goldsmith, for instance, whose views are close to those of Smollett, comes nowhere near to the latter's manner of expressing

them. In The Bee, Goldsmith writes that "Of all the follies which this great metropolis labours under, there is not one, I believe, at present, appears in a more glaring and ridiculous light than the pride and luxury of the middling class of people".[3] Smollett has Matthew Bramble turn this sentiment into a lengthy diatribe (which must stand here for the many similar ones that the squire delivers in the novel on the same issue):

> All these absurdities arise from the general tide of luxury, which hath overspread the nation, and swept away all, even the very dregs of the people. Every upstart of fortune, harnessed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath, as in the very focus of observation...usurers, brokers, and jobbers of every kind; men of low birth, and no breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence, unknown to former ages; and no wonder that their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity, and presumption. Knowing no other criterion of greatness, but the ostentation of wealth, they discharge their affluence without taste or conduct, through every channel of the most absurd extravagance; and all of them hurry to Bath, because here, without any further qualification, they can mingle with the princes and nobles of the land.... Such is the composition of what is called the fashionable company at Bath; where a very inconsiderable proportion of genteel

people are lost in a mob of impudent plebeians, who have neither understanding nor judgment, nor the least idea of propriety and decorum; and seem to enjoy nothing so much as an opportunity of insulting their betters (pp. 36-37).

This is the essence of one part of Bramble's criticism of society in Humphry Clinker, and it follows directly the social criticism of Smollett's earlier fiction. The growth of trade during the eighteenth century has broken down old class barriers and is threatening (so Bramble believes) to destroy the whole fabric of society. Social relations are no longer based on traditional distinctions of rank, where social groups are linked by their universally acknowledged responsibilities to each other, and with accepted and obeyed rules of conduct. Wealth, or more accurately, a surplus of wealth, has resulted in luxury guided not by good taste, but by what the squire sees as vulgar ostentation. Even in the polite society of Bath, birth, breeding and good taste are taking second place to bourgeois values founded simply on the possession of wealth. The emphasis on money at the expense of traditional attributes of gentility leaves not only the merchants and tradesmen - the nouveaux riches - open to Bramble's criticism, but also that section of the aristocracy, and the gentry too, who pander to their wealth. Commerce allows even the lowest ranks to influence the behaviour of the community, simply by virtue of their wealth, and even Bramble's party cannot escape their influence. In his letter of May 6th, the squire regrets having allowed himself to attend a ball where Liddy is to dance with the only son of a

wealthy undertaker from London (Tabitha, characteristically, has formed an acquaintance with his mother), during which he faints. Certainly the strength of Matthew's feelings is understandable in the light of his personal experience, but he persuades us to take his opinions seriously with an ingenuous acknowledgement of his own vehemence: "This, I own, is a subject on which I cannot write with any degree of patience; for the mob is a monster I never could abide, either in its head, tail, midriff, or members: I detest the whole of it, as a mass of ignorance, presumption, malice, and brutality; and, in this term of reprobation, I include, without respect of rank, station, or quality, all those of both sexes, who affect its manners, and court its society" (p. 37). Here, for the first time in Humphry Clinker, we meet a bête noire of Bramble (and of his creator). Even Smollett's attacks in the Atom on the "Hydra of Meaco" scarcely exceed Bramble's denigration of the growing influence of the lower classes, for the squire concerns himself not only with the labouring class (the effect of which Smollett describes even in Roderick Random; v. above, pp. 55-57), but with all those from the middle or upper classes whose own behaviour - based on an uncritical acceptance of social mobility - tends to break down the traditional structures of society. Not only is the commercial revolution responsible for creating a rootless, amorphous group within the cities, but through the social mobility it engenders, it is responsible both for a general perversion of taste extending beyond the middle classes themselves, and a more dangerous political corruption in those who seek the mob's

support.

The features of life in Bath which catch Bramble's attention are also the subject of Liddy's first letter from the spa. In fact, uncle and niece could scarcely be more diverse in their reactions to the town, for the experience and perception of the squire give way to the ignorance and naiveté of Lydia. Though she is free of the obvious prejudices which remove any suggestion of detached objectivity from Matthew's letters, her naiveté makes her impressions much less acceptable than his. "Bath is to me a new world", she writes, "All is gayety, good-humour, and diversion. The eye is continually entertained with the splendour of dress and equipage; and the ear with the sound of coaches, chaises, chairs, and other carriages. The merry bells ring round, from morn till night...Bath...to be sure, is an earthly paradise...the new buildings...look like so many enchanted castles, raised on hanging terraces" (p. 39). If we compare this letter with Matthew's, we have an excellent example of Smollett's use of the epistolary method, for although the letters give us two extreme viewpoints, the total effect is to reinforce the squire's description of Bath, rather than to encourage the reader to form a balanced account of the city by synthesis. Liddy repeats, and thereby confirms, the descriptions of ostentatious luxury that we find in Matt's letter, when she notes the continual "splendour of dress and equipage". If we have attributed Bramble's aversion to noise, and to the sound of the Abbey bells in particular, to his hypersensitive nature, we may well revise that opinion on considering Lydia's account of the "continual...

sound of coaches, chairs and other carriages", and her apparent delight that "the merry bells ring round, from morn till night". Moreover, the very extravagance of Liddy's enthusiasm for Bath, her description of "an earthly paradise", or of buildings like "enchanted castles", must surely make us sceptical of other aspects of her account, and encourage us to look carefully for examples of unconscious irony in Liddy's epistles, by means of which Smollett, whilst seeming to oppose Matthew's prejudices, in fact, reinforces them.

Despite the divergence of opinion about Bath, Smollett suggests some essential similarities between the characters of Liddy and her uncle, as he does throughout the whole of the novel. We see, for instance, the mutual affection which exists between Matthew and his niece. "When he is free from pain", she writes, "he is the best tempered man upon earth; so gentle, so generous, so charitable, that every body loves him; and so good to me, in particular, that I shall never be able to shew the deep sense I have of his tenderness and affection" (p. 40). Secondly, we see a response to the society of Bath - this time an instinctive rather than a reflective response - in which Liddy reveals a reaction very similar to that of her uncle. Describing a dance, Lydia comments that "The place was so hot, and the smell so different from what we are used to in the country, that I was quite feverish when we came away. Aunt says it is the effect of a vulgar constitution, reared among woods and mountains; and, that as I become accustomed to genteel company, it will wear off" (p. 41). Though Liddy's youth and inexperience may lead her to over-value the new sights

and sounds to which she is, for the first time, exposed, her constitution is so far from being "vulgar", that she is unable to bear the unhealthy nature of Bath's diversions, differing so completely, as it does from the atmosphere of Wales. In this, she not only forms an obvious contrast with her aunt, but greatly resembles her uncle, who, in his letter of May 8th, relates how he fainted at a ball: "Imagine to yourself", he writes, "a high exalted essence of mingled odours, arising from putrid gums, imposthumated lungs, sour flatulencies, rank armits, sweating feet, running sores and issues.... Such, O Dick! is the fragrant æther we breathe in the polite assemblies of Bath - Such is the atmosphere I have exchanged for the pure, elastic, animating air of the Welsh mountains - O Rus, quandote aspiciam!", an Horatian appeal which Liddy later echoes in London, confirming that under an impressionable exterior, she too possesses inherent good taste. Having enumerated the joys of London, Liddy concludes that "I could gladly give up all these tumultuous pleasures, for country solitude, and a happy retreat with those we love" (p. 95).

It is the contrast between town society and country life which occupies Bramble in his second letter from Bath. "I wish", complains the squire, "I had not come from Brambleton-hall; after having lived in solitude so long, I cannot bear the hurry and impertinence of the multitude; besides, every thing is so sophisticated in these crowded places" (p. 47). Once more specifying the mob and the perversion of taste as examples of the ills of urban society, Matthew implicitly contrasts the "hurry" and "impertinence"

of town crowds with the calm, well-ordered and respectful peasantry, and the sophistication of the town with the simple unadulterated pleasures and tastes of rural life.

When Jery writes his letter of April 30th, the same shortcomings of urban life which Matthew deprecates, concern him also. Though we may attribute some of Matt's passion to his hypersensitive nature, we cannot do the same with his nephew whose function (as so often in the novel) is that of a reporter, a role facilitated by his detachment, which allows a relatively objective description of events. Though Jery's views lack the rancour characteristic of his uncle's, they serve (no less than Liddy's) to support, rather than detract from, Matthew's observations. "Another entertainment, peculiar to Bath", he writes, "arises from the general mixture of all degrees assembled in our public rooms, without distinction of rank or fortune. This is what my uncle reprobates, as a monstrous jumble of heterogeneous principles; a vile mob of noise and impertinence, without decency or subordination. But this chaos is to me a source of infinite amusement" (p. 49). Jery's sentiments reveal the difference in character between him and his uncle. The Master of Ceremonies leading the "antiquated Abigail, dressed in her lady's cast-clothes" or the "paralytic attorney of Shoe-lane" kicking the shins of the chancellor of England, are, in their absurdity and grotesqueness, laughable. This is how Jery views the scenes at Bath - at face value. Bramble, meanwhile, though Jery deliberately tells us in the same paragraph, that he is "the most risible misanthrope I ever met with", is unable to laugh at

such events because he sees beyond the incidents themselves to the warping, or even destruction, of social values, which they imply. These values, in which Bramble believes, and which he regards as closely connected with the moral values of the nation, are visibly threatened in Bath, and for this reason, the follies of mankind, which he can so readily appreciate in other cases, are here too important a matter for laughter. In this attitude, he is - even for a member of his social class - exceptional, "as tender as a man without a skin; who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching", but he is also uncommonly perceptive.

Jery admits the greater wisdom of his uncle in the same letter, whilst describing to Sir Watkin Phillips the difference of opinion he has with Matthew and James Quin, over the free intermingling of different social groups in the amusements at Bath. While Bramble observes that such mixing is destructive of all order and urbanity, that it renders the plebeians insufferably arrogant and troublesome, and vulgarizes the deportment and sentiments of those who move in the upper spheres of life, Jery takes the opposite view that those members of the lower classes who are so anxious to imitate the dress and behaviour of the gentry, would soon also adopt their maxims and manners. In order to test his theory that the gradual erosion of class barriers will result in higher standards of social behaviour, Jery suggests that the three of them should attend a general tea-drinking, where, at the ringing of a bell, the ladies present are to be allowed their choice of sweetmeats and nose-gays. "This", he concludes prophetically, "will be no bad way of trying the company's breeding"

(p. 52). When the experiment actually takes place, Jery is confounded, for the company breaks into instant confusion, pushing, struggling, crying and swearing, while "the tropes and figures of Billingsgate were used without reserve in all their native zest and flavour" (p. 52). The difference in attitudes reveals Matthew's greater experience of the world, but, as Jery relates, "my uncle's delicacy was hurt. He hung his head in manifest chagrin, and seemed to repine at the triumph of his judgment". Indeed, Bramble's pessimistic appraisal is even more accurate than he had foreseen, for "the two amazons who singularized themselves most in the action, did not come from the purlieus of Puddle-dock, but from the courtly neighbourhood of St. James's palace" (p. 52), a most conclusive illustration of how completely the urban aristocracy have surrendered to the standards of the middle classes.

Matthew Bramble may be over-sensitive, extreme in the expression of his opinions, and occasionally misanthropical, but in his pessimistic appraisal of the effects of changes resulting in English society from the increased influence of the bourgeoisie, we recognize him to be closer to the truth than the optimistic, forward-looking Jery. We find further evidence of this in a subsequent letter of the squire's, where he describes the various misfortunes of a number of old friends. Little more than a decade previously, he declares, many decent families were able to retire to Bath, and make a respectable appearance, without unbearable expense. "But", he continues, "the madness of the times has made the place too hot for them, and they are now obliged to think of other migrations -

Some have already fled to the mountains of Wales, and others have retired to Exeter. Thither, no doubt, they will be followed by the flood of luxury and extravagance, which will drive them from place to place to the very Land's End...Bath is become a mere sink of profligacy and extortion" (p. 57). The increased cost of living in Bath, caused by the influx of the new rich is, suggests Bramble, one example of the way in which society is changing morally as well as socially. England is happy that those who have recently acquired fortunes should squander them in extravagance, whilst men who have served the country must survive where, and as best, they can. Once more, Smollett does not content himself with generalized criticism of this national irresponsibility, but pursues a favourite topic (first introduced in relation to Tom Bowling, in Roderick Random), when he specifies the ills of a rear-admiral and colonel. Both, having served their country long and well, find themselves at last rejected, passed over for promotion, in favour of those who can afford to pay for commissions with fortunes that their families have made in trade. Such rejection of merit in favour of money is a favourite complaint of Smollett (who returns to the theme when Bramble commiserates with Lismahago for his similar neglect) and the gentry's decline into poverty whilst the nouveaux riches squander their newly-acquired wealth, prompts Matthew's lament that "Incidents of this kind are frequent; and every day teems with fresh absurdities, which are too gross to make a thinking man merry" (p. 57).

Smollett is anxious, moreover, to demonstrate that his attacks on social mobility and its effect

on society, do not stem simply from a selfish defence of privilege. If the letters of Bramble and Jery seem to present Bath only from the viewpoint of the upper reaches of society, Smollett ensures that the town does not escape censure even from the very imperfect Winifred Jenkins. In her first letter from Bath, Tabitha's maid writes with relish, "O Molly! you that live in the country have no deception of our doings at Bath. Here is such dressing, and fidling, and dancing, and gadding, and courting, and plotting" (p. 42), and, like so many servants in Smollett's fiction, is delighted to find herself in what she appropriately calls the "squintasense of satiety". Like Ferdinand (though without his vice and malice) she aspires to appear in a higher social position. Thus she piques herself on being the "sworn sister" of Mrs. Patcher, maid to Lady Kilmacullock, who shows Winifred her secrets - how to "wash gaze, and refrash rusty silks and bumbeseen", in order that, along with her fellow-servants, she may make a splendid figure in the cast-off clothing of her mistress. Only after being abused by a hostile crowd in Newcastle whilst attending a play with the petit-maître Dutton, does Win recognize the dangers which such unworthy social aspirations entail, but even before she leaves Bath, she shows a certain (and important) recognition of the perversion of moral standards that has occurred there. "O Molly! the sarvants at Bath are devils in garnet....I don't blame them for making the most of their market, in the way of vails and parquisites...But then they oft to have some conscience, in vronging those that be sarvants like themselves - For you must no, Molly, I missed

three-quarters of blond lace, and a remnant of muslin, and my silver thimble; which was the gift of true love...they say as how the very teeth an't safe in your head, if you sleep with your mouth open" (pp. (70-71).

It is as a means of contrast with the majority of servants in the novel that the titular hero, Humphry Clinker, is primarily important. If, in a variety of incidents at Bath, Smollett has portrayed many instances of excessive wealth coupled with a lack of gratitude for generosity (particularly in the story of Paunceford and Serle which Jery relates in his letter of May 10th), he reveals in the character of Humphry, the reverse, for Clinker couples extreme poverty with a profound gratitude for Bramble's charitable behaviour. The "shabby country fellow" of "queer and pathetic" appearance has an immediate effect upon the family, shocking Tabitha by "presuming to ride before persons of fashion without a shirt", and prompting the charity of her brother, who presents Clinker with a guinea. Bramble's charity, it is interesting to note, does not stem solely from instinctive compassion at hearing of Humphry's plight, for Matt knows that charity must be deserved, and he first enquires as to Clinker's character. Having once satisfied himself that Humphry is industrious, and that his poverty is the result of ill-health, the squire is able to reveal both compassion and charity. Equating any particular action of Matthew's with a similar one of Smollett's, is dangerous, but from what we know of the author's own charitable impulses,[4] we may be tempted to think that in like circumstances, he would have done the same. Certainly,

Bramble's memorable "Heark ye, Clinker, you are a most notorious offender - You stand convicted of sickness, hunger, wretchedness, and want" (p. 82), reminds us of the opening words of Smollett's Advice, written a quarter of a century earlier: "'Tis infamous, I grant it, to be poor". The contrast here, between Bramble's recognition of his moral duties and Tabitha's unawareness of hers, is striking. The latter, whose judgement of character rarely goes deeper than surface appearance, observes, of the metamorphosed Clinker, "that the postilion, who rode next to her, was not a shabby wretch like the ragamuffin who had drove them into Marlborough" (p. 82). On realizing her error, Tabitha refuses to continue for London while Humphry remains, and Bramble reluctantly (and perhaps wrongly) agrees to dismiss him. When Humphry reappears at the next stop made by the party, Matthew questions him as to the reasons for his renewed presence, and Clinker replies that "his honour had been so good to him, that he had not the heart to part with him; that he would follow him to the world's end, and serve him all the days of his life, without fee or reward" (p. 83). This declaration is as central to the values of the novel as is Tom Pipes' "Damn the money!" in Peregrine Pickle. Clinker stands revealed at once as the epitome of the loyal, honest servant who plays such an important role in Smollett's novels. Almost twenty-five years passed between the writing of Roderick Random and the publication of Humphry Clinker, and allowing for the passage of those years, Matt Bramble stands in a position very similar to that of Roderick. The relationship beginning at this point, and which is so important in the novel,

is one whose virtues have been extolled by Smollett in his earlier fiction. Master and servant bind themselves not as in contemporary urban society, by financial bonds, but by a respect for the ordered ranks of society, and by mutual trust and loyalty - not by economic but by moral ties. In Humphry Clinker, the relationship suggests an ideal society which, at least in fictional form, was not unfamiliar to the eighteenth century reader. Pope describes it succinctly in the Essay on Man:

> Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
> A master, or a servant, or a friend,
> Bids each on other for assistance call,
> 'Till one Man's weakness grows the strength of all
> (ii, ll. 249-52).

That the moral responsibilities within this society apply in both directions is a lesson which both Roderick and Peregrine must learn, but one which the squire already knows. When the faithful Clinker's awkwardness and over-eagerness to slaughter Chowder lead to Tabby's demand that her brother send "this rascallion about his business immediately", Matthew refuses to abandon Humphry. Instead, he confronts his sister, and by so doing effects a genuine reconciliation between them. Even in personal terms, Clinker's appearance is important to the novel, but more significantly, his relationship with the squire acts as a standard against which we can measure the values of London society.

From Roderick Random onwards, Smollett has made his characters' experience of London of particular

importance to his fiction, and Humphry Clinker is no exception, with almost a quarter of the entire novel detailing the reactions of Bramble's party to the metropolis and to its political and social influence on the nation's life. Like those of other eighteenth century travellers, Matthew's first impressions of the capital reflect its rapid growth during the preceding years, and he remarks on the modern amenities - the spacious, well paved and lighted roads, for instance - which so amazed continental visitors. Such conventional comments give way to a more important topic of discussion, the nature of the changes taking place in British society. "The capital", remarks the squire, "is become an overgrown monster", and he notes with disgust that one-sixth of the country's population now live there. For Smollett and like-minded contemporaries, the problem of urban growth seemed particularly serious, since (they thought) as more countrymen went as labourers into trade and industry, so profits for the middle classes rose, enabling the most successful of the bourgeois to move into the country, turning more countrymen from the land. As Goldsmith wrote in The Deserted Village:

> But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
> Usurp the land and dispossess the swain (ll. 63-4).[5]

"What wonder", then says Bramble, "that our villages are depopulated, and our farms in want of day-labourers?" (p. 87). It is here in the London section of Humphry Clinker, that the squire most obviously reveals himself as a spokesman for a pre-industrial society, rejecting the needs of a commercial and industrial society as false, at least insofar as they necessitate the changing

of rural life in order to provide the growth in urban communities that commerce and industry require. This is not the full extent of his criticism of modern town society, however, for his remarks continue with a perceptive analysis of the social evils attendant on urban growth. Nor do these evils affect only one section of the community. "The tide of luxury", he notes, "has swept all the inhabitants from the open country - The poorest 'squire, as well as the richest peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics" (p. 87). And, as we have seen the effect of Bath's attractions on Win, so Bramble believes that rural labourers are "debauched" by the appearances of town servants, "those coxcombs in livery", and that they desert their rural occupations in the hope of being able to live well with no effort. Whatever their motivation, large numbers of countrymen and women did leave home for the capital in the eighteenth century, and we have noted a contemporary historian's estimate that there were never less than ten thousand unemployed throughout that period (v. above, p. 50). No wonder then, that Matthew complains that "Great numbers of these, being disappointed in their expectation, become thieves and sharpers; and London being an immense wilderness, in which there is neither watch nor ward of any signification, nor any order or police, affords them lurking-places as well as prey" (p. 87), a comment as valid at the end of the 1760s as when Mandeville made his very similar remark forty years earlier (v. above, p. 226). For Bramble, luxury and corruption are the source of all these social evils, for the universal pursuit of wealth does not entail

simply a breaking down of social barriers, but also a loss of the moral qualities appropriate to each class. Like Dr. Johnson, Matthew laments that in contemporary society, "there is no distinction or subordination left" (p. 88).

Smollett does not allow Bramble's description of London to stand unchallenged. He opposes it with a letter in which the enthusiastic Lydia reveals her impressions of the metropolis to Laetitia. The author's intention in juxtaposing Bramble's account of the capital with Lydia's is similar to that underlying their contrasting chronicles of Bath. Though Liddy's enthusiasm may seem simply to counteract Matthew's irascibility, her descriptions are so extravagant, her metaphors so fanciful and her enthusiasm so tinged with unconscious irony, that far from encouraging synthesis, they confirm our impressions of both Lydia's simplicity and the validity of her uncle's opinions. Of the city, for instance, Liddy writes, "All that you read of wealth and grandeur, in the Arabian Night's Entertainment, and the Persian Tales, concerning Bagdad, Diarbekir, Damascus, Ispahan, and Samarkand, is here realized" (p. 92). Ranelagh looks "like the inchanted palace of a genie", and listening to Tenducci, Lydia confesses that "I really thought myself in paradise" (p. 92). Some of the objective worth of these opinions may fairly be judged by comparison with her letters from Bath, where it is not Ranelagh, but the houses of the town, which are "enchanted castles", and where Liddy feels herself in "an earthly paradise". In Vauxhall, she remarks (and here Smollett's ironic treatment of her is at its most apparent), "I had the happiness to

hear the celebrated Mrs. —— , whose voice was so loud and so shrill, that it made my head ake through excess of pleasure" (p. 93). As so often when giving a considered response to new experiences, Liddy reveals herself as hopelessly conventional and, consequently, naive. Only when an instinctive response is called for, does she reveal her relationship to her uncle. Thus, less humorously, her letter highlights Bramble's remarks concerning the insubordination of the London mob. Writing of the trip to Vauxhall, she recalls that "The pleasure of this little excursion was, however, damped, by my being sadly frighted at our landing; where there was...a crowd of people bawling, and swearing, and quarrelling: nay, a parcel of ugly-looking fellows came running into the water, and laid hold on our boat with great violence, to pull it a-shore; nor would they quit their hold till my brother struck one of them over the head with his cane" (p. 92). This is not only Liddy's, but also Smollett's view of the English character, a character typified by a bluntness which, the latter remarks in The Present State, "with the vulgar...often degenerates into mere brutality" (Present State, ii, p. 214).

The tastelessness of London's entertainments may derive simply from the innate vulgarity of the newly-wealthy bourgeoisie, but the insolence of the mob stems not only from social changes, but from the corruption and incompetence of politicians, and politics occupy an important place in Matthew's correspondence from London. Smollett's belief in the ideology of Bolingbroke and the country party is (we have seen) discernible even in Roderick Random, but it was not until after

1760, that he publicly demonstrated his support in political terms. That Smollett was able to play any active role in the politics of the age was due primarily to the death of George II, in 1760, at the age of seventy-seven. During the previous two reigns, opposition to the existing ministry had centred around the heir to the throne, which under George II meant initially around Prince Frederick (until his death in 1751) and latterly around the young man destined to become George III. Whether that king was an eighteenth century Machiavelli playing off the interests of ministers against each other with a view to restoring to the monarchy more power than the Act of Settlement had intended, or whether he was a high-principled but inexperienced young man who did not fully recognize the significance of the political power struggle going on around him, is a question which provoked many answers, answers generally determined by the political leanings of the historians involved. Certainly, at the time of the prince's accession, Smollett saw him (as did many of his contemporaries) as the Patriot King described by Bolingbroke, who would take back the usurped power of the monarchy from the corrupt Whig oligarchy, and, by breaking down the machinery of political corruption, restore morality and unity to national life. Samuel Johnson put forward a similar view in The False Alarm, as late as 1770, when he called George III "a King who knows not the name of party, and who wishes to be the common father of all his people" (Life, ii, p. 112). In 1760, Smollett must have had strong hopes that the principles he had supported throughout his life would at last be put into practice. Not only was the king

opposed to the political corruption which Smollett saw at the root of the national malaise, but in complete contrast to his grandfather, was firmly against the war in support of Hanover, "that horrid Electorate which has always liv'd upon the vitals of this poor Country".[6] We have noted Smollett's praise of Pitt in his historical writings and in his personal correspondence, but in the last year of George II's reign, Pitt had become increasingly in favour of maintaining the war in Europe, ostensibly as a means of tying up French troops which might otherwise be used in America, but to less sympathetic eyes (such as Smollett's), his change of heart appeared only as a base method of gaining favour with the monarch, even at the expense of his principles. Having been so quickly disillusioned with the minister he had so admired, Smollett felt renewed hope at the accession of the new monarch, an optimism increased when the young king signalled his independence by arranging, in March 1762, for the resignation of Holderness (then Secretary of State), in order that his close adviser Lord Bute might move from being Groom to the Stole, to take his place. The closeness of the relationship between George and Bute, and their agreement on the need to end the war in Germany, ensured an increasing split between them and the surviving Whig ministers. Pitt resigned in October 1762, when the King and cabinet declined to take his advice to declare war on Spain, and when Bute informed Newcastle of the decision to end the subsidy to Frederick of Prussia (against the Duke's advice), and requested only a reduced subsidy for the European war from the Commons, the Duke resigned also.

Five days after the resignation, on May 29th 1762, Smollett published the first issue of his magazine The Briton, in support of Bute's ministry.

The Briton survived until 12th February 1763, during which time Smollett was opposed by the rival publication, The North Briton, which his quondam friend, John Wilkes, first published on June 5th 1762. Two months after Smollett had abandoned his magazine and two weeks after Bute had resigned amidst great unpopularity, Wilkes achieved first noteriety, and subsequently great fame, by his attack in No. 45 of The North Briton on the king's reference to the Treaty of Paris as "honourable to my Crown and beneficial to my people", an attack which led to his prosecution for a "false, scandalous and seditious libel". By the time that The Briton ceased publishing (certainly when he saw Wilkes championed by the London mob with the cry of "Wilkes and Liberty!"), Smollett had undergone his final disillusionment with practical politics, which left him with contempt for most politicians, and a grudging respect for a few. What Humphry Clinker might have been like had Smollett written it in the mid-1760s, we cannot say, but it would certainly not have earned its reputation as his best-natured book. Between 1763 and the writing of Humphry Clinker, however, Smollett anonymously published The History and Adventures of an Atom, which in thinly and often obscenely disguised form relates the political history of the late 1750s and early 1760s. In that work, Smollett attacks, without compunction, George II and the Hanoverian connection, together with the leading politicians of the day and their policies. It is a brilliant, brutal,

carefully-planned and passionately-written satire on the political system and ideals of the mid-eighteenth century. It is fair to say that, had Smollett not written the satire, Humphry Clinker might have been hopelessly bogged down in the mud which its author had fortunately already slung with great vigour at his political opponents, in the Atom. Even having written that work, Smollett finds room to abuse Pitt and to savage Newcastle, though the latter, a leading politician for half-a-century, had been dead for two years. In Humphry Clinker, Smollett also returns to a restatement of the principles of patriotism, though with less enthusiasm and far less conviction than before, for such principles were no more practised than they had been under Walpole.[7] The politics of The History of an Atom are those of hatred and disgust; the politics of Humphry Clinker come close to those of disillusion.

Matt Bramble's visit to London takes place in 1765, during the weak administration of Lord Rockingham. It is a choice of ministry characteristic of the political attitudes which Smollett reveals after the fall of Bute. Only five years after the young George III had come to power with the promise (for Smollett) of a change in the old order of the Whig oligarchy, conditions were very much as before. The young, inexperienced Rockingham, the First Lord of the Treasury, derived his present power (he was a great landowner in Ireland and Yorkshire) from the influence his father had gained with Newcastle and Pelham (who advanced him in the peerage), and from his own favour at the end of the previous reign with George II. Newcastle himself, now aged seventy-two, was back, although only as Lord Privy Seal, and the

remainder of the administration - which did not, however, include Pitt or his close supporters - reflected a similar attachment to the old Whig ministries of George II's day. The bitterness which Smollett must have felt in describing the morally corrupt and politically incompetent court to which Bramble introduces his nephew, so soon after the Patriot King seemed to have arrived, is discernible throughout the political section of Humphry Clinker.

At St. James's, Bramble and Jery (guided by Barton) meet or observe a number of important contemporary figures, including Cumberland, Bute, Pitt, and Newcastle. Jery reveals his own good sense when he describes Barton as "a busy, talkative politician; a petit-maître in his dress, and a ceremonious courtier in his manners... he is become a warm partizan of the ministry, and sees every thing through such an exaggerating medium, as to me, who am happily of no party, is altogether incomprehensible" (p. 95). Barton's views, which reveal Smollett at his most ironic, are hyperbolic and generally impossible to take seriously. His absurd comparison of George III with a succession of the most distinguished of the Roman emperors,[8] is indicative of the objective worth of his opinions, and Bramble's simple, reserved description of the king as "A very honest kind-hearted gentleman...he's too good for the times" (p. 96) suggests the extent of Smollett's own disillusion with his monarch.[9]

In the political commentaries of Humphry Clinker, Smollett is often more concerned with the immediate past than with the present, raking up old grievances rather than looking to the future. Cumberland, for

instance, had always been a staunch supporter of Whig administrations, but it is less for his political allegiances (he had died on October 31st 1765) than for his role as "Butcher Cumberland" after the defeat of the rebels at Culloden in 1746 that Smollett introduces him in Humphry Clinker. As he had done in the Atom, Smollett uses irony rather than invective to attack Cumberland, of whom (as the aptly-named Fatzman) he had written, "When the insurgents were defeated, dispersed, and disarmed...his humanity emerged, and took full possession of his breast. He considered them as wretched men misled by false principles of honour, and sympathized with their distress; he pitied them as men and fellow-citizens".[10] Although more than twenty-five years separate the writing of Humphry Clinker from the Battle of Culloden, and though Smollett had scant sympathy for the Prince's cause, his anger at the treatment of his fellow-Scots had not yet abated. In The Tears of Scotland, written in 1746, he had proclaimed that

> While the warm blood bedews my veins,
> And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
> Resentment of my country's fate
> Within my filial breast shall beat (ll. 49-52).

When Barton speaks of Cumberland as "that illustrious hero, who trod rebellion under his feet, and secured us in possession of every thing we ought to hold dear, as Englishmen and Christians" (p. 96), it is hardly surprising that Bramble displays an obvious lack of enthusiasm.

His elogy of Cumberland complete, Barton proceeds to point out the "favourite yearl", Smollett's former

patron, the Earl of Bute, who stands (symbolically) alone at a window. Bramble describes him, with obvious partisanship, as "the Caledonian luminary, that lately blazed so bright in our hemisphere!", and remarks, "methinks, at present, it glimmers through a fog; like Saturn without his ring, bleak, and dim, and distant" (p. 97), a perceptive enough comment, for it was a condition of the formation of the Rockingham administration that George III would never again consult his one-time mentor. The description of Lord Bute in The History of an Atom gives us our best glimpse of the reaction to politics which Smollett underwent after his unhappy experience with The Briton. In comparison with almost all other leading figures of the period, Bute (or Yak-strot) comes off very well, but the criticism of his character, rather than his principles, nevertheless reveals Smollett's reluctant awareness that much of his previous political thinking (including that we have earlier discussed, in the novels) was founded in his aspirations to the ideal, rather than in a serious cognisance of the actual. Good-will, he realizes, is neither enough for the inexperienced George III to become the Patriot King, nor for Bute to form a patriotic ministry strong enough to put his anti-corruption measures into effect. Despite Bute's great achievement in severing the links with Hanover, and despite his personal integrity and undoubted patriotism, Smollett admits in the Atom, "His virtue became the dupe of his vanity. Nature had denied him shining talents, as well as that easiness of deportment, that affability, liberal turn, and versatile genius without which no man can ever figure at the

head of an administration" (Atom, p. 484).

However mild Bramble's praise of Bute may be in Humphry Clinker, it appears eulogistic in comparison to the squire's treatment of Pitt and Newcastle, with which Smollett juxtaposes it. Pitt, whom Smollett had once so admired, and to whom The Complete History of England is dedicated, lost all favour with the author after his volte-face over the issue of aid for Hanover. In Humphry Clinker, it is Bramble who comments, "Ha, there's the other great phænomenon, the grand pensionary, that weathercock of patriotism that veers about in every point of the political compass, and still feels the wind of popularity in his tail" (p. 97), but it might well be Smollett himself, for in one sentence the squire isolates all of the author's major objections to Pitt. By referring to him as "the grand pensionary", Smollett revives his erstwhile patron's smear against the minister, for Bute had (with only partial success) endeavoured to suggest that even the high-principled Pitt, the popular favourite, had his price, by publishing news of his resignation in the same issue of the Gazette as details of the pension he received, and of the peerage he accepted on his wife's behalf. Despite the rancour Smollett evidently still felt towards Pitt, it is scarcely an observation worthy of him or of Matt Bramble. More substantial is Smollett's belief, reiterated here, that Pitt's change of mind over support for Hanover was inspired solely by motives of personal expediency. As Professor Knapp shows in his valuable article "Smollett and the Elder Pitt", the author's quarrel with Pitt is most fairly stated in a public announcement on the front page of The Gazetteer and London

Daily Advertiser for Thursday, October 7th 1762, where Smollett answers an attack in The Public Ledger which alleged him to be both venal and inconsistent, for making Pitt the dedicatee of The Complete History and then attacking him in The Briton. Smollett, having first declared that he dedicated his work to the most distinguished patriot of the day, when Pitt exerted his powers of oratory against the connection with Hanover, continues thus: "Though Mr P—— as a M——r, afterwards adopted those very principles against which he had so long and so strenuously declaimed, I was surely under no obligation to follow his example; to renounce the maxims which I had always avowed, and violate my conscience out of respect of his character. I thought it my duty to sacrifice every personal consideration to historical truth",[11] and whether historical truth is the result of the attacks on Pitt in The Briton, the Atom or Humphry Clinker, there can be no doubting Smollett's sincerity. If Pitt was (in Smollett's eyes) guilty of anything more heinous than the renunciation of earlier principles, it was in the increasing support he attracted from the mob, and if one image stands out above all others in the Atom, it is of Orator Taycho, "that insolent foul-mouthed demagogue" who controls the "blatant beast", the London mob. In Humphry Clinker, even Pitt's popularity is turned against him.

Though Matthew Bramble, now almost at his most virulent, moves on to the vilification of Pitt's political associates, his "eulogium" is interrupted by the arrival of an even more tempting target, the Duke of Newcastle, and in the attack which follows

we see the real significance of the political section of Humphry Clinker. The duke ("sage Newcastle" as Smollett ironically denominated him in Advice) mistakes the squire for "a staunch friend of the administration", though Bramble, as he proudly proclaims, "voted with the ministry but three times, when my conscience told me they were in the right" (p. 98). If Newcastle's conversation tells us nothing about Matthew, however, it reveals much about the duke. Newcastle's instinctive linking of "a staunch friend of the administration" with "I made your brother an Irish bishop" provides a vivid example of the purchasing power of a parliamentary vote under successive Whig ministries, and Smollett shows no pity for the duke's reduced importance and the loss of control of patronage which he had exercised for so long, in the minister's closing "Though I have lost the power, I retain the inclination" - a cruel as well as humorous and appropriate exit line.[12]

The political section of Humphry Clinker is short, and its importance should not be overestimated. It remains interesting, however, to ask why it is there at all. The answer lies not simply in relation to the characters whom Smollett describes, nor with their virtues and defects, but with the policies they represent (or represented), the influence of which permeates the novel as a whole. The lack of patriotism and love of power which Smollett detected in Pitt and his followers, and the greed of Newcastle, may find a contrast in the honesty of George III and Bute, but as Smollett ruefully reflects in the Atom, honesty serves little political purpose if allied to political

incompetence. It is with the defects of politicians that Smollett concerns himself above all in Humphry Clinker, not least as those defects reappear as symptoms of the decay of moral and social values in British society. Humphry Clinker is not primarily a political novel, but its introduction of politics is important to the wider area of Smollett's values, not only in his condemnation of the politicians' damaging obeisance to the mob, but in the social damage caused by an aristocracy, and even a gentry, willing to sacrifice its standards of taste and decorum in order to accommodate the growing and affluent bourgeoisie in their midst.

Bramble's dislike of the mob, and of its newly-acquired influence and power, reveals itself once more in his letter of June 2nd. Relating to Dr. Lewis the discussion he has had with Barton on the question of the libelling of politicians (with particular reference to a nobleman they had earlier observed at St. James's - probably Bute), he embarks on a long attack on the liberty of the press, at least as the London mob support it, which almost certainly represents Smollett's own views. Although, earlier in the decade, he had himself been imprisoned for libel, Smollett's experience during the Wilkes affair induced a prejudice against the more extreme forms of political criticism (or at least - if we consider the content and language of the Atom - those with which he disagreed). Certainly the Wilkes case must have been uppermost in his mind when he has Barton say "Suppose [the nobleman] should prosecute the publisher....The multitude immediately take him into their protection, as a martyr to the cause of

defamation, which they have always espoused" (p. 102). Bramble, anticipating the tenor of Lismahago's remarks, concludes that "the liberty of the press, like every other privilege...must be restrained within certain bounds; for if it is carried to a breach of law, religion and charity, it becomes one of the greatest evils that ever annoyed the community" (p. 104). It enables, as Lismahago asserts (Matthew's letter of July 15th), "the vilest reptile to soil the lustre of the most shining merit, and furnished the most infamous incendiary with the means of disturbing the peace and destroying the good order of the community" (p. 205). Given such sentiments (with which Bramble later agrees), it is not surprising that the squire, linking the mob's support for Wilkes with its support of Pitt, attacks the latter with a bitter "Notwithstanding my contempt for those who flatter a minister, I think there is something still more despicable in flattering a mob" (p. 104).

If the vehemence of Bramble's observations seems too great for his arguments to convince the reader, Smollett ensures that the squire will, in the same letter, apparently question the validity of his own view of society. "[Was] the world...always as contemptible", he reflects, "as it appears to me at present? — If the morals of mankind have not contracted an extraordinary degree of depravity, within these thirty years, then must I be infected with the common vice of old men, <u>difficilis</u>, <u>querulus</u>, <u>laudator temporis acti</u>; or, which is more probable, the impetuous pursuits and avocations of youth have formerly hindered me from observing those rotten parts of human nature, which now appear so

offensively to my observation" (pp. 106-7). Such reflection, brief though it is, is important for our understanding of the character of Matt Bramble. That he is capable of even momentary self-doubt prevents us from charging the squire with bigotry. The ability to question their ideas and motives is not an attribute of Roderick, Peregrine or Jery, whose attachment to certain ideals is instinctive rather than reasoned. For the older man, the land-owning valetudinarian, to retain our sympathy, a measure of objectivity is essential. In fact, like the contrast of his views with those of Liddy, the objectivity is spurious, Matthew's doubts are fleeting, and he concludes the same letter with a sentiment which we as readers ultimately accept as valid, since it is borne out repeatedly by the squire's experience within the novel: "Every thing I see, and hear, and feel, in this great reservoir of folly, knavery, and sophistication, contributes to inhance the value of a country life" (p. 107).

The remark which thus closes the squire's letter of June 2nd, has social as well as personal significance, and his next epistle moves to a detailed account of Matthew's vision of rural life - a potentially ideal existence. The contrast between the hectic chaos of urban life and the calm order of a country existence remains the single most important aspect of Humphry Clinker, and Smollett is at pains to assert that despite his political disillusion, he remains as firmly convinced as ever of the social wisdom of retaining the country estate as the basic social unit in Britain, and readopting traditional values as the moral foundation of the nation's life. In Humphry Clinker, as much

as in any of his novels, Smollett's advocacy of rural life owes something to Horace (whom he quotes on several occasions) and to the eighteenth century poetic tradition of Horatian writing epitomized by Pope's later work. But though Horace's emphasis on morality, temperance and friendship all appear in the novel, and particularly in Matthew's letters to Dr. Lewis, Smollett goes beyond the reflective nature of Horatian verse to his own form of didacticism. It is in the importance of traditional moral and social values to the country as a whole, rather than just to the man who elects a country life, on which Smollett lays his greatest stress, and it is the threat to those values posed by the expansion of commerce, of urban centres and of bourgeois influence which preoccupies Matthew. The squire's criticism of London life takes three main forms: most importantly, he attacks the debasement of moral standards reflected in the diminishing recognition of the mutual responsibility which should exist between different social classes; he also (as we have seen) rejects contemporary political standards, which, particularly in the politicians' readiness to accept the mob as a force in the nation's affairs, reveals an abdication of their particular responsibilities, and lastly, he condemns the outward signs of the slow disintegration of the traditionally rigid social order, manifest in debased standards of taste which pervade all classes, and affect deportment, dress, furnishings and food. In Bramble's criticism of urban life, Smollett insists unrelentingly that it is the bourgeois and capitalistic values of society which are primarily responsible for the nation's moral decay. "All the

people I see", says Matt, "are too much engrossed by schemes of interest or ambition, to have any room left for sentiment or friendship - Even in some of my old acquaintance, those schemes and pursuits have obliterated all traces of our former connexion - Conversation is reduced to party disputes, and illiberal altercation ....Every person you deal with endeavours to overreach you in the way of business...- Your tradesmen are without conscience, your friends without affection, and your dependents without fidelity" (p. 123). In this tone of moral outrage, we recognize not only Bramble but the Smollett of the Continuation of the History of England also. The growing industrial and commercial society, basing its activities on the pursuit of wealth, erodes individual conscience and breaks down both the moral ties linking friends within a social group, and class ties themselves. "I shall fly", remarks the squire, "with double relish to the serenity of retirement, the cordial effusions of unreserved friendship, the hospitality and protection of the rural gods" (p. 123). To escape from the city is a natural enough desire for a man of Bramble's bent, but the phrase he uses to describe rural pleasures - "jucunda oblivia vitæ" - scarcely does full justice to his vision of the country estate. Though he is enthusiastic in his praise of friendship, good food and repose, he also cites, among the enjoyments of a country life, the opportunity to superintend the workings of his farm, and, he continues, "Nor do I take less pleasure in seeing my tenants thrive under my auspices, and the poor live comfortably by the employment which I provide" (p. 119). This is the image of the landed gentleman on

his estate which runs throughout the whole of Smollett's fiction, and we have noticed the author's personal expression of the same idea in a letter to William Huggins (v. above, p. 4). Its importance to the social vision of Humphry Clinker is central and Smollett extends and develops the theme in his accounts of Burdock, Pimpernel, the Scottish clan chiefs, Oxmington, Baynard and Dennison. Nor does Bramble's care for his tenants depend solely upon the squire's altruism; the reciprocal relationship which Smollett's idealized picture of pre-industrial rural society shows us, with its paternal landowner and contented peasantry, holds its own pleasures for Matthew, who, restating Smollett's conception of the ideal relationship between social classes, declares that "Finally, I live in the midst of honest men, and trusty dependants, who, I flatter myself, have a disinterested attachment to my person" (p. 119).

It is with the rural existence of Brambleton-hall that the squire contrasts his experience of London. "What temptation", he asks, "can a man of my turn and temperament have, to live in a place where every corner teems with fresh objects of detestation and disgust ?" (p. 118), and he draws our attention to the degeneration of traditional standards which seems (to him) irrevocably linked to urban life: "What kind of taste and organs must those people have, who really prefer the adulterate enjoyments of the town to the genuine pleasures of a country retreat ? " (p. 118). Those drawn to London, aristocrat, bourgeois, or labourer, "seduced by vanity, ambition and childish curiosity", lose the ability to distinguish excellence. A recital of the pleasures of life at Brambleton-hall

finds Matthew extolling the virtues of solitude, lack of noise, pure water, home-made beer and cider, sweet and nourishing veal, mutton and poultry, good bread, fish, vegetables, fruit, and, in general, an outdoor existence. In London, by way of contrast, he mentions the "streams of endless putrefaction" that he breathes, and unfavourably compares the unhealthy complexions of townspeople with the "ruddy swains" of Wales. He remarks on London's noise, the filthy water from open aqueducts, and denigrates both the wine and the capital's bread ("a deleterious paste, mixed up with chalk, alum and bone-ashes; insipid to the taste, and destructive to the constitution"), a distasteful substance which Bramble attributes to the people's fondness for white bread,[13] an instance of depraved taste echoed by the common craving for bleached veal and coloured vegetables. Bramble is here criticizing standards which are different not in degree but in kind from those at Brambleton-hall. Smollett is not simply regretting that Londoners are unable to obtain the high-quality produce which Matthew enjoys, but notes how the inhabitants of the capital prefer their food adulterated, and we do not need any explicit comment from the squire to link a general preference for food which looks attractive, rather than tastes well, to see a further manifestation of the bourgeois' love of ostentation overcoming good sense. The message is clear enough, but should we require any further evidence of the complete distortion of values within the town, we need look no farther than Jery's revelation, in his letter of June 22nd, that Tabitha has presented Chowder to Lady Griskin, "who proposes to bring the breed of

him into fashion" (p. 101).

The discussion of the country estate, and the social relationships which it implies, has a dramatic counterpart in Jery's letter of June 10th, when Bramble articulates his ideas on the correct roles of master and servants. He criticizes Clinker (recently revealed as a Methodist) not specifically for preaching, but for preaching to his social superiors. In his descriptions of Humphry, Smollett allays some of the fears which the squire has shown, for Clinker epitomizes all the virtues which Bramble has found lacking in London servants - gratitude, loyalty, and a proper sense of social station and of its obligations. Smollett reinforces his point by means of an obvious contrast with Sir Watkin Phillips' dishonest servant whom Jery mentions at the beginning of the same letter. "I hope (said Humphry) I have not failed in my duty to your honour - I should be a vile wretch if I did, considering the misery from which your charity and compassion relieved me...I'm bound to love and obey your honour - It becometh not such a poor ignorant fellow as me, to hold dispute with gentlemen of rank and learning - As for the matter of knowledge, I am no more than a beast in comparison of your honour; therefore I submit; and, with God's grace, I will follow you to the world's end, if you don't think me too far gone to be out of confinement" (pp. 138-9). From this point onwards, Clinker plays an increasingly important role in the novel. His honesty and simplicity are so well established, that when he is arrested on a charge of highway robbery, Bramble postpones his journey to the North in order to help his servant, so convinced is he of Humphry's

innocence. As Clinker - the servant - has demonstrated an awareness of his social responsibilities, so Bramble - the master - does likewise. He also reveals, at the same time, an ability to judge character. Matthew has previously demonstrated this attribute on several occasions, where Smollett contrasts it with the superficial assessment of other characters (Tabitha is unable to recognize Humphry dressed in clean clothes, for instance). When Clinker is arrested, "the spectators, who assembled to see this highwayman, were sagacious enough to discern something very villainous in his aspect" (pp. 145-6), a judgement as absurd as that which the would-be thief-takers make of the benevolent Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews: that he "had the most villainous Countenance they ever beheld".[14] In a description of Humphry which emphasizes the social values of the novel, Matthew reveals a somewhat greater perceptivity, noting the character of Clinker as one of "downright simplicity, warmed with a kind of enthusiasm, which renders him very susceptible of gratitude and attachment to his benefactors" (p. 153), a comforting appraisal after the experience of so much metropolitan disorder and dishonesty.

Having concluded his account of the city with some reassurance that social and moral stability may not be entirely lost, Smollett moves his party away from London and into the country. The transition produces an unexpected and ironic result. Whereas the disorder of London society provokes Clinker's assertion of his loyalty to traditional values, the country estate (which Matthew has praised as a bastion for

the defence of those values) proves, in other hands, only too susceptible to the pernicious influence of bourgeois irresponsibility. In his letter of June 26th, Bramble gives us two examples of life as a country landowner, which contrast strongly with his own way of life. Firstly, he introduces Squire Burdock, the ex-fox-hunter and would-be maintainer of Old English Hospitality, married to a domineering wife who treats with disdain all those of inferior fortune, without regard to their rank or personal merit. As so often in his fiction, Smollett makes marriage for love a particularly important example of moral conduct, and Squire Burdock has married not for love, but for his wife's fortune. In a difference of opinion over wealth - and specifically over the amount of Jery's fortune - Smollett makes his most obvious contrast of the values of Bramble and of the Burdocks. When Mrs. Burdock asks whether Jery is intended for the law, Matthew states without hesitation that "as he had an independent fortune, he should follow no profession but that of a country gentleman" (p. 167), and intimates a hope that his nephew will become a member of Parliament. When she discovers the extent of Jery's fortune - better than two thousand a year - Mrs. Burdock refuses to accept the possibility of Jery preserving his political independence "on such a paultry provision", while Squire Burdock compounds his wife's hint of corruption with the cry that "times are changed.... Country gentlemen now-a-days live after another fashion. - My table alone stands me in a cool thousand a quarter" (p. 167). Such extravagance, particularly when it supports ostentation rather than hospitality, is an

example of the distortion of traditional standards, and though we read that guests feed on a "great profusion of victuals and drink", Bramble again stands for the civilised values of the gentry when he comments that "I would rather dine upon filiberts with a hermit, than feed upon venison with a hog" (p. 165). The house itself, large, but neither elegant nor comfortable, resembles an inn, and "The footmen", Bramble complains, "might be aptly compared to the waiters of a tavern if they were more serviceable and less rapacious; but they are generally insolent and inattentive" (p. 165), a natural consequence of a life-style based on bourgeois values, for Burdock's servants are bound to him solely by financial ties.

In the same letter, Matthew describes a visit to another relative, the miserly Pimpernel. The youngest son of a gentleman, Pimpernel has trained as an attorney, and though he regains his place among the gentry after the deaths of his elder brothers, the lawyer lacks all the personal qualities necessary to support his rank. "He carried home with him", says the squire, "all the knavish chicanery of the lowest pettifogger, together with a wife whom he had purchased of a drayman for twenty pounds; and he soon found means to obtain a dedimus as an acting justice of the peace" (p. 171). Thus far Pimpernel closely resembles Justice Gobble, and like him, he is both avaricious and despotic. He is, continues Bramble, "a brutal husband, an unnatural parent, a harsh master, an oppressive landlord, a litigious neighbour, and a partial magistrate" (p. 171). Pimpernel suffers from faults picked up in, and typical of, the town. Financial circumstances force him, like

so many members of the gentry, into a profession, but unlike Roderick, he does not resist this downward movement but acquiesces to the middle class values with which he comes into contact. When he does inherit his father's estate, Pimpernel no longer retains the moral or social values necessary for its successful administration, for he brings back with him the worst features of modern urban life, together with a wife from the lower-middle classes.

As we see it, in close proximity to Burdock's, this tale proves a cautionary one, and the stories together help to place in perspective the view of rural life which Bramble has earlier depicted. Traditional values are attacked from two sides, both by the self-destructive surrender to luxury and extravagance and by the petit-bourgeois inability to understand or even recognise the social responsibilities of the gentry. Even in Roderick Random, Smollett portrayed the less impressive side of rural life (in his description of the irresponsible fox-hunter), but his greater insistence, at the end of his life, on the nature and number of moral insufficiencies within the gentry, reflects his awareness that the values of the middle classes and urban aristocracy were becoming increasingly dominant.

These descriptions of English landowners mark the virtual end of Smollett's discussion of society in the first English section of Humphry Clinker. The succeeding three letters contain much humour, particularly in the descriptions of Micklewhimmen and in the interpolated story of Hewett, but it is only incidentally, as when Clinker's simplicity and loyalty

lead him farcically to drag Bramble from the sea at Scarborough, that Smollett keeps us aware of the social values of the novel. In order to link the two very different sections of his work - the first English part of the tour, and the journey around Scotland - Smollett introduces Lismahago. The lieutenant's presence effects this link in two main ways: firstly, his arguments with Bramble on political and social issues serve to comment on, augment, and to some extent conclude several topics already discussed in the novel, and secondly, as Lismahago is himself a north Briton, much of his conversation on the Scottish character and life north of the border acts as an introduction to themes which Bramble's party will later discuss. Lismahago's contrasting descriptions of life in England and Scotland also prepare the reader for the very marked change of attitude that Matthew reveals in his account of Scotland.

The first arguments of Lismahago on, for example, his army career, the Americans or the English language, reveal that the lieutenant is even more stubborn and decided in his opinions than Bramble, and as such, his views cannot always be accepted at face value. Even Matthew finds the Scot cantankerous. "The spirit of contradiction is naturally so strong in Lismahago", he writes, "that I believe in my conscience he has rummaged, and read, and studied with indefatigable attention, in order to qualify himself to refute established maxims, and thus raise trophies for the gratification of polemical pride" (p. 203). To some extent, this is undoubtedly true, but the perversity of some of his arguments should not prevent us from

noting how much of Lismahago's polemic coincides with views already expressed in the novel, nor how it persuades even Bramble to modify previously tentatively-held opinions. The first instance of this is the lieutenant's defence of "lord B—'s inglorious peace", in which he endeavours to demonstrate that the treaty concluding the Seven Years' War was "the most honourable and advantageous peace that England had ever made since the foundation of the monarchy". Lismahago here displays even more enthusiasm about Bute than does Smollett, but their attitudes are similar. Bramble confesses that Lismahago "offered such reasons on this subject, that I was really confounded, if not convinced" (pp. 203-4).

Even more important are the lieutenant's other arguments. He contends that commerce will sooner or later prove the ruin of every nation where it flourishes, that parliament is the rotten part of the British constitution, that the liberty of the press is a national evil, and that the English jury system produces perjury and shameful injustices. Of these four main themes, it is the first with which Smollett is most concerned, and whose expression, by the time of writing Humphry Clinker, was the most difficult. Lismahago, for all his eccentricity, is expressing a view which underlies not only Smollett's early fiction, but much of his historical and social writing. The commercial revolution, or more exactly, the ethos behind it, lies, for Smollett, at the root of the majority, if not all, of the ills of contemporary society. It is the change in society which Smollett observed (of which his own youthful experience was a symptom) that

provoked his attacks, in many forms, on the unrestricted growth of commerce. Lismahago's arguments about this society all support views or incidents which have appeared earlier in Smollett's fiction, but stated so uncompromisingly they appear as extreme as they must have seemed to many readers in 1771. By introducing Lismahago, Smollett comes as close to questioning his own reiterated belief in the fundamental importance of landownership to British society, as was perhaps possible. However much Smollett believed in 1770 that a land-based society was the best solution for the happiness of all classes, he was not blind to the fact that society was moving in a very different direction. It is for this reason that Smollett places Lismahago's arguments before the Scottish section of the novel, where we find a modified view of a society which, though remaining well-ordered, allows the importance of the commercial revolution, and we should consider Lismahago's views against the experience of Bramble's party in both England and Scotland.

The moral tone implicit in the lieutenant's remark that "traffick was an enemy to all the liberal passions of the soul", is characteristic of much of his argument. Smollett's morality also, however subjective it may be, almost invariably takes first place in discussion of any aspect of social behaviour. Lismahago censures commerce as based on "the thirst of lucre", a sentiment expressed before in Humphry Clinker, particularly where Bramble decries the change it has brought about in normal social relationships, even friendships, since financial gain is now the predominating motive. Shifting his attack, the lieutenant speaks of the

sudden affluence engendered by trade, which (and he might here be quoting from Smollett's own History), "forced open all the sluices of luxury and overflowed the land with every species of profligacy and corruption" (p. 205). Within the novel itself, Smollett has demonstrated the truth of this observation, in his descriptions of society at Bath and London, and he dramatizes it most strikingly in the second English section of the novel.

Lismahago's argument ranges widely, and in his discussion of the British parliament, we can see the similarities and the differences between Smollett's treatment of a common theme in his specifically political writings and in his fiction. In his critical study, The Later Career of Tobias Smollett, Louis L. Martz demonstrates how closely Lismahago's comments on parliament follow Smollett's own criticism of that institution in The Present State.[15] The arguments are so similar that we can have no doubt that Lismahago is, here at least, speaking for Smollett. What proves very different is the tone of the two arguments, for whereas Smollett's is a balanced, judicious commentary, typical of the work as a whole, the lieutenant's is an extreme, impassioned attack. The discussion itself is catholic in nature, commencing with criticism of the system of buying boroughs and canvassing for votes "in consequence of which the elected and the elector, and, in short, the whole body of the people, were equally and universally contaminated and corrupted" (p. 205). The whole tenor of Lismahago's remarks suggests a summing up by Smollett of the attitudes he has reflected throughout his fiction, from the untrust-

worthiness of Mr. Cringer, through the polite hypocrisy of Sir Steady Steerwell, to the election episode in Launcelot Greaves, where we see the results of the chain of corruption which begins with administration itself and ends with both candidates and electors prostituting themselves for material gain. Nor are the deficiencies of the political system simply a matter for moral regret, for where corruption is endemic, liberty itself is at risk. Thus Lismahago concludes with the familiar fear that the theoretical balance between monarch, lords and commons created by the Act of Settlement might one day be destroyed by the acquiescence of a corrupt House of Commons, bought by the ministry, resulting in the same excess of monarchical power that the 1688 Revolution had sought to prevent. The value of the truly independent country member, such as Matt Bramble, becomes abundantly clear.

These arguments (and those on the liberty of the press and the superiority of Scottish law, which act as means of maintaining thematic unity by looking respectively backwards and forwards to the London and Edinburgh episodes of the novel) do not find immediate acceptance from Bramble, who "questioned", "argued" and "wrangled" with his companion. Though he occasionally refutes the lieutenant, Matt more often ends in agreement with him, and he concludes his account of their discussions with the words, "I believe, however, that I shall for some time continue to chew the cud of reflection upon many observations which this original discharged" (p. 206). Smollett's introduction of Lismahago fulfils three purposes: it brings in a character, humorous in himself, who will later provide further

comedy by his courting of, and marriage to, Tabitha; it introduces the reader to the Scottish section of the novel, and, by apparently putting the lieutenant in opposition to Bramble, it actually supports and strengthens the squire's own views on contemporary society and its problems.

Smollett is not content to describe these problems simply by means of reported discussions, and in his return to Humphry Clinker, we find a dramatization of two themes which run through the novel - the conduct of servants and the immorality of marrying for money. Jery, in his letter of July 18th, makes a decisive contrast between Clinker and his own servant, Dutton, in their courtship of Win Jenkins. From the moment of his appearance on the road to London, when Winifred notes his alabaster skin, Humphry has exercised a fascination for Tabitha's maid, whose own feelings for the sober, industrious Clinker are, however, weakened by her introduction to the urban life so different from that of Wales. The influence of Mrs. Patcher has not gone for nothing with Win, who turns her attentions to the petit-maître Dutton, whose flamboyance and belief in his own merits offer a direct contrast to Humphry's sobriety and humility. Certainly Winifred, who "seems to have adopted Mrs. Tabby's manner with her cast cloaths...learns her phrases [and] repeats her remarks" (p. 208), suits Dutton well, with his "second-hand finery", his habit of taking snuff, and his French manners, and so whilst Humphry escorts Tabitha to hear John Wesley preach, Dutton takes Winifred to the theatre. There they pass for actors ready for performance, until, their real

characters unfortunately revealed, they suffer the verbal and actual mud-slinging of the mob. For this insult to Winifred, Humphry holds Dutton responsible, and thrashes him in a fist-fight, after having rejected the petit-maître's suggestion of a duel, since, he says "it doth not become servants to use those weapons, or to claim the privilege of gentlemen" (p. 209). The attraction between Dutton and Winifred in fact comes shortly to an end, for the former, still hoping to improve his station, runs off with an heiress - the daughter of a pawnbroker - who (and Smollett stresses the moral dissoluteness to which a preoccupation with money leads) was already eloping with an Irishman. Whether justifiably or not, Smollett again links moral with social criticism, and it comes as no surprise to the reader that the servant Dutton, who does not know his proper place in society, gives evidence of his folly by his tawdry dress, and of his unjustifiable cupidity by running off with the heiress. Neither morally nor socially does he invite much sympathy from Smollett who points, by contrast, to the virtues of the simple Clinker, whilst supporting, in passing, his rejection of any marriage not contracted for love.

After Roderick Random, which not only has a Scottish hero, but also presents, in fictional terms, an important social dilemma of the Scottish gentry in the eighteenth century, Smollett makes little use of his own Scottish birth in terms of background for his fiction. His continued sojourn in London, however, was less one of choice than of necessity, for as he wrote in a letter to Alexander Carlyle, "I do not

think I could enjoy Life with greater Relish in any part of the world than in Scotland among you and your Friends, and I often amuse my Imagination with schemes for attaining that Degree of Happiness, which, however, is altogether out of my Reach" (Letters, p. 33). Smollett's last visit to his native country took place in 1766, and it is both to this journey, and to an evident desire to reinforce his work in The Present State on contemporary Scotland, that we owe the Scottish section of Humphry Clinker. Certainly ignorance about Scotland was general in England; Louis Martz notes that in the course of anti-Scottish feeling aroused by Bute's ministry, Wilkes could print James Howell's derogatory account of Scotland (published in 1649), with the implication that it accurately represented contemporary conditions.[16] Jery remarks that "between want of curiosity, and traditional sarcasms...the people at the other end of the island know as little of Scotland as of Japan" (p. 214), and Johnson comments scathingly on the ignorance of one eminent man who enquired of him "How it happened that England and Scotland, which were once two kingdoms, were now one" (Life, ii, p. 91). The most amusing instance of such ignorance in Humphry Clinker comes in Jery's letter of July 18th, where the letter-writer relates that his aunt "was so little acquainted with the geography of the island, that she imagined we could not go to Scotland but by sea" (p. 213), a tale which we might ascribe to Tabitha's very limited understanding, and the author's fertile imagination, were it not that, in a letter dating from 1754, Smollett tells how "one of our Chelsea Club asked me if the weather was good

when I crossed the Sea from Scotland" (Letters, p. 33).

Ironically, it is Smollett's very enthusiasm for Scotland (which also runs through the Scottish section of The Present State) which most endangers his desire that we should take seriously his account of that country. Though he suggests that his characters' descriptions are objective (Bramble as a Welshman should have no prejudice for or against Scotland), and though he duly notes some of the country's more disagreeable features - "the frightful moor of sixteen miles" after Berwick, or the "filthy and disagreeable" inn, or the smell at Edinburgh, the squire's enthusiasm is so marked in contrast with his misanthropic view of England that some of the seriousness is lost. In his letter of July 18th, for instance, Matthew speaks with approbation of "the noise of coaches and other carriages, for luxury as well as commerce", and even comments with pleasure on the sounding of church bells - both somewhat surprisingly in view of his comments on similar occurrences in Bath or London. In a more persuasive contrast to urban life in England, the squire notes that the beef and mutton of Edinburgh rival that of Wales, fish is good and fresh, and both water and bread are excellent. "I eat", he says, "like a farmer, sleep from mid-night till eight in the morning without interruption, and enjoy a constant tide of spirits" (p. 219).[17]

Many of the features of Edinburgh which the party describe are, as the few examples above suggest, set in deliberate opposition to similar ones in Bath or London (though they also receive confirmation in The Present State). This is also true of certain aspects

of social order which Jery and his uncle mention. In the former's letter of August 8th, for example, we read of the dinner given by the Edinburgh cawdies to the city's young gentlemen. Both in appearance and behaviour, the cawdies suggest a direct contrast to the servants found in English cities. Whereas the latter are extravagant in their dress and faithless in their service, the cawdies "though shabby in their appearance, and rudely familiar in their address, are wonderfully acute, and so noted for fidelity, that there is no instance of a cawdy's having betrayed his trust" (p. 226). Similar in intention is Matthew's laudatory account of the Scottish legal system, contained in his epistle of the same date, which besides complementing Lismahago's earlier remarks, also forms a contrast with the court scene in London, where Humphry is charged as a highwayman before a judge who knows both of Clinker's innocence and of the criminal nature of his accuser. Other aspects of life in Scotland - hospitals, the university and the medical school - seem impressive since they have no mentioned counterpart in England, and the work-house is also singled out, since it usefully employs its inmates in order that the poor may nearly maintain themselves, forming a link with Matthew's own care when exercising charity.

Only one real criticism escapes Bramble throughout his eulogistic description of Edinburgh and the surrounding countryside, but in social terms it is a serious one, for he writes that, if the citizens of the capital have one fault, "their weak side seems to be vanity. - I am afraid that even their hospitality is not quite free of ostentation. - I think I have

discovered among them uncommon pains taken to display their fine linen, of which, indeed, they have great plenty, their furniture, plate, house-keeping, and variety of wines, in which article, it must be owned, they are profuse, if not prodigal" (p. 234). This criticism is particularly noticeable in its application to a nation which Bramble generally praises for avoiding the extravagance symptomatic of the growing bourgeois influence on English society. Here, unsupported by further examples of ostentation or lack of good taste, Smollett's remark may be interpreted simply as a warning to Scotland. Nevertheless, when Bramble concludes, "A burgher of Edinburgh, not content to vie with a citizen of London, who has ten times his fortune, must excel him in the expence as well as the elegance of his entertainments" (p. 234), we know that even in Scotland, the squire is still wary of extravagance and of its attendant dangers.

Nor does Edinburgh alone receive Bramble's praise. Other urban centres in Scotland merit accolades from all members of the party. Jery comments on Glasgow, for instance, mentioning its trade and opulence, and remarking that "The town of Glasgow flourishes in learning as well as in commerce", expresses admiration of Scotland's education at the expense of England's. Matthew is also delighted with the city. He has previously noted the "neat, thriving town" of Alloa, and denominates Glasgow "one of the prettiest towns in Europe; and...one of the most flourishing in Great Britain" (pp. 245-6). Commenting favourably on the cathedral and the university, he mentions the growing population of thirty thousand, and remarks that "marks

of opulence and independency appear in every quarter of this commercial city" (p. 246). Coming after the repeated attacks on English commerce and its effects on society at Bath and London, the praise of Glasgow's trade in Matthew's letter of August 28th is surprising, but though the description of the city is too short to convince the reader that the city has really avoided the evils generally attendant on sudden affluence, it is true that nothing written by Jery or his uncle suggests either the extravagance or the folly of English society.

It is in further contrast to their accounts of England that both Jery and Matthew comment adversely on the quality of rural life in Scotland. The healthy, well-clothed labourers of England soon give way to the sallow-complexioned, shabby countrymen of Scotland (though Matt assures his nephew that they can well stand comparison with the peasants of France, Italy and Savoy, of whose poverty Smollett had earlier written in Travels through France and Italy). While Jery remarks on the beggarly appearance of the Scottish labourers and of the wretched cabins and stunted live-stock, the squire expands this description, noting the lack of enclosures which would separate fields and protect crops from the high winds. Whether or not this is intended to link to the squire's criticism of agriculture in the highlands, it remains somewhat puzzling in contrast to Smollett's non-fictional work, for though recent historians have shown that "improvers" were in a minority in the lowlands until the 1780s,[18] Smollett takes particular note in The Present State of how much agriculture has improved in the Lothians.

"The farmers", he says, "are master of the science of agriculture, and wealthy in consequence of their skill" (Present State, ii, p. 112). Whatever we make of Bramble's comments here, however, we see him in the highlands not only as a knowledgeable critic of agricultural deficiencies, but as an equally perceptive social observer. Noting the "barren and moorish" ground, and "poorly lodged", dirty and badly dressed peasants, Bramble proclaims that "Agriculture cannot be expected to flourish where the farms are small, the leases short, and the husbandman begins upon a rack rent, without a sufficient stock to answer the purposes of improvement" (p. 245). Whereas in England we see Bramble as critical of urban society, and an upholder of the values of rural life, in Scotland the reverse is generally true. The contradiction is more apparent than real, however, for it is rural and urban conditions, rather than Matthew's values which alter. As in England, rural life can only help landowner and tenant alike, if both recognize their responsibilities, and Smollett does not shirk from criticizing those landowners who find short leases and rack-rents an easy way of making fast profits. Like Bramble, he points to the root cause of much rural distress in Scotland when he writes, in The Present State, that food shortages must be imputed to the understandable "sloth and poverty of the tenants, oppressed by rapacious landlords, who refuse to grant such leases as would encourage the husbandman to improve his farm, and make himself better acquainted with the science of agriculture" (Present State, ii, p. 6). However superior a society based on the land may be to one

founded on commerce and urban development, rural existence does not in itself ensure a happy, fruitful and well-ordered life, for that rural society must first be well regulated (as Bramble's estate evidently is) with landlord and labourer or tenant farmer each playing his appropriate role for the good of both. Similarly, urban life need not necessarily produce those ills which Bramble so despises, but can, as with Edinburgh or Glasgow, be well ordered. These apparent paradoxes continue throughout the Scottish section of the novel, and though no resolution is attempted until Lismahago's reappearance at Carlisle, discussion of the nature of society increases. Smollett gives greater emphasis to the problem which underlies all his fiction, and Matt's letter of September 6th suggests that Smollett's conception of the ideal society is slowly changing. Though he has previously criticized urban commercial society for its less rigid class structure, and for thereby breaking down the concept of respect for rank which has traditionally held English society together, it is the very rigidity of the highland clan structure that the squire now questions. We can readily accept Bramble's criticism of the unswerving loyalty to the clan chiefs which led so many highlanders to participate in the 1745 rebellion, or to engage in cattle-stealing on behalf of a chieftain returned from exile, but it is difficult not to feel some surprise at Matthew's strictures on the general relationship between the clansmen and their leaders. Bramble writes of the highlanders that they obey the clan chief as their lord "with all the ardour of filial love and veneration; while he, on his part, exerts a paternal authority,

commanding, chastising, rewarding, protecting, and maintaining them as his own children" (p. 255). To criticize such a relationship seems, at best, untypical, for Bramble's treatment of his servants and tenants is the very epitome of paternalism. Matthew's only forceful objection is that the clan chieftains (like some English landowners) have not always felt a responsibility towards their clansmen equal to that of the highlanders to their leaders, and although the squire suggests that one might employ the common people in such a manner "as to give them a taste of property and independence", he immediately tempers this suggestion by commenting that "It cannot be expected, that the gentlemen of this country should execute commercial schemes to render their vassals independent; nor, indeed, are such schemes suited to their way of life and inclination" (p. 256; my emphasis).

In order to clarify these surprising and somewhat confused notions, Smollett takes care to give his readers a dramatic illustration of his meaning, and he suggests how Bramble's ideal might be put into practice in the story of Capt. Brown (which Jery relates in his letter of September 12th). The captain, we find, returning home prosperous from the East Indies, decides to set up a manufacture "to give employment and bread to the industrious" (p. 265). The moral intention that Capt. Brown brings to the introduction of industry reflects Bramble's apparent belief that commerce need not bring with it the social ills he has described, if it is restrained within certain bounds, and if accompanied by the traditional paternalistic morality characteristic of the country estate.

It seems to be of an urban squire that Bramble comments "he was an honour to his country, and had in some measure redeemed human nature from the reproach of pride, selfishness, and ingratitude" (p. 265).

Lest we take this for facile optimism on the author's part, however, Smollett develops the contradictions surrounding the growth of trade and manufacturing in Scotland, in Matthew's letter of September 15th, when the squire relates the story of Lismahago's experience in Scotland. The lieutenant returns to his ancestral home only to discover that his nephew has married the daughter of a bourgeois, the director of a weaving manufacture, with whom he has entered into partnership ("a disgraceful situation" as Bramble remarks). Finding industrial machinery has actually been installed in the great hall, Lismahago is enraged, and he denounces his nephew with biblical vehemence, horsewhipping him and crying, "Degenerate rascal! you have made my father's house a den of thieves" (p. 272). Smollett uses Lismahago's experience to illustrate the paradoxical situation of contemporary Britain, and as Lismahago's comments on society introduced the Scottish section of Humphry Clinker, so his developed arguments bring it to a close. But though, like the lieutenant, Smollett decries the destruction of the traditional life-style of the gentry, the author of Humphry Clinker is not quite the same man who denounced commercial and urban growth in Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle. Simple negation of social progress - positing a return to an idealized feudal past - is unacceptable to a man who spent most of the last period of his career engaged in studies of the economic and political life of his

nation and one who had seen, for the first time in recent years, the poverty of a large part of the population in his native land. Thus Lismahago's cantankerous diatribe against the union of England and Scotland (which Bramble reports in his letter of September 20th) and which posits a retrogressive or, at best, static society, finds little favour with the squire (or with Smollett). Though many of the lieutenant's arguments are valid and find support in the events of the novel itself, his denunciation of trade is too extreme even for Smollett. In the person of Lismahago, Smollett seems to be criticizing both the attitudes and (especially) the method of presenting them, which run through his earlier fiction. The Smollett of Humphry Clinker is a more perceptive social critic, a less backward-looking idealist and, perhaps, a man rid of the illusion that simple answers can solve complex problems.

Certainly this is the Smollett we see at the end of Bramble's commentary on contemporary Scotland, when the lieutenant seems to have taken over Matthew's role as the prophet foretelling social disaster. This extended metaphor appears in Matthew's letter of September 15th, when the squire remarks, "the captain, like the prophets of old, is but little honoured in his own country", and Lismahago cries "Woe be to that nation, where the multitude is at liberty to follow their own inclinations! Commerce is undoubtedly a blessing, while restrained within its proper channels; but a glut of wealth brings along with it a glut of evils: it brings false taste, false appetite, false wants, profusion, venality, contempt of order, en-

gendering a spirit of licentiousness, insolence and faction, that keeps the community in continual ferment, and in time destroys all the distinctions of civil society; so that universal anarchy and uproar must ensue" (p. 280). Though we may question their manner of expression, we can scarcely, in the context of the novel, disagree with Lismahago's sentiments, for not only has Bramble revealed them himself, but he has also experienced their unpleasant truths. He has seen false tastes in the descriptions of food, clothing and entertainments at Bath and London, false wants and profusions in the general extravagance of both cities, contempt of order in the promiscuous mixing of social classes at Bath, engendering insolence among the middle classes and venality in their rapacious servants, while corrupt politicians permit faction and encourage licentiousness by their recognition of the influence of the mob. Yet when Lismahago enquires of the squire whether even national opulence can justify the changes brought about by a freer, commercial society, Matt shows himself to be a more forward-looking man than hitherto: "No, sure", he retorts, "but I am one of those who think, that, by proper regulations, commerce may produce every national benefit, without the allay of such concomitant evils" (p. 280). In this answer we recognize the greatest effect of Bramble's tour of Scotland, for he has seen there a country which, whilst accepting the inevitable expansion of commerce, has not allowed the bourgeoisie to act as arbiters of taste nor their values to dominate social relationships. This is the great difference between the portraits of England and Scotland in Humphry Clinker, and though

Bramble apologetically mentions the dangers of vanity in relation to the citizens of Edinburgh, the extravagance which is common south of the border is conspicuously absent north of it. The people are both content with their own rank and respectful of public order, so that Bramble's party are neither jostled at their entertainments by parvenus, nor threatened by the barely-restrained common people, and where there is a recognition of social responsibility, then commerce can - like the properly administered estate - support the continued stability of society by contributing to the general happiness and well-being of all its members.

With the journey of Bramble's party southwards, away from Scotland, Smollett introduces us to the final section of the novel, in which he not only draws together the threads of the various plots - Liddy's romance with Wilson, Tabitha's hunt for a husband, the revelation of Humphry's true position - but also makes a final summary of his own social and moral values. Interpolated narratives play an important role in Smollett's fiction (as we have seen), by giving a wider confirmation of the experience of the central characters, and in reinforcing the author's values. In the stories of Baynard and Dennison, Smollett (having made his gesture in the direction of the mercantile society) returns to the country estate, which still remains his ideal social unit.

Bramble begins his account of Baynard's affairs by describing with chagrin the changes that have been made (for the worse) in the house of his friend. He

relates how Baynard had by extravagance, and the expense of a contested election, turned an income of fifteen hundred a year into a debt of ten thousand pounds, and how he resolved to discharge the debt "by means of a prudent marriage". Even this brief hint will be enough to make Smollett's intentions apparent to anyone who remembers either the social consequences of Pimpernel's marriage into the middle classes or the moral import of Bramble's comment on Liddy's possible marriage to Barton; "in the choice of a husband, a young woman ought not to sacrifice the feelings of her heart for any consideration upon earth...Liddy is not so desperate...as to worship fortune at such an expense" (p. 141). In the brief description of Baynard's wife which follows, we see Smollett still insisting on the interrelationship between moral and social values. Baynard's reduction of marriage to a matter of financial self-advantage brings him a middle class bride, the daughter of a failed tradesman, with, it is true, a twenty thousand pound fortune (inherited from an uncle), but also a deficiency of taste which is not only regrettable, but financially ruinous. The ideas which Baynard holds at the time of his marriage are similar to those of Bramble: to reside on his country estate and devote himself to its improvement, whilst enjoying the friendship of neighbours, and keeping his house comfortable, but free from extravagance. It is the attitude of his wife (who embodies all the worst attributes of the middle classes) which destroys this visionary scheme. Devoid of taste, Mrs. Baynard's ruling passion is a vanity which manifests itself in

a characteristically bourgeois "shew and ostentation". The couple, who remain in London solely at her insistence, are sucked "into the vortex of extravagance and dissipation", and Mrs. Baynard's preference for the shallow pleasures of the town and her unthinking acceptance of its values, go with her when she travels, with her husband, to pass the summer on his country estate. While Mrs. Baynard insists on maintaining a household comparable (down to the last detail) with those belonging to men of much greater fortune, her husband finds his whole life revolving around empty amusements, without friendship, while his estate decays. Everything that Bramble sees on his visit reinforces his belief in the absurdity of bourgeois extravagance and in its potentially destructive effect on social order, even on the country estate, for the servants show neither civility to guests, nor respect to their masters, since their service depends solely on financial ties. In the house, the rooms and the furniture, even the stove, are ornamental rather than functional - their aim is to impress others rather than to serve the family, while Mrs. Baynard, not content to increase her expenditure on the latest fashion, has, in the interests of her perverted taste, rendered the house both cold and uncomfortable. She has (to show her taste) pulled down the trees and walls surrounding the house - thereby letting in the east wind - and seized a two hundred acre farm, in an unsuccessful attempt to turn it into an ornamental lake, two acts which reveal the triumph of ostentation over common sense, and which also attract Pope's attention in the Epistle to Burlington:

The vast Parterres a thousand hands shall make,
Lo! COBHAM comes, and floats them with a Lake:
Or cut wide views thro' Mountains to the Plain,
You'll wish your hill or shelter'd seat again
(ll. 73-6).

Smollett's point (like Pope's) is not simply that Mrs. Baynard is a foolish woman, but that personal vanity can, and does, have social consequences, for the seizure of the farm takes from the tenants their means of livelihood, and her diversion of the stream robs two mills of the power they need. Bourgeois irresponsibility deprives Baynard of income, and his tenants of employment. This is the most serious defect that we see in Mrs. Baynard, for her ostentation threatens the basis of social order itself, but her whole way of life reveals similar perversions of taste. She is ill-mannered to her guests, and her son's impertinence provokes even the gentle Liddy to box him vigorously round the ears. When the party dines, the food includes no nourishing or even enjoyable course, but a succession of French dishes - ragouts, fricassees, rôtis, and, for dessert, "iced froth" - contrived for show, and served by powdered lacqueys on a succession of expensive plate and china. The dining room is a large old Gothic parlour (formerly the hall) which, paved with marble, is cold enough to set Bramble's teeth chattering. It is easy to think that, in writing this passage, Smollett had in mind Pope's lines, again from the Epistle to Burlington:

Is this a dinner? this a Genial room?
No, 'tis a Temple, and a Hetacomb.
A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state,

You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
Sancho's dread Doctor and his Wand were there.
Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,
From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King
(ll. 155-62).

Such is the situation which Bramble discovers on his first visit to his friend, a way of life which forms a microcosm of the changing society of eighteenth century England - the gentry corrupted by bourgeois influences, the pleasures of the country sullied by the follies of the town, the aesthetic and moral standards of traditional society perverted by the worship and unceasing pursuit of money, and the nouveaux riches' love of ostentation. Here too we see the rudeness of servants, their lack of fidelity, and (in the case of the Baynards' personal servants) their absurd metamorphosis into "gentlemen". And, underlying all of this, we find the gentry's rejection of their responsibilities for tenants and servants alike, abandoned in favour of the gratification of vanity, which - if the Baynards' son is a true guide - threatens to break down all accepted standards of behaviour within a generation.

It is in contrast to the corrupt society of Baynard's house (and as a means of introducing the contrasting estate of Dennison) that Smollett turns to the virtues of the perfect servant, Humphry Clinker. In an episode which forms a serious counterpart to Clinker's comic attempts to save Matt from the sea at Scarborough, Humphry really does prevent the squire from drowning when his coach overturns in a stream.

Though Matthew offers Humphry thirty guineas and a ring of the same value (the contents of his pockets), Clinker refuses them, crying "as for the lucre of gain, I renounce it" (p. 315), the final rejection of service dependent on financial reward that he makes, and one which culminates Smollett's portrayal of the perfect servant, bound by moral and not economic ties, in his fiction. Only a page later, the reader discovers that (as Smollett has hinted earlier) Matthew's paternal concern for all his servants is particularly appropriate in his relations with Humphry, and the squire officially admits Clinker as his natural son.

As Bramble's generosity originally prompted the devotion of Humphry, so Smollett introduces the equally benevolent Dennison through the praises of a former servant, who represents his ex-master as "a perfect miracle of goodness and generosity" (p. 316). Charles Dennison, a college friend of Bramble's, embodies all the virtues that Bramble (and Smollett) admires and expects in a country gentleman. His life-style is the antithesis of Baynard's, and he has, comments Matt, "really attained to that pitch of rural felicity, at which I have been aspiring these twenty years in vain" (p. 320). Like Pimpernel earlier in the novel, Dennison is the younger son of a gentleman, and as such obliged to earn a living in a profession - again, like Pimpernel, in the law. But there the resemblance ends, for Dennison, like Roderick's father, marries a gentlewoman for love, even though his father rejects him as a result. In a further similarity to the situation of Roderick's father, the family estate passes to a fox-hunting sot, who drinks himself to death only after having shown

himself unworthy of his position amongst the gentry, by both insulting and oppressing his servants and by almost ruining the estate. When Dennison finally inherits the land, he (in contrast to Pimpernel) immediately abandons his profession, and with the encouragement of his generous and intelligent wife, retires to the country. Undeterred by reports of the expense of a rural existence, he consciously rejects extravagance and dissipation, and, asking only simple, wholesome food and decent lodgings and apparel, proceeds to support his family by the careful administration of his estates. While Baynard allows his estate to be transformed from a useful to a supposedly ornamental one, Dennison converts his land in order that it should be more productive; whereas Baynard's house is ostentatious and uncomfortable, Dennison's is simple but homely. If Baynard's wife requires as many servants as her neighbours, then Mrs. Dennison asks for no more than a bare minimum of footman, house-maid and cook. Even in details, Smollett contrasts completely the respective life-styles of Baynard and Dennison, with the latter rejecting the "luxury and dissipation" which has ruined the former. As their wives differ, so do their sons, one ill-mannered, the other "of very amiable character", who follows his father in refusing marriage with the "heiress of a considerable fortune" suggested for him, in favour (as it transpires) of Liddy.

The obvious and enviable merits of Dennison's house and estate provide the impetus for the resolution of the unfinished business of Humphry Clinker, in which Matt puts into practice the lessons that Smollett wishes us to learn concerning the regulation

of country life, on Baynard's behalf. On the death of the latter's wife, the squire gives instructions to sever Baynard's strongest links with the town, by selling his house in London, together with all its contents. He dismisses "that legion of supernumerary domestics, who had preyed so long upon the vitals of my friend: a parcel of idle drones, so intolerably insolent, that they even treated their own master with the most contemptuous neglect" (p. 342), thereby ridding Baynard of one of the most expensive and detestable reminders of his former extravagant existence. Though in the Scottish section of Humphry Clinker, Smollett has for the first time been prepared to admit the value, even the necessity, of the expansion of commerce, his real interest still lies in traditional rural society. Thus Bramble's plans for Baynard's estate do not allow for any innovation, but restore the house and grounds to their original state, before their comfort and utility were perverted by the false values of the town - the rivulet is returned to its old channel, the pleasure-ground reverts to its original status as corn-field and pasture, and walls are rebuilt and trees planted as before to eliminate the elements. Baynard's own intentions similarly reflect this return to the past and to tradition, for in accordance with his original decision, he enters himself as a pupil in farming, and decides to devote himself completely to agriculture.

The ideal society which Smollett posits in Humphry Clinker is the traditional rural society of the gentry, based on the country estate. Despite the modifications in his views which so many years of political and

economic study induced, whereby he admits the importance and permanence of the commercial revolution (whilst unrealistically rejecting its ethos), it is rural society which remains his overriding interest, and whose values underly his fiction. However inadequate such a social vision may have been by 1770 - at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution - it was not, as Smollett insists, simply an attempt to defend the privileges of a few by means of escape into an idealized past. This belief is an error which even the most distinguished of Smollett's critics has perpetuated and which does scant justice to the author. In his Introduction to the Oxford edition of Humphry Clinker, Professor Knapp notes Bramble's observation of social evils, and continues: "He would welcome reforms, but how actively he would work to effect them is perhaps questionable", concluding with a reference to the importance of the country estate in the novel that ends, "Smollett himself loved an Arcadia" (p. xvi). The conviction that Bramble is an impractical observer who wishes (like Smollett) to enjoy only the pleasures of an ideal rural escape, is without justification. Not only has the squire performed his civic duties by sitting as an independent member in parliament, but in his careful and sympathetic administration of his estate he has created a miniature society which is beneficial not only to himself but to servants, tenants and neighbours also. In Humphry Clinker, Smollett deliberately counters the notion that the country estate is simply an idealized retreat, and in the letters of the naive Liddy, he shows us the simple (and simple-minded) rural idyll which both he

and Bramble reject. For Lydia, country felicities consist in "the ground enamelled with daisies, and primroses, and cowslips; all the trees bursting into leaves, and the hedges already clothed with their vernal livery ...tender bleating wanton lambkins playing, frisking and skipping...[while] all night long sweet Philomel pours forth her ravishingly delightful song" (p. 27).[19] This is Smollett in an ironic and in a serious mood, for though Liddy's conventional and cloying images at first provoke a smile, they also serve as an implicit and important contrast to her uncle's socially aware view of the country estate. Matthew does, naturally, appreciate the minor pleasures of rural life, but his greatest stress falls on the social importance of the estate. Unlike the city, with its corruption and dissipation, the country estate depends not on inauthentic economic ties which encourage greed and conflict by setting the desires of one social group against those of another, but on the authentic moral values of mutual affection and a recognition of mutual responsibility. These are the values which not only emerge from Smollett's social vision, but which also illuminate the whole of his fiction.

Afterword

Since I began work on what is now The View of Eighteenth Century Society in the Novels of Tobias Smollett, there has been no shortage of new writing on (or mentioning) the picaresque novel, Smollett's fiction or his politics. Such articles have often contained much interesting detail, but few (it seems to me) have been successful in illuminating the central problems which these topics raise. Nor has this been for lack of concern about such issues - what is the essential nature of the picaresque novel, of Smollett's fiction, of his politics (did he have any, is, of course, a variation on this latter theme)? The passing reference to these topics need not detain us for long (although the quality of such incidental reference should amply demonstrate to all critics the need for extreme caution when venturing into general discussion). But what, for instance, do we make of the claim that in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, "Fielding used the picaresque epic form and was strongly influenced by aristocratic values",[1] when no attempt is made to define "picaresque" or "epic" and when Fielding's noted antipathy towards some aspects of "aristocratic" society is simply left as an unresolved paradox? How seriously can we regard any statement concerning Smollett and "other English picaresque writers of his time",[2] a cavalier comment which succinctly reveals a cheerful disregard for both critical and national niceties? Perhaps such errors do not matter. Certainly we should not, if the works above

broached the fiction of Fielding or Smollett only in passing, allow the hurried remark or the over-broad generalization to blind us to work of real value, to any work, that is, which gives us a clearer perception of the author's intentions, of his moral preoccupations and social values, and which sends us back to the novels with renewed enthusiasm. We do not reject Fielding's asides on literature because he disliked Pamela, nor Johnson's criticism because he disparaged Tom Jones. But what if the critical solecisms we have noted above are not hurried remarks, not over-broad generalizations; what if their authors purport to discuss "Fielding, Tom Jones, and the Rise of the Novel", and "Smollett's Development as a Novelist"? Then we are back with the problem which gave rise to our first chapter, "Smollett and the Picaresque Novel" - the problem of the misunderstanding of a basic critical concept. Neither of these two statements in fact necessitates an answer here; I have dealt with the misconceptions they promote at sufficient length elsewhere. Other problems remain, however, and it is to the fundamental importance of two of these for Smollett's, and other, fiction that I wish to draw attention here.

George S. Rousseau's "Smollett and the Picaresque: Some Questions about a Label", which concerned us in our first chapter, provoked a reply from the best of present-day Smollettian critics, P-G Boucé ("Smollett's Pseudo-picaresque"[3]), which unfortunately adds to, rather than detracts from, the number of confusing limitations about the use of the term "picaresque". Admittedly there are attempts to clarify some of Rousseau's more obvious obfuscations (Boucé correctly

suggests that the first-person narrator is not essential to the picaresque novel form - though by avoiding discussion of the narrator's function, he is unable to say why a third-person narrator can take his place), but in at least one instance he raises a new and apparently decisive argument against using "picaresque" as a useful taxonomical term in connection with Smollett's fiction. Drawing primarily on his reading of Spanish picaresque novels and of Gil Blas, Boucé remarks that "I could not help noticing the importance of the picaro's humble, even - in modern parlance - proletarian origins",[4] and consequently concludes that neither Roderick nor Peregrine can be picaros. This is less than the minor point of disagreement it might at first appear. We gain nothing by either affirming or denying the importance of the picaro's social status, nor by trading impressions of that status, unless we first ask why the Spanish picaro should be proletarian. The question (and its answer) raises important issues, the ramifications of which extend beyond Smollett's fiction to the wider problems of any artist's use of literary tradition within a changing society.

We have noted in some detail the varieties of disorder in Spanish society, especially as they are reflected in Spanish picaresque fiction, and have mentioned in particular two important characters - the picaro and the impoverished hidalgo. The former, as Boucé correctly remarks, is of humble birth and his rootless situation reflects that of many of the contemporary lower class population of Spain, divorced from their traditional occupations on the land, and - in the period following the collapse of Spanish industry -

thrown into a life of lawlessness on the margins of society. The undoubted emphasis on this section of the community reflects both the size of the problem (well attested to in contemporary writing of all kinds, v. above, pp. 33-42), and, in part, the situations and experience of the writers of picaresque fiction. If the flamboyant career of the author of Riconete y Cortadillo springs most readily to mind, we should not forget that the lives of, for instance, Mateo Alemán or Vicente Espinel reveal that other authors of picaresque fiction also had personal experience of the milieux they so minutely describe, and an affinity and sense of identification with the central characters of their novels. The Spanish novelas picarescas are not, however, memorable simply for their Lazarillos, Guzmáns, or Estabanillos. The disorientation of the lowest classes of society was paralleled by that of the hidalgo - the gentleman and small landowner - a disorientation produced by pressures exerted on the one hand by large landowners (often aristocrats) anxious to consolidate their estates and on the other by wealthy bourgeois who had profited from the industrial boom. Though he certainly lacks the central importance of a Làzaro, the impoverished gentleman is noteworthy both as a literary creation and as the fictional representative of an actual social group at a time of real hardship and changing social patterns.

The gentleman who finds his social position threatened both by the increasing gulf between himself and more wealthy neighbours, and by the pressure of a newly wealthy bourgeoisie is, therefore, no invention of Smollett's. What Smollett does is to

readjust the relative importance of two groups - the minor landed gentry and the labouring classes detached from their traditional social relationships with their masters and the land they worked. This latter group appears in, at least, Smollett's first three novels, including the non-picaresque Fathom, and in the character of a Miss Williams or Ratchkali we see what might earlier have been a Justina or a Pablos. My point is not, of course, simply that this lower social group also appears in Smollett's picaresque fiction. In Lazarillo, Làzaro and not the hidalgo is the picaro; in Roderick Random, the picaro (if he exists) is Roderick and not Miss Williams. But to argue from this that Roderick cannot therefore be a picaro is to misunderstand the nature of any genre, of literary tradition itself. Only by the intelligent adaptation of an established literary form can that form retain its vitality. Observable differences between Alemán's or Quevedo's fiction and Smollett's work reflect not a move away from the picaresque novel but the ability of Smollett to comprehend the essential vision of the form - the vision of disorder - and to make the form and its vision serve to illustrate for contemporaries the specific problem of an identifiable social group as it manifests itself for an individual. The change that occurs in Smollett's use of the picaresque novel form echoes both the different social background of its author and the changes which have occurred in the social structure. Boucé, by considering the picaresque novel solely as a literary artefact, is unable to recognize that for Smollett the decision to make Roderick or Peregrine the central characters of his

first two novels was almost an inevitable one. Smollett's undoubted compassion for the misery endured by those at the bottom of the social ladder in an individualistic society did not allow him to observe their feelings or aspirations other than from his own viewpoint. Miss Williams, Hugh Strap or Tom Pipes exist only as perceived by a member of a different and socially superior class. Whatever gifts he possessed, as he himself realized, Smollett did not have the ability to enter into the mind and heart of the prostitute or the servant. For all his charity towards the position of the prostitute in eighteenth century society (his attitude is very close to Defoe's in pointing to man as the seducer and client) he could no more have written Moll Flanders than he could have penned Pamela. And having recognized his own limitations, Smollett did not write the adventures of Miss Williams or Ratchkali, for they would have been uneasy or tedious affairs (as we can see beyond question by considering the author's furthest move in that direction - making Ferdinand the titular hero of one novel). It is precisely because of Smollett's willingness to change the social station of the picaro, and because of his subsequently sympathetic handling of Roderick and Peregrine (with all their faults and their descent into vice and cruelty) that the picaresque vision of a society in moral and social disorder triumphantly survives its transposition from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and its change of country.

In arriving at his conception of the picaresque novel, Boucé specifically mentions Gil Blas, and perhaps he is not entirely wrong to do so (even for Quevedo,

the literariness of the novela picaresca assumes importance alongside its social vision) but in his rigid adherence to the conventions of the Spanish picaresque novel - with its proletarian picaro and Spanish locations - Le Sage comes close to destroying the virtues of his work. Such adherence (as I suggest above, v. pp. 72-4) makes Gil Blas not more, but less, authentic. Few indeed are the works which can both survive and transcend their dependence on another literary creation, whilst remaining untouched by personal experience at an individual or social level. Who today (besides the literary critic) would read Don Quixote if it did no more than burlesque the libros de caballerías, or Joseph Andrews if Joseph or Parson Adams did not take on a life quite separate from anything inspired by Fielding's desire to ridicule Pamela? Le Sage's work (to be sure) does take on a life of its own, but it remains most successful when not over-dependent on its sources and the false demands, in terms of character and location, they supposedly engender. Attempts to repeat a successful formula (as countless film producers and popular novelists have discovered) may or may not be financially rewarding but the "Son of..." syndrome is rarely productive artistically. And this is why Boucé's mistaken emphasis on the social origin of the picaro is primarily important. Not simply as it eases Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle into or out of the select society of the Picaresque Novel, but as it affects Smollett's genuinely perceptive use of literary tradition and as it grasps or fails to grasp the importance of specific social, economic and political conditions to a work of art.

It is precisely these socio-economic and political conditions that impinge on another recent undervaluation of the depth and breadth of Smollett's fiction. Undervaluation might seem a misleading, even harsh, term to use if only because the writer I have in mind would certainly disclaim any intention to discuss Smollett's novels at all, at least in the article in question. But again I wish to draw attention to the wider implications of what is (apparently) a considered remark. Though discussing Smollett's active involvement with British political affairs in a thorough and judicious manner (in "The Patriotic Briton: Tobias Smollett and English Politics 1756-1771"[5]), Robin Farbel makes the following assertions: "None of Smollett's writing... before 1756 could be called political....It is hard to escape the conclusion that Smollett was a devoted writer but was fundamentally apolitical".[6] It is the implicit denial that writing other than that involving mention of actual politicians, governments or policies can be usefully termed "political" that I wish to challenge.

The eighteenth century was a political age. Whether expressed in prose or verse, by a creative writer or social commentator, political thought looms large in the consciousness of the age's great writers. For its novelists (Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett), its greatest poet (Pope) and for men of miscellaneous creative talents (Swift, Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, Johnson) the eighteenth century remained throughout politically conscious. Political awareness, however, reveals itself in many ways, some more obvious than others, and we should not expect every manifestation

to be as palpable as Jonathan Wild. Of course, many artists, from different ages, diverse backgrounds and working in different media, have displayed an ability to treat public affairs in works revealing scant (or no) attempt to disguise their true intent. Absalom and Achitophel and Windsor Forest are examples of such work deriving from seventeenth and eighteenth century England; Verdi's Nabucco from nineteenth century Italy and Camus' La Peste from twentieth century France are others. Smollett himself does much the same thing in The History of an Atom. But Smollett's Atom is far from his most persuasive work and we need not search long for the reasons underlying its failure to convince. Given the intensity with which Smollett felt the ills of British society in the 1760s, together with his contempt for ministerial corruption and incompetence, and the extent to which he deprecated the politicians' lust for power and honours or the venal appetites of parliamentarians and voters, it should not surprise us that the force of the author's attack is dissipated in too many directions at once, to lie finally submerged under a torrent of ferocious and even obscene abuse.

Intensity of feeling is no bad thing for the creative artist, but it requires strict control. Some artists are more successful in this respect than others, but it is (at least in part) on the extent to which such control can be exercised that artistic success or failure depends. In War and Peace, writing of a period sufficiently distant to allow adequate detachment, Tolstoy creates in Napoleon, Alexander and Kutuzov, characters as real for the reader as Peter,

Nicolai or Natasha. Writing a novel set in an era too close for his own feelings and gifts, Solzhenitsyn creates in The First Circle (in uneasy contrast to his handling of Lev or Gleb) a Stalin all too apparently observed from outside, and observed with a hatred more intense than any Smollett reserved for Newcastle. The First Circle is overtly - by its introduction of Stalin - a "political" novel. But is Ivan Denisovich, though no Stalin haunts its pages, less of a "political" novel than the other? Aware, as we are, of the events which gave rise to its writing - circumstances not wholly extrinsic to the work - we must answer "no". And this avowal of the political nature of Denisovich depends not solely on any knowledge we may possess of the exact circumstances of its publication or its author's life, but on the fact that we are dealing with the product of our own age, with political events that, to a greater or lesser degree, are part of our awareness of our world. Smollett's novels are as much a product of his age and society as the fiction of Solzhenitsyn. From Roderick Random to Humphry Clinker, Smollett describes social and economic problems - which are political problems also - in terms of the experience of individuals. It is in this wider sense that Smollett's novels are political. Nor is this merely a quibble, for (as I hope is implicit in my study) one of the greatest strengths of Smollett's fiction is its generally acute sense of time and place. No one reading the novels can fail to see the importance Smollett attaches to, for instance, the appearance of Matthew Bramble at court in Humphry Clinker, but in a sense this is only

a minor, explicit manifestation of Smollett's political awareness. Much the same might be said of his own excursion into active politics in editing The Briton. Underneath both lies a more general concern with political life, with its morality, its ideals and most importantly with the sources of its power: the extent to which a wider political power would follow economic influence into the hands of the middle class. This last preoccupation is one which, in various forms, is discernible through the whole of Smollett's writings, and which holds as crucial a position in his thinking as in that of the country party. Political power during the eighteenth century did not mean only the power of the king, the ministry or parliament, but the lesser political power exercised locally by the landed gentry. This is the power to which we have referred throughout as social power - the power of the landowner over his tenants and labourers, the power of the landowner as magistrate, his power as local member of parliament or, at least, his part in selecting that member. It is the defence of this aspect of political power which played a large role in the ideology of the country party and which finds lucid and cogent expression in the novels of Smollett.

Let us not go too far. I do not wish to claim that we can view Smollett's fiction only in terms of eighteenth century politics; such limitation is entirely alien to my aims. My point is that by categorically denying the importance of a political dimension to the novels we deny a part of their richness. My own thesis throughout is (as will be clear) that the political is only one dimension of the novels,

but - in the widest sense - the most important of all. The accuracy of this claim must be left to the reader to decide, but I do maintain that only by regarding the fiction as in part political can we do justice to Smollett as a novelist. Nor am I unmindful of the specifically literary qualities (as opposed to the moral and social values) of the fiction in saying this. It is only by reference to their social - or "political" - preoccupations, that we can see the conclusions of Smollett's first four novels as truly consistent with what has gone before in those works. Without wishing in any way to detract from the moral or psychological levels which others have found in the novels, without denying the importance of fluent narrative or vivid characterization, I find it is in the light of its expression of the viewpoint of a particular social group within eighteenth century society that Smollett's fiction reveals itself as most truly original.

I have chosen to single out these comments of Boucé and Farbel both because they deserve an answer - unconsciously lessening, as they do, the extent of Smollett's achievement - and because they are recent ones. With the bicentary of Smollett's death commemorated, critical work goes on apace, and it is encouraging that it should do so. Too often in the past, literary historians, having decided (been told?) that Smollett is one of the great eighteenth century novelists, have been at something of a loss to say why, and by subsequently giving prominence to the individual features of his novels (particularly those already mentioned - his narrative gifts, his powers

of characterization, his vivid delineation of locales) have diverted the reader's attention from the heart of the author's work to its margins. I wish to make no inflated claims for The View of Eighteenth Century Society in the Novels of Tobias Smollett. With the publication of P-G Boucé's Les Romans de Smollett, the student of eighteenth century literature can begin to see for himself the structures of Smollett's novels, and the different moral, social and psychological levels and complexities they contain. Much work, however, remains to be done. Attempts to make sense of an author's work as a whole - to understand the man, his values and background - have always attracted literary critics and will doubtless continue to do so. Within the field of the eighteenth century novel, Defoe and Richardson invite examination of their different approaches to the economic and moral values of the growing middle classes. Fielding by contrast suggests the importance of optimism in the power of virtue and reason to solve the problems of what (despite the vigorously expressed fears of, inter alia, Smollett) was a predominantly stable age, whilst Sterne similarly intimates the need for balance of thought and feeling expressed not in terms of the supremely ordered world of Tom Jones, but in the (apparently) disordered world of individual consciousness. Such wider attempts to understand an artist's work have, in relation to Smollett, met with only limited success. The concepts of Radical Dr. Smollett, Smollett the Picaresque Novelist or Smollett of the Scottish School may interest but they do not convince. It is by our understanding of Smollett's social convictions, supported as they are by the precepts

of a traditional and generous humanity, and deriving both from personal experience and political conviction, that we can most fully appreciate his fiction. The vision of an organic society bound by moral and not financial ties, opposed to the increasingly dominant individualistic bourgeois society of eighteenth century Britain, is the most important and original feature of Smollett's fiction, and it has been my purpose throughout to draw attention to that vision and to the part it plays both in our appreciation of the novels themselves and in firmly establishing the place of Smollett as a major novelist of his century.

Notes

In the absence of good modern translations of most of the Spanish picaresque novels, I have generally used A. Valbuena y Prat's anthology La Novela Picaresca Española. The only exceptions to this rule are Lazarillo de Tormes and El Buscón where I have quoted from Michael Alpert's translations (published in Two Spanish Picaresque Novels). For Le Sage's Gil Blas, I have naturally used Smollett's own translation. All other translations of primary and secondary sources are my own.

(Notes pp. 1-6)

Introduction

1) A characterization quoted by Lewis M. Knapp in Tobias Smollett (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 4.
2) T.G.Smollett, The Letters of Tobias Smollett, ed. L.M.Knapp (Oxford: O.U.P., 1970), pp. 43-4.
3) T.G.Smollett, The Present State of All Nations (London, 1768), ii, p. 209.
4) Hume Campbell represented Peter Gordon in the latter's action against Smollett for assault.
5) T.G.Smollett, Travels through France and Italy (1766; rpt. London: O.U.P., World's Classics, 1907), p. 228.
6) T.G.Smollett, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker,

(Notes pp. 6-13)

ed. L.M.Knapp (London: O.U.P., 1966), p. 126.

1: Smollett and the Picaresque Novel

1) Consider, for example, Angus Ross' "Introduction" to the Penguin edition of Humphry Clinker (London: Penguin, 1967), or J.V.Price, Tobias Smollett: The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (London: Arnold, 1973).
2) George S. Rousseau, "Smollett and the Picaresque: Some questions about a label," Studies in Burke and his Time, 41 (1971), 1886-1904.
3) See Humphry Clinker, ed. Knapp; Ferdinand Count Fathom, ed. Damian Grant (Oxford: O.U.P., 1971); Humphry Clinker, ed. A. Ross.
4) Walter Allen, The English Novel (1954; rpt. London: Penguin, 1958), p. 69.
5) Robert Giddings, The Tradition of Smollett (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 148.
6) Angel Valbuena y Prat, ed., La Novela Picaresca Española (Madrid: Aguilar, 1966), p. 31: "Before examining the evolution of the Spanish picaresque novel in detail, through its significant works, we must note that it is not possible to reduce the whole genre to an excessively strict unity, that will give an excessively one-sided impression of it. Although Alemán's Guzmán stands at the centre of all the picaresque, we must not consider it a work precluding other possibilities".
7) Valbuena y Prat, p. 41: "We have noticed, then, a difference, a different type of picaresque between the works of Cervantes and the other exploits and accounts of the youths who are telling their life-

story. Because of this the picaresque elements take on a very personal form in the hands of Cervantes".

8) A.A.Parker, Literature and the Delinquent (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1967), p. 6.

9) Stuart Miller, The Picaresque Novel (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve Univ., 1967), p. 98.

10) That Stuart Miller, in the work cited above, actually discusses Moll Flanders as one example of a picaresque novel, is less of a contradiction than it might appear. The divergence of my opinion from his stems entirely from the vexed question of Defoe's handling of his central character; Miller evidently does not find (as I do) that the authorial irony precludes any really sympathetic identification with Moll.

11) Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961; rpt. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, Phoenix Edition, 1967), p. 150.

12) Miller, p. 131.

13) A. Pope, An Essay on Man, IV, l. 49; this and all subsequent quotations of Pope's poetry are taken from The Poems of Alexander Pope ("The Twickenham Edition"), ed. J. Butt (1963; rpt. London: Methuen, University Paperbacks, 1968).

14) Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, "Some Reflections on the Present State of the Nation," in The Works of Lord Bolingbroke (1844; rpt. London: Frank Cass, 1967), ii, p. 448.

15) Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, ed. R.P.C.Mutter (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 123.

16) Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English

Novel (London: Hutchison, 1951), i, p. 76.

17) H. Fielding, Jonathan Wild (1743; rpt. London: Everyman, 1973), p. 141.

18) Fielding, Tom Jones, p. 123.

19) H. Fielding, Miscellanies, ed. H.K.Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), i, p. 11.

20) Valbuena y Prat, p. 23: "The satirical element enters into the picaresque novel to a large extent. Various occupations and social classes are the target of the witty trickery or the sharp censure of the character who is relating, at the whim of the author, his assumed life-story".

21) Compare, for example, the account of the hidalgo in Lazarillo with the following extracts from a letter written in the sixteenth century by a Jesuit, quoted by Marcelin Defourneaux in La Vie Quotidienne en Espagne du Siècle d'Or (Paris: Hachette, 1964), pp.249-50:

> Il y a trois ou quatre jours, on a arrêté à Madrid un homme qui le matin se revêtait de haillons et feignait d'être estropié et malade, demandant l'aumône à grandes lamentations et grands cris jusqu'à une heure. Puis il rentrait dans son logement, mangeait et se revêtait de soie, splendidement, et se peignait ....[Il] déclara qu'il avait adopté ce mode de vie pour éviter l'ecueil de ceux qui se promènent et mènent un brillant train de vie, sans avoir ni rente, ni source de revenu, opérant la nuit dans les maisons sans surveillance, et faisant main basse sur ce qui était mal gardé.

(Notes pp. 25-30)

22) Valbuena y Prat, p. 23: "From Guzmán onwards, the same feeling for caricature which elongates characters and background, and, as a result, deforms what could be realism, tends to present the grotesque or venal side, always exaggerating the negative aspect of every office and every profession".

23) Francisco de Quevedo, "The Swindler" ("El Buscón"), trans. M. Alpert, in Two Spanish Picaresque Novels (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 93. All subsequent references to "The Swindler" and to "Lazarillo de Tormes" are to Alpert's translation in this edition.

24) Mateo Alemán, "Guzmán de Alfarache," in La Novela Picaresca Española, p. 274: "Hers was one of the most perfect and rare beauties to be seen in anyone. She would be not yet seventeen years of age, and being in the state I have referred to, it emphasized much more greatly her discretion, gravity and grace".

25) T.G.Smollett, Roderick Random (1748; rpt. Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1925), ii, p. 18.

26) Miguel de Cervantes, "Rinconete y Cortadillo," in La Novela Picaresca Española, p. 177: "My homeland isn't really home, since I have there only a father who doesn't think of me as a son, and a step-mother who treats me like a step-son".

27) Jerónimo de Alcalá Yáñez, "El Donado Hablador," in La Novela Picaresca Española, p. 1200: "I, father, was born in a town in Andalusia; my parents, whom God has taken, although I never knew them, were, I am told, people of importance in my village... my father died when I was twenty days old...so

they put me in mourning in the cradle".

28) T.G.Smollett, Peregrine Pickle, ed. J.L.Clifford (Oxford: O.U.P., 1964), p. 53.

29) Quoted by J.H.Elliott in Imperial Spain 1469-1716 (1963; rpt. London: Penguin, 1970), p. 113.

30) John Lynch, Spain Under the Hapsburgs (Oxford: O.U.P., 1964), i, p. 93.

31) "Today honour scorns the man who works".

32) Elliott, p. 115.

33) Fabio, the courtier's hopes
Are prisons where the ambitious die
And where the most astute grow grey hairs.
(The original Spanish given in the text is taken from The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse, ed. J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1960), p. 189; the translation is my own.)

34) "To live except from rents, is not befitting of a noble".

35) Manuel Colmeiro, Historia de la Economía Política en España (1863; rpt. Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1965), p. 783: "Spanish industry had reached more or less the highest point of its prosperity at the mid-point of the sixteenth century. It did not enjoy its good fortune for very long, since it quickly began to embark precipitously on a downhill course, and fell calamitously to the bottom of the abyss".

36) Colmeiro, p. 785: "the number of people condemned to perish of poverty for want of work must have been greatly increased".

37) Quoted by William C. Atkinson in A History of

Spain and Portugal (London: Penguin, 1960), p. 154.

38) Colmeiro, p. 602:

> We say moreover that one of the things that causes us to have so many thieves in Spain, is likewise to tolerate so many vagabonds, because the kingdom is full of them and these are people many of whom wear chains and ornaments of gold and garments of silk, with their appearances very much in order, without serving anyone or having an estate, an office or a benefice, and, to clear up all doubts, some support themselves by sharping and practising any number of deceits, others by cheating at cards, others by stealing, and there is amongst them a captain of thieves who leads his allotted gangs in the fairs throughout the entire kingdom...and many by being pimps, the worst and most pernicious people.

39) James Boswell, Life of Johnson, ed. G.B.Hill, rev. L.F.Powell (Oxford: O.U.P., 1934), i, p. 490.

40) The Spectator, ed. D.F.Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), i, p. 88.

41) Although it is worth noting the following dialogue between Justice Gobble and the knight in Launcelot Greaves:

> 'What are you, friend? What is your station and degree?' 'I am a gentleman,' replied the knight. 'Ay, that is English

> for a sorry fellow, (said the justice.) Every idle vagabond, who has neither home nor habitation, trade nor profession, designs himself a gentleman. But I must know how you live?' 'Upon my means,' 'What are your means?' 'My estate.' 'Whence doth it arise?' 'From inheritance.' 'Your estate lies in brass, and that you have inherited from nature: but do you inherit lands and tenements?' 'Yes.'

T.G.Smollett, Sir Launcelot Greaves, ed. D. Evans (London: O.U.P., 1973), p. 94.

42) The Spectator, i, p. 91.

43) T.S.Ashton, An Economic History of England: The 18th Century (1955; rpt. London: Methuen, University Paperbacks, 1972), p. 47.

44) T.G.Smollett, The Continuation of the Complete History of England (1765; rpt. London, 1800), iv, pp. 247-8.

45) D. Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, ed. P. Rogers (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 295.

46) T.S.Ashton, for example.

47) See Dorothy George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 119.

48) Bernard Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, ed. F.B.Kaye (Oxford: O.U.P., 1924), i, p. 192.

49) Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, ed. A. Skinner (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 185.

50) Neither was it an exclusively British trait; in

the Travels, Smollett writes:

> The artisans of Nice are very lazy, very needy, very aukward, and void of all ingenuity. The price of their labour is very near as high as at London or Paris. Rather than work for moderate profit, arising from constant employment, which would comfortably maintain them and their families, they choose to starve at home, to lounge about the ramparts, bask themselves in the sun, or play at bowls in the streets from morning 'till night (p. 172).

51) Fielding, Jonathan Wild, p. 64.

52) M. González, Voyage to Great Britain (London, 1730); quoted by D. George in England in Transition (London: Penguin, 1953), pp. 24-5, who suggests that though purportedly Portugese, González was more probably English.

53) The perception of such antipathy, moreover, seems closely related to the nationality of the author. If Smollett describes a joke at the expense of the Scots, Defoe relates a similar incident, taking place in Edinburgh, in which Col. Jack is the butt of a Scotsman's wit: v. Defoe, Colonel Jack, ed. S.H.Monk (1965; rpt. London: O.U.P., Oxford Paperbacks, 1970), pp. 100-1.

54) Smollett's training as a doctor leads him to found his metaphor in a very real danger to the young child in the eighteenth century. Giving cold baths to newly-born children is one of the actions

against which William Buchan warns in his Domestic Medicine, first published in 1769; v. T.C.Smout, A History of the Scottish People (1969; rpt. London: Collins/Fontana, 1972), p. 258.

2: "Roderick Random"

1) G. Lukács, La Théorie du Roman (Geneva: Editions Gauthier, 1963), p. 61: "by a web of indissoluble bonds to the community whose fate crystallizes in his own life".
2) A-R. Le Sage,"The Author's Declaration," The Adventures of Gil Blas de Santillana, trans. T.G.Smollett (1748; rpt. London: O.U.P., World's Classics, 1907), i, p. 1.
3) The Spectator, i, pp. 448-9.
4) Mandeville, i, p. 59.
5) See Launcelot Greaves, pp. 38-40.
6) See, for example, Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 24-36, or J.H.Plumb, The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725 (1967; rpt. London: Penguin, University Books, 1973), p. 125.
7) Vicente Espinel, "La Vida de Marcos de Obregon," in La Novela Picaresca Española, Libro I, Descanso IX, p. 958: "This was the first step towards my undeceiving, and the beginning of knowing that no one should trust flattering words".
8) The words "and candour" included here are present in the first, though not the Shakespeare Head, edition.

9) The Shakespeare Head edition has "gain" for "glean"; the latter is the reading of the first edition.

10) Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (1957; rpt. London: Penguin, 1963), p. 65.

11) See P-G. Boucé, Les Romans de Smollett (Paris: Didier, 1971), p. 173.

12) Quoted by L.M.Knapp in Tobias Smollett, p. 285.

13) Bolingbroke, Works, ii, p. 386.

14) Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach (London: Penguin, 1963), pp. 57-8, translated by Anna Bostock.

3: "Peregrine Pickle"

1) Bolingbroke, Works, ii, p. 168.

2) The opposition of aristocrat and country gentleman, though of particular importance to Smollett's view of society, should not be regarded as an absolute division. Possibly a more accurate contrast would be that of large and small landowners. A few aristocrats with small estates would have had interests closer to those of the country gentlemen than to those of their fellow peers (for discussion of the most penurious noblemen, v. Namier pp. 221-5). Conversely, the wealthiest of the country gentlemen would have found themselves more naturally aligned with the court (Robert Walpole himself, though allied to the Townshends by his sister's marriage, was descended from what might be described as an archetypal family of country squires in Norfolk).

3) T.G.Smollett, Ferdinand Count Fathom, ed. D. Grant (London: O.U.P., 1971), p. 211.

(Notes pp. 156-192)

4) A.R.Humphreys, "Fielding and Smollett," The Pelican Guide to English Literature, ed. B. Ford (London: Penguin, 1957), iv, p. 327.

5) Allen, p. 69.

6) A. Ross, "The 'Show of Violence' in Smollett's Novels," Yearbook of English Studies, 2 (1972), p. 119.

7) See pp. 113-9.

8) Lines quoted (unnumbered) by Dennis Davison in his "Introduction" to The Penguin Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 15.

9) See pp. 746-7.

10) Fielding, Jonathan Wild, p. 22.

11) Fielding, Miscellanies, i, p. 10.

12) Pope, Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue I, l. 136.

13) This episode is pre-figured in Peregrine's encounter with the former oyster-wench, Mrs. Hornbeck, p. 193.

14) Pope, The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated, ll. 67-8.

15) See Letters, p. 65 and p. 69, for example.

16) Bolingbroke, Works, i, p. 502.

17) Bolingbroke, Works, ii, pp. 398-9.

18) The Tatler (London, 1711), iv, p. 56 (no. 199).

19) Ibid., p. 57 (no. 199).

20) The inserted "Memoirs" of Lady Vane, arguably gratuitous and certainly disproportionate in length, are nevertheless often thematically relevant, and the reader should not fail to notice the peculiar appositeness here of Lady V ——'s "I would rather give myself to a footman, than sell myself to a prince" (p. 474), particularly

in the light of Peregrine's sympathetic response to her story (p. 538).

21) Bolingbroke, Works, ii, pp. 379-80.

22) Ibid., p. 391.

23) Pope, The Dunciad, IV, l. 107.

4: "Ferdinand Count Fathom" and "Sir Launcelot Greaves"

1) By David Hannay, Tobias George Smollett (London: Walter Scott, 1887); L.M.Knapp, Tobias Smollett; R. Giddings, The Tradition of Smollett; P-G. Boucé, Les Romans de Smollett.

2) By Hannay and Knapp (as above) and A.R.Humphreys, The Pelican Guide to English Literature, iv.

3) Notably by Louis L. Martz, in The Later Career of Tobias Smollett (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1942).

4) Tuvia Bloch in "Smollett's Quest for Form," MP, 65, no. 2 (Nov. 1967), 103-113.

5) T.G.Smollett, Ferdinand Count Fathom, ed. D. Grant (London: O.U.P., 1971), pp. 2-3.

6) In the Oxford edition.

7) R.D.Spector, Tobias George Smollett (New York: Twayne, 1968).

8) Fielding, Jonathan Wild, p. 137.

9) A fourth possible influence on his choice is suggested by a letter Smollett wrote to William Huggins on 27th November, 1759: "Since I parted from you in the Country, I have read Berni and the orlando furioso in the Italian from one end to the other, and was indeed become a sort of a Knight errant in Imagination", Letters, p. 84.

10) See pp. 79, 80, 89, 104, 129, and 137.

11) Identified by Samuel Pegge in Anonymia (1809), pp. 287-8; quoted by Damian Grant in his notes to the Oxford edition of Fathom.

12) A contrasting type of pride is that of Monimia, who was "by birth, nature and education inspired with that dignity of pride which ennobles the human heart" (p. 211).

13) This episode is paralleled by the unhappy story of the merchant's daughter in Launcelot Greaves; v. below, p. 259.

14) Mandeville, i, p. 272.

15) Henry Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling, ed. B. Vickers (1967; rpt. London: O.U.P., Oxford Paperbacks, 1970), p. 108.

16) T. Bloch, "Smollett and the Jewish Naturalization Bill of 1753," American Notes and Queries, 6 (1968), 116-117.

17) Walter Scott, "Tobias Smollett," in Prose Works (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1827), iii, p. 155.

18) As does T.O.Treadwell, for example, in his essay "The Two Worlds of Ferdinand Count Fathom," published in Tobias Smollett, ed. G.S.Rousseau and P-G. Boucé (New York: O.U.P., 1971); see p. 143.

19) Newcastle's fear of lost popularity in the country evidently weighed more strongly with him than any immediate benefit to be obtained from the measure, as its rapid repeal indicates.

20) See Random, i, pp. 15-6 or p. 30, for example.

21) See, for example, Travels, pp. 308-9.

22) See Present State, ii, p. 172.

23) In a letter to Sir Horace Mann; Horace Walpole,

Correspondence ("The Yale Edition"), ed. W.S.Lewis (London: O.U.P., 1971), vol. 25, p. 315.

24) See James R. Foster, "Smollett's Pamphleteering Foe, Shebbeare," PMLA, LVII (Dec. 1942), 1053-1100.

25) Clinker, p. 164.

26) Continuation, ii, p. 393.

27) During the 1754 Oxfordshire election, the number of peers on the Whig side (Marlborough, Harcourt, Guildford and Macclesfield) provided ammunition for the jibes of the Tory country gentlemen (v. Namier, p. 71).

28) The fear that merchants and manufacturers would bring further corruption to the House of Commons was a familiar one in the eighteenth century. John Douglas wrote, in a pamphlet published anonymously before the 1761 general election:

> If our House of Commons is to be filled with men who are in trade, and who get themselves elected, only to be in the way of their trade...I know not whether we have most reason to dread a majority of greedy stock-holders, or of indigent placemen, for our representatives

(quoted by Namier, p. 45).

29) Bolingbroke, Works, ii, p. 401.

30) Compare with the suggested faults of the female prisoner in the King's Bench prison; v. above, pp. 258-9.

5: "Humphry Clinker"

1) Boucé, p. 244.

2) The Jerusalem Bible translation at this point more accurately reflects the intended spiritual import of Jeremiah's lament than does the Authorized Version's "Why is my pain perpetual?".

3) Oliver Goldsmith, "The Bee," Collected Works, ed. A. Friedman (Oxford: O.U.P., 1966), i, p. 486.

4) See L.M.Knapp, Tobias Smollett, pp. 306-7.

5) O. Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village," Collected Works, iv, p. 289.

6) R.R.Sedgwick, ed., Letters from George III to Lord Bute (London: Macmillan, 1939), p. 28; letter dated 5th August 1759.

7) Pope underwent a similar disillusionment with the practice (if not the principles) of patriotism; consider the poem 1740, for instance.

8) Consider Smollett's own ironic comments on the similarly extravagant encomiums bestowed on George II after his death in 1760 (Continuation, v, p. 372).

9) As Smollett wrote in the Atom, George III laboured under but one misfortune, for he had had "divers preceptors to teach him the rudiments of every art but the art of reigning" (Atom, p. 442).

10) T.G.Smollett, The History and Adventures of an Atom (1769; rpt. Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1926), p. 327.

11) Quoted by L.M.Knapp in "Smollett and the Elder Pitt," MLN, 59, no. 4 (April 1944), p. 255.

12) In fact, the duke's exit is only a temporary one, for he reappears in Jery's letter of June 5th, where Smollett gratuitously uses him as the butt

for farce (the Algerine ambassador mistakes him for the minister's fool, when he appears at his own leveé with his face completely lathered). Jery's observation that Newcastle "scarce ever opened his mouth without making some blunder, in relation to the person or business of the party with whom he conversed; so that he really looked like a comedian, hired to burlesque the character of a minister" (p. 113), is close to Smollett's satirical comment in the Atom, "he appeared... as if he had lost his wits in the morning, and was in quest of them all day" (Atom, p. 310).

13) As Louis Martz has also noted (in The Later Career of Tobias Smollett, pp. 128-9), this is one of the few instances where Smollett imputes different motives for occurrences described in both The Present State and Humphry Clinker. Bramble suggests that the inhabitants of London prefer white bread because of its colour; in The Present State, Smollett blames the poor quality of bread on the adulteration of flour by "knavish bakers" (ii, p. 220). Although the former fits better thematically in the novel, the latter explanation is more probably accurate, because after 1758 the number of loaves to be made from a sack of flour was prescribed by law, and there was obviously both ample motive and opportunity for malpractice by unscrupulous bakers.

14) H. Fielding, Joseph Andrews, ed. M.C.Battestin (Oxford: O.U.P., 1967), p. 142.

15) Martz, pp. 167-8.

(Notes pp. 324-361)

16) Martz, p. 109.

17) Note the precise contrast that Smollett suggests here with Matthew's views on the food and water of London; v. above p. 314, and Humphry Clinker, pp. 118-9.

18) See Smout, pp. 271-81, for example.

19) Smollett seems (consciously or unconsciously) to be parodying a very similar description in Gil Blas; v. above p. 140, and Gil Blas, ii, p. 201.

Afterword

1) Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood, The Sociology of Literature (London: Paladin, 1972), p. 177.

2) John M. Warner, "Smollett's Development as a Novelist," Novel, IV (1972), 148-161.

3) P-G. Boucé, "Smollett's Pseudo-picaresque: A Response to Rousseau's Smollett and the Picaresque," Studies in Burke and his Time, 45 (1972), 73-79.

4) Ibid., p. 75.

5) Robin Farbel, "The Patriotic Briton: Tobias Smollett and English Politics 1756-1771," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 8, no. 1 (1974), 100-114.

6) Ibid., p. 103.

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I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed entirely by myself.

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