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Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel

David H. Richter

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Contents

Acknowledgments viii

1 The World That Made the Novel 1

2 *Oroonoko* (1688) 34

3 *Moll Flanders* (1722) 51

4 *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) 66

5 *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (1749) 81

6 *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.* (1759–1767) 100

7 *Evelina: The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778) 117

8 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) 131

9 *Things As They Are, or The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) 151

10 *Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814) 171

11 *Emma* (1815) 189

12 The World the Novel Made 213

Selected Further Reading 226

Index 232

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Chapter 1

The World That Made the Novel

This book is about reading the English novel during the "long eighteenth century," a stretch of time that, in the generally accepted ways of breaking up British literary history into discrete periods for university courses, begins some time after the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 and ends around 1830, before the reign of Queen Victoria. At the beginning of this period, the novel can hardly be said to exist, and writing prose fiction is a mildly disreputable literary activity. Around 1720, Daniel Defoe's fictional autobiographies spark continuations and imitations, and in the 1740s, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding's novels begin what is perceived as "a new kind of writing." By the end of the period, with Jane Austen and Walter Scott, the novel has not only come into existence, it has developed into a more-or-less respectable genre, and in fact publishers have begun to issue series of novels (edited by Walter Scott and by Anna Barbauld, among others) that establish for that time, if not necessarily for ours, a canon of the English novel. With the decline of the English drama and the almost complete eclipse of the epic,[1] the novel has become by default the serious literary long form, on its way to becoming by the mid-nineteenth century, with Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot, the pre-eminent genre of literature. This chapter will consider how and why the novel came to be when it did.

The Novel before the Novel

But before we get to that story, we need to make sure that it's the right story to be telling. Margaret Doody argues on the first page of her provocatively titled *The True Story of the Novel* that "the Novel as a form of literature in the West has

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a continuous history of about two thousand years." She is certainly right that long form prose fiction goes back to the Greek romances of the first through fourth centuries CE: the earliest is probably Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* and the best-known Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*. These were tales of lovers, usually nobly born, beautiful and chaste, whose flight from parental opposition leads them into incredible dangers surmounted by unbelievable artifices. For example, in *Leucippe and Clitophon* (second-century romance by Achilles Tatius) the lovers are shipwrecked, then captured by bandits, who proceed to sacrifice Leucippe and, after disemboweling her, to eat her liver; Clitophon, who has observed this from afar, wants to commit suicide until he is informed by his clever servant that Leucippe is alive, thanks to a wandering actor who impersonated the priest and used a retractable dagger – a theatrical prop he happened to have with him—along with some animal's blood and entrails, to simulate the sacrifice.

> By evening we had filled and crossed the trench, and I went to the coffin prepared to stab myself. "Leucippe," I cried, "thy death is lamentable not only because violent and in a strange land, but because thou hast been sacrificed to purify the most impure; because thou didst look upon thine own anatomy; because thy body and thy bowels have received an accursed sepulchre, the one here, the other in such wise that their burial has become the nourishment of robbers. And this the gods saw unmoved, and accepted such an offering! But now receive from me thy fitting libation." About to cut my throat, I saw two men running up, and paused, thinking that they were pirates and would kill me. They were Menelaus and Satyrus! Still I could not rejoice in their safety, and I resisted their attempt to take my sword. "If you deprive me of this sword, wherewith I would end my sorrows in death, the inward sword of my grief will inflict deathless sorrows upon me. Let me die: Leucippe dead, I will not live." "Leucippe lives !" said Menelaus, and, tapping upon the coffin, he summoned her to testify to his veracity. Leucippe actually rose, disembowelled as she was, and rushed to my embrace.

Doody's claim that "Romance and the Novel are one" (15) has generally been found unconvincing. Although Doody can point to a group of "tropes" (general plot points and themes, like erotic desire and generational conflict) that one can find in both the Greek romances and the English novel of the eighteenth century, this is a very weak claim, since they can be found without looking very hard pretty much everywhere else in literature. Her stronger claim – that these "tropes" are moments in the worship-service of the Mother Goddess, which continues in the novel into our own day – has generally been met with ridicule.

But the genre of romance was certainly around and being read in the eighteenth century. It was viewed as the competition, though: many of the most important eighteenth-century novelists insisted on defining their work in opposition to, rather than within, the genre of romance.

The other genre of prose fiction current during this late classical period is the Menippean satire, exemplified by Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, and Petronius' *Satyricon* (both first-century CE). These were episodic tales primarily ridiculing the behavior and pretensions of wealthy middle-class citizens of the Roman empire. Here's a sample from the *Satyricon*; the narrator is a guest at an over-the-top dinner in the mansion of a parvenu ex-slave named Trimalchio:

> I inquired who that woman could be who was scurrying about hither and yon in such a fashion. "She's called Fortunata," he replied. "She's the wife of Trimalchio, and she measures her money by the peck. And only a little while ago, what was she! May your genius pardon me, but you would not have been willing to take a crust of bread from her hand. Now, without rhyme or reason, she's in the seventh heaven and is Trimalchio's factotum, so much so that he would believe her if she told him it was dark when it was broad daylight! As for him, he don't know how rich he is, but this harlot keeps an eye on everything and where you least expect to find her, you're sure to run into her. She's temperate, sober, full of good advice, and has many good qualities, but she has a scolding tongue, a very magpie on a sofa, those she likes, she likes, but those she dislikes, she dislikes! Trimalchio himself has estates as broad as the flight of a kite is long, and piles of money. There's more silver plate lying in his steward's office than other men have in their whole fortunes! And as for slaves, damn me if I believe a tenth of them knows the master by sight.

Both romance and fictional satire, prose versions of tragedy and comedy, continue into the high middle ages and the Renaissance in different forms. In the Middle Ages the dominant form was the chivalric romance; in English the longest, most detailed, and most artistic of these is Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* published 1485 by Caxton.

> So after the quest of the Sangreal was fulfilled, and all knights that were left alive were come again unto the Table Round, as the book of the Sangreal maketh mention, then was there great joy in the court; and in especial King Arthur and Queen Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were come home, and passing glad was the king and the queen of Sir Launcelot and of Sir Bors, for they had been passing long away in the quest of the Sangreal.

> Then, as the book saith, Sir Launcelot began to resort unto Queen Guenever again, and forgat the promise and the perfection that he made in the quest. For, as the book saith, had not Sir Launcelot been in his privy thoughts and in his mind so set inwardly to the queen as he was in seeming outward to God, there had no knight passed him in the quest of the Sangreal; but ever his thoughts were privily on the queen, and so they loved together more hotter than they did to-forehand, and had such privy draughts together, that many in the court spake of it, and in especial Sir Agravaine, Sir Gawaine's brother, for he was ever open-mouthed.
>
> So befell that Sir Launcelot had many resorts of ladies and damosels that daily resorted unto him, that besought him to be their champion, and in all such matters of right Sir Launcelot applied him daily to do for the pleasure of Our Lord, Jesu Christ. And ever as much as he might he withdrew him from the company and fellowship of Queen Guenever, for to eschew the slander and noise; wherefore the queen waxed wroth with Sir Launcelot. And upon a day she called Sir Launcelot unto her chamber, and said thus: Sir Launcelot, I see and feel daily that thy love beginneth to slake, for thou hast no joy to be in my presence, but ever thou art out of this court, and quarrels and matters thou hast nowadays for ladies and gentlewomen more than ever thou wert wont to have aforehand.

Fictional satire also continues, usually in shorter forms, of which the best known are the comic tales in the *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio and the fabliau, which English-speaking readers know best in the bawdy stories in rhyming couplets told by the Miller and the Reeve in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

There is a genuine flowering of Elizabethan prose fiction but it, nevertheless, does not produce anything remotely like the eighteenth-century novel. One strand, that of the long form romance, long form, is the **pastoral;** these are English texts usually mixing prose and poetry, such as Sidney's *Arcadia* (1580; *New Arcadia* 1586) and Mary Wroth's *Urania* (1621). Some of the shorter and less elaborate versions of prose romance served as the sources of Shakespeare's comedies, like Thomas Lodge's lyrical *Rosalynde* (1590), which became *As You Like It*, and Robert Greene's acerbic *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* (1588), which became *The Winter's Tale*. Behind the poetic prose of these romances stands John Lyly's *Euphues* (1578), a homiletic conduct book written in a style with elaborately balanced phrases, which has given its name to the genre. This style can be seen in the following soliloquy from *Pandosto*, in which Franion (on whom Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale* is based) meditates whether he should follow his sovereign's orders to kill the queen:

> Ah Franion, treason is loved of many, but the traitor hated of all. Unjust offences may for a time escape without danger, but never without revenge. Thou art servant

to a king, and must obey at command. Yet, Franion, against law and conscience it is not good to resist a tyrant with arms nor to please an unjust king with obedience. What shalt thou do? Folly refuseth gold, and frenzy preferment; wisdom seeketh after dignity, and counsel looketh for gain. Egistus is a stranger to thee, and Pandosto thy sovereign. Thou hast little cause to respect the one, and oughtest to have great care to obey the other. Think this, Franion, that a pound of gold is worth a tun of lead, great gifts are little gods, and preferment to a mean man is a whetstone to courage. There is nothing sweeter than promotion, nor lighter than report. Care not then though most count thee a traitor, so all call thee rich.

But some of the more interesting prose fiction of the sixteenth century is explicitly antiromantic: **coney-catching pamphlets** like those of Robert Greene, explaining petty criminals' methods. The tradition goes back to the Spanish **picaresque** in *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and *Guzman de Alfraches* (1598), which inspired works like Deloney's *Thomas of Reading* (1598?) and Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveler* (1594) – possibly the most readable of the Elizabethan novellas today. Here Jack Wilton convinces a credulous innkeeper that enemies at Henry VIII's court have plotted against him, telling the king that he sells his alcoholic cider to the enemy:

Oh, quoth he, I am bought & solde for doing my Country such good seruice as I haue done. They are afraid of mee, because my good deedes haue brought me into such estimation with the communalty, I see, I see it is not for the lambe to liue with the wolfe.

The world is well amended, thought I, with your Sidership … Answere me, quoth he, my wise young *Wilton*, is it true that I am thus vnderhand dead and buried by these bad tongues?

Nay, quoth I, you shall pardon me, for I haue spoken too much alreadie, no definitiue sentence of death shall march out of my wel meaning lips, they haue but lately suckt milke, and shall they so sodainly change theyr food and seeke after bloud?

Oh but, quoth he, a mans friend is his friend, fill the other pint Tapster, what sayd the king, did hee beleeue it when hee heard it, I pray thee say, I sweare to thee by my nobility, none in the worlde shall euer be made priuie, that I receiued anie light of this matter from thee.

That firme affiance, quoth I, had I in you before, or else I would neuer haue gone so farre ouer the shooes, to plucke you out of the mire. Not to make many wordes (since you will needs know) the king saies flatly, you are a miser & a snudge, and he neuer hopt better of you. Nay then (quoth he) questionlesse some planet that loues not syder hath conspired against me.

So romance and satiric anti-romance developed in various forms for around 1500 years before a dialectical synthesis of the two genres explicitly took shape in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1607). These episodic tales about the country gentleman Alonso Quijano, whose reading of chivalric tales have created in him the delusion that he is the noble Don Quixote, could be said to initiate the European novel. *Don Quixote* is translated into English by Thomas Shelton as early as 1612, but it is surprising how little Cervantes affects the course of prose fiction in English, until Henry Fielding nearly 150 years later set his quixotic Parson Adams onto the high road in *Joseph Andrews* (1742).

The flowering of the Elizabethan period is followed by a relative desert in the seventeenth century. There are influential works of prose fiction, such as the lengthy pastoral romances translated from the French, for example, Honoré D'Urfé's *Astrée* (translated as the *Romance of Astrea and Celadon*, 5399 pages, published in stages from 1607 to 1627); and Madeleine de Scudéry's *Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie* published in the 1650s). But there is no canonical English text of prose fiction until John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), which puts to use colloquial, racy language in its homiletic allegory. In a more minor vein, the line of romance is carried forward by two Restoration playwrights, Aphra Behn and William Congreve, in *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* (1688) and *Incognita* (1690). *Oroonoko* is discussed in all its complexities in Chapter 2. *Incognita*, unfortunately out of print, reads a bit like a "novelization" of a Restoration comedy with a marriage plot: Congreve has hit upon a way of writing fiction using comic form; what he lacks is a way of making us visualize the characters and the reality of the dramatic situation without the presence of stage actors. In other words he "tells" his story but does not know how to "show" it.

The movement of the picaresque and its combination with other nonfictional genres like the spiritual autobiography and the lives of notorious criminals can be seen in texts like Francis Kirkman's *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled, or the History of Mary Carleton*, a retelling of the nonfictional story of a notorious imposter, bigamist, and thief of that name who ended her life on the gallows in 1673. These nonfictional genres become important in the lineage of Daniel Defoe, who would use the various lives of Carleton and other criminals in his own fiction (particularly his most accomplished impersonations, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*). Lennard Davis suggested in *Factual Fictions* (1983) that it was nonfictional work of this sort – biography, spiritual confession, and crime news – that contributed most to the development of the novel in the eighteenth century. But it is interesting and true that the seventeenth century, the period when English prose is acquiring its fluidity and rapidity of effect – the sort of change you see when you move from Sidney to Dryden – is also a time when there are no canonical or even semi-canonical fictions. Nothing we

would want to call a novel really gets published until the eighteenth century in England, doubting that gets us nowhere, but accounting for why it happened then and there is the real problem.

The Rise of the Novel

Probably the most influential single book on the eighteenth century novel was Ian Watt's: *The Rise of the Novel* (1957). There had been chronological studies of fiction before – including an encyclopedic ten-volume *History of the English Novel* by Ernest Baker – but Watt's was the first book to pose the question of historical causation.

It is important to understand how Ian Watt posed the question: he accepts the general assumption that the English novel starts with Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, but that there was no common influence among the three, so that understanding why the novel sprung up when it did is a matter of understanding what preparation the general culture had made for the appearance of a new genre and form of text.

> There are still no wholly satisfactory answers to many of the general questions which anyone interested in the early eighteenth-century novelists and their works is likely to ask: Is the novel a new literary form? And if we assume, as is commonly done, that it is, and that it was begun by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, how does it differ from the prose fiction of the past, from that of Greece, for example, or that of the Middle Ages, or of seventeenth-century France? And is there any reason why these differences appeared when and where they did?
>
> Such large questions are never easy to approach, much less to answer, and they are particularly difficult in this case because Defoe, Richardson and Fielding do not in the usual sense constitute a literary school. Indeed their works show so little sign of mutual influence and are so different in nature that at first sight it appears that our curiosity about the rise of the novel is unlikely to find any satisfaction other than the meager one afforded by the terms 'genius' and 'accident,' the twin faces on the Janus of the dead ends of literary history. We cannot, of course, do without them: on the other hand there is not much we can do with them. The present inquiry therefore takes another direction: assuming that the appearance of our first three novelists within a single generation was probably not sheer accident, and that their geniuses could not have created the new form unless the conditions of the time had also been favorable, it attempts to discover what these favorable conditions in the literary and social situation were, and in what ways Defoe, Richardson and Fielding were its beneficiaries. (9)

Formal Realism

Watt identifies the novel proper with the literary technique he calls "formal realism," which is defined in terms of the text's explicit notation of the circumstantiality of the dramatic events. In terms of the history of thought, "formal realism" is the literary equivalent of what he calls the "realist" philosophy of Descartes and Locke, with their emphasis on *particulars* as the basis of knowledge, and the source of all abstract or general ideas, and on knowledge as growing from our *individual experience* of specific times and places, rather than by authorities or by abstract principles derived a priori. Watt doesn't exactly say that Defoe couldn't have written without Locke, but the implication of the dependence of literary on philosophical realism is that we don't need to look earlier than the 1680s for the philosophical roots of the literary phenomenon.

Individualism

Watt saw formal realism, especially that of Defoe, as going hand in hand with a belief in individualism, in the sense that the individual is viewed as able to define and master his or her own fate, rather than having to find a role relative to a group or a hieratic system of authority. This belief Watt identifies with the social movements favoring Protestantism and capitalism.

> The novel's serious concern with the daily lives of ordinary people seems to depend upon … that vast complex of interdependent factors denoted by the term 'individualism' … The concept of individualism … posits a whole society mainly governed by the idea of every individual's intrinsic independence, both from other individuals and from that multifarious allegiance to past modes of thought and action denoted by the term 'tradition' – a force that is always social, not individual … It is generally agreed that modern society is uniquely individualist … and that of the many historical causes for its emergence two are of supreme importance – the rise of modern industrial capitalism and the spread of Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist or Puritan forms. (60)

The Reading Public

In addition to these ideological factors, Watt proposed that the rise of the novel depended on the emergence of a different and larger middle-class reading public. The problem is that literacy beyond the ability to sign one's name was rare at the beginning of the eighteenth century. There is no evidence for a mass

reading public at the time of Defoe, or even at the end of the eighteenth century – and Watt is well aware of this. Still, he feels that the slow, continual expansion of the reading public into the middle class (and among the household servants of the urban aristocracy and middle class as well) might have "tipped the balance" so that the money to be made would be made by appealing to the middle class interests.

> Evidence on the availability and use of leisure confirms the previous picture given of the composition of the reading public in the early eighteenth century. Despite a considerable expansion it still did not normally extend much further down the social scale than to tradesmen and shopkeepers, with the important exception of the more favored apprentices and indoor servants. Still, there had been additions, and they had been mainly recruited from among the increasingly prosperous and numerous social groups concerned with commerce and manufacture. This is important, for it is probable that this particular change alone, even if it was of comparatively minor proportions, may have altered the centre of gravity of the reading public sufficiently to place the middle class as a whole in a dominating position for the first time.
>
> In looking for the effects of this change upon literature, no very direct or dramatic manifestations of middle-class tastes and capacities are to be expected, for the dominance of the middle class in the reading public had in any case been long preparing. One general effect of some interest for the rise of the novel, however, seems to follow from the change in the centre of gravity of the reading public. The fact that literature in the eighteenth century was addressed to an ever-widening audience must have weakened the relative importance of those readers with enough interest in classical and modern letters; and in return it may have increased the relative importance of those who desired an easier form of literary entertainment, even if it had little prestige among the literati .... It is certain that this change of emphasis was an essential permissive factor for the achievements of Defoe and Richardson. (47–9)

Watt is particularly interested in the fact that women become an important element of the reading public in the eighteenth century, and that their interests were better served by those of the novel as it developed than by the traditional genres. (Women also become important as writers, a fact Watt is less interested in.) Another key issue is that the booksellers of the time – we would call them publishers – are replacing aristocratic patrons as the chief middlemen for the production of literature, which would have favored market forces (and therefore the interests of the middle classes) at the expense of traditional values and forms.

The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740

Watt's theory dominated the critical landscape for thirty years, until scholar Michael McKeon did an elaborate revision of Watt's vision of history. McKeon was in essential agreement with the way Watt set up the question – that the origins of the English novel are to be explained by explaining the social and intellectual preconditions that made possible writers like Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding.

One thing that is quite obviously wrong with Watt is that, while positing that the English novel begins with Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, the model he created did not really apply particularly well to Fielding. As Watt himself noted, the elements of "formal realism" are not as important in Fielding as they are in Richardson and Defoe: Unlike Defoe and Richardson, Fielding uses type names for his characters (like Allworthy and Thwackum), doesn't minutely describe furniture, clothing, and landscapes, frequently summarizes the content of people's utterances instead of minutely detailing what they say, and so on. And you can't possibly write Fielding out of the history of the novel, since he is so important for the later development of Smollett and Austen, and still later for Dickens and Thackeray.

In a more important sense, though, what is wrong with Watt, from McKeon's point of view, is that he simply doesn't go back far enough to find the roots of what happened to English society, and he doesn't dig deep enough. McKeon is a Marxist, so he would find Watt's three factors, individualism, Protestantism, and capitalism, all in the wrong order. First there must come the economic transformation of a society, then its social transformation, and finally the revolution in ideology that mediates, explains, and justifies the new relationships.

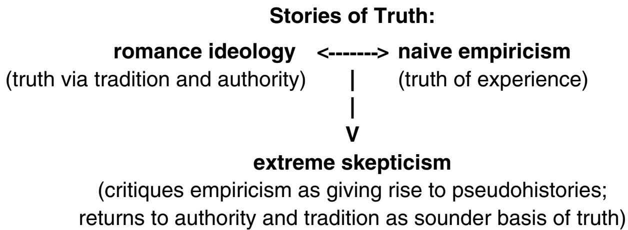
Mercantile capitalism had been displacing feudal agrarianism since the late fifteenth century as the source of English wealth, and the process is continuing throughout the period of the rise of the novel. But the catastrophe for the ideology of the feudal period is for McKeon the crucial period of the rise of the novel. McKeon sees the seventeenth century as the great watershed, the point at which the old ideologies collapse to be replaced by those of the modern world.

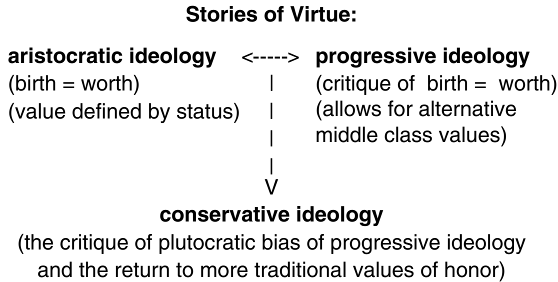
Like any good Marxist, McKeon sees these ideological shifts as happening in what we might call the plot form of transcendental dialectic, in which old ways of understanding the notions of truth and virtue call into being their opposites, and then the conflict between these hypostatized opposites calls into existence a third term, which partly recurs to the first, partly opposes it. These dialectics operate in what McKeon calls "Stories of Truth" and "Stories of Virtue":

> The novel … attains its modern "institutional" stability and coherence at this time because of its unrivaled power both to formulate and to explain a set of

problems that are central to early modern experience. These may be understood as problems of categorial instability, which the novel, originating to resolve, also inevitably reflects. The first sort of instability with which the novel is concerned has to do with generic categories; the second, with social categories. The instability of generic categories registers an epistemological crisis, a major cultural transition to attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative .... The instability of social categories registers a cultural crisis in attitudes toward how the external social order is related to the internal, moral state of its members .... Both pose problems of signification. What kind of authority or evidence is required of narrative to permit it to signify truth to its readers? What kind of social existence or behavior signifies the individual's virtue to others? (20)

We could diagram McKeon's dialectical oppositions thus:





McKeon's argument is not that his oppositional elements lead to a clear resolution, but rather that the novel as it develops is shaped from within by the tensions of the struggle. His epistemological dialectic describes a shift from an opposition between: (1) idealized romance plots, and (2) literally true stories narrated by individuals giving their subjective impressions, toward (3) a new sort of "truth" – an ideal of verisimilitude, in which fictional characters behave in the way real people would in their situations – which is precisely the kind of truth today's readers expect from the novel.

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* does not reproduce the literal experience of the title character's real-life counterpart, Alexander Selkirk; rather, the castaway plot, with all the minutely detailed events by which Robinson survives, is made to serve Robinson's fictional journey from the heedless adventurer to the Christian who accepts his worldly fate as part of God's providence. Similarly in terms of virtue, the conservative ideology critiques the excesses of both aristocratic and bourgeois values; Richardson's *Clarissa* positions his Christian heroine as threatened, and ultimately destroyed, both by the aristocratic Lovelace's pursuit of power and pleasure and by the emergent bourgeois Harlowe family's urgent need to pursue ever-greater wealth and status. And unlike Watt, McKeon clearly includes Fielding in his purview, although with Fielding it is primarily the authorial voice rather than the character-narrators of Defoe and Richardson that is the repository of the clearest vision of truth and virtue.

Causality and the Rise of the Novel

McKeon's explanation of the economic and social factors leading to the development of the English novel is so much more powerful that Watt's that one might think that was the end of the matter. In one sense, it may be too powerful, because the general factors McKeon is interested in – his stories of truth and stories of virtue – are not peculiar to narrative literature at all: we find them behind the drama and poetry of the eighteenth century, and indeed behind a good deal of the philosophical and historical writing as well.

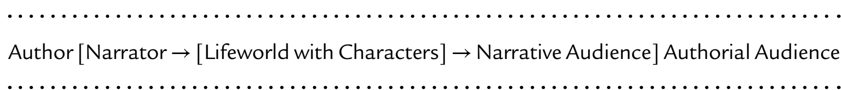
And here again, as with Margaret Doody's theory, the issue is how we frame the vexed question of what we mean by "the novel." For McKeon, the "novel" whose origin he wants to explain takes a multiplicity of forms: Cervantes's satire on knightly romance, Bunyan's religious allegories, Defoe's pseudo-autobiographies, Swift's Menippean satire, Richardson's serious and tragic novels in letters, Fielding's comic and serious narratives and Sterne's strange mixture of sentimentality and satiric wit. Some of these forms have "legs": they continue and develop further in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while others are texts that have early modern or even medieval forebears but don't extend their tradition into later periods. That is the basis of Ralph Rader's strong critique of McKeon's explanation of the rise of the novel:[2] precisely what is it whose cause we want to understand?

Causality is a word that has many meanings. Generally it means agency, sometimes teleology; but we also distinguish between necessary and sufficient conditions, between predisposing and precipitating causes. We flexibly use the term "cause" or "origin" for each of these things, and in our general conversation we don't usually get confused since we know which we really want to talk about in

particular cases. In remoter matters, however, like the writing of literary history, it is possible to have a marked preference for one form of causality over another.

The controversy between Michael McKeon and Ralph Rader on the origins of the English novel is illustrative of this. It isn't just that McKeon and Rader disagree over what caused the English novel, it's that they don't even agree on what should *count* as an explanation. For Michael McKeon the true explanation of the origin of the novel has to be found in the predisposing factors: his explanation ends when he has elucidated what made society change in such a way as to make collectively meaningful narratives in which the domestic struggles of individuals were made significant, narratives that at the same time were "realistic," like the truth about the real world but not historically veracious. The peculiar concerns and intents of the authors of these novels are unimportant. As far as McKeon is concerned, if Richardson had not written the first English novel, someone else would have, and the course of literary history would have developed almost precisely as it did.

But for Rader, it doesn't count as an explanation of the novel to be able to say how society got to the state where it could support realistic fictional narrative as a literary genre. For Rader the predisposing causes are less interesting, and he is willing to take McKeon's explanations of them for granted. Instead the novel begins when a particular individual – Samuel Richardson – tells a story about a virtuous servant who marries a well-born landowner, and tells that story in a way that was unique at the time. What was original about *Pamela* for Rader is the way we are made to read it. The events recounted have to be understood in two different ways at once, on a narrative plane and on an authorial plane. That is, the reader is forced to take the story as autonomously "real," on the one hand, in the sense that we understand Pamela's world as operating by the laws that obtain in our own world and therefore independent of our desires about her (the narrative plane). But the reader is also required to read the text as "constructed," in the sense that we understand the novel in terms of Richardson's creative intention, forming expectations and desires respecting the protagonist that shape our sense of the whole (the authorial plane). We could diagram this double mode of reading thus:



For Rader the crucial moment is the construction of a form that operates on both levels at once – as autonomous narrative and as authorial construct. Once that had been done, others could, and did, imitate the achievement, bringing to the form new sorts of meaning and structure.

These preferences as to what counts as an acceptable explanation of the origin of a genre have further consequences. Rader is not deeply concerned with the predecessors to Richardson's formal achievement, because for him Bunyan, Defoe, and Swift belong to strands of literary history that did not initiate world-historical change.[3] And in a similar way in the opposite direction, Michael McKeon loses most of his interest in the history of the novel once the genre has gotten fully started, as though it were the *embryology* of the novel rather than its history that is of primary concern.[4]

Well, which of them is right? Is the origin of the English novel to be found in its predisposing or its precipitating causes? Clearly both – and neither. Surely each answer is only one element of what would be a totally satisfying solution, and rationally, we ought to reject the either/or quality of the question. But while we can reject the disjunction as undesirable, it is harder to come up with a method of historical research that does not enforce it. As Johnson's Imlac cautioned Rasselas, one cannot simultaneously fill one's cup from the mouth and the source of the Nile. And the systematic study that provides us with a sense of all that was crucially necessary to produce an artifact will never tell us about the moment of invention that went beyond the necessary to the sufficient. When the focus is upon the individual genius engaged in constructing something new out of materials that are available to hand, we see the foreground with clarity, but the background – including how those materials came to be available to hand – recedes into a blur. Conversely, when it is the ground that occupies our attention, we must take the figure for granted. Indeed, those who investigate the background may even assume that the foregrounded individual's contribution is ultimately not very important.

With technological invention parallel discoveries are common. If Edison had not invented the lightbulb in October 1879, someone else would have done so a few months or years later, and we would be lighting our homes and offices in similar ways, though without paying our bills to Consolidated Edison. Those who follow in the path of artistic innovators, similarly, often pay them the homage of picking up their topics and techniques, which is why aspects of the specific architecture of *Pamela* run throughout the history of the novel into our own time, via *Jane Eyre*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Rebecca*, and on to *Fifty Shades of Grey.*

Historical Presentism and the History of the Rise of the Novel

At the risk of becoming hopelessly relativistic, we need to point out that the answer to the question of when the English novel starts may depends not only on who is asking the question, but on when they are asking it. John Richetti's

article on the history of the English novel in the eighteenth century, in the massive *Encyclopedia of the Novel*, credits the sociological origins of the novel to an "emerging and enlarging urban professional and middle class acquired more leisure and a greater appetite and disposable income for consumer goods," resulting in the creation of a "growing audience" for entertaining and improving literature, including "prose narratives frequently called 'novels' but sometimes 'histories' or 'true histories.'" Richetti begins his story much earlier than Ian Watt does, and covers the seventeenth-century narratives out of which the novel grew, including French romances, *chroniques scandaleuses*, Newgate biographies, travel books, amatory tales, and spiritual pilgrimages. But unlike Watt, who considered Defoe one of the founders of the novel, Richetti considers even his greatest creations, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, and even *Roxana*, merely "proto-novelistic" (359). For Richetti as for Ralph Rader, the truly "pathbreaking" text is Richardson's *Pamela*, which conveys "an illusion of immediacy and personal authenticity." The attempt to parody *Pamela* then draws Henry Fielding into the orbit of the novel, where his contribution, in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, is "an authoritative narrative voice that manipulates and arranges characters and incidents and engages in an implicit conversation with his reader about the meanings of his fiction" (360). Between them Richardson and Fielding create "the new novel of the 1740s" whose "social-historical and moral ambitions" can be reshaped, by other hands, to the representation of subtle, sometimes aberrant, psychological states (361).

And looking into that same encyclopedia to other articles delineating the history of narrative in the various European languages – Dutch, French, German, Italian, Hungarian, Russian, Spanish – they all seem to agree in one respect: whatever individual nations were doing with narrative before the middle of the eighteenth century – and they were all doing very different things – each of them was enormously influenced either directly by Richardson or indirectly by him via Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. *Pamela* was an internationally pathbreaking text that displaced proto-novelistic genres, not only in England but everywhere Richardson was translated. A new sort of narrative, often epistolary in form, sentimental and romantic, yet vivid with psychological realism, seems to become the dominant practically everywhere.

On the other hand, many other recent studies of the origin of the English novel, the grand narratives by Nancy Armstrong, Ros Ballaster, John Bender, Homer Obed Brown, Lennard Davis, Margaret Doody, Catherine Gallagher, J. Paul Hunter, and William Beatty Warner take very different positions. Many of these histories have been pushing the historical horizon of the "novel" back from Richardson, back further than Defoe, into the romances and amatory fictions and *chroniques scandaleuses* of the late seventeenth century. Obviously,

one motivation is the need of literary scholars for more fodder, but given how unnecessary it is these days to claim a place on Parnassus for the objects of our study, that cannot be the only answer.

Rader's and Richetti's notion that *Pamela* was uniquely important in the foundation of the novel as an institutional form really rests on a cultural horizon that views the historical sequence starting with Richardson and Fielding and continuing through Smollett, Sterne, Burney, Austen, Scott, Dickens, the Brontes, Thackeray, Trollope, Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, and James, all leading up to the high modernist works of Joyce and Woolf, as the backbone of contemporary civilization. Born like Rader and Richetti before 1950, I can still feel the attraction of this vision of a great tradition. But what if one's notion of what a novel is was formed through contemporary texts like Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas? T*hen the experimentation with prose forms between 1660 and 1740 becomes much more relevant to one's sense of what the novel is all about. In the twenty-first century, we live under the magnetic attraction of the postmodern, and if the dry crumbs and *abîmes* of self-reflexive narrative (in Barth, Nabokov, Robbe-Grillet, and Calvino) are no longer in the height of fashion, we are nevertheless writing "novels" in scare quotes rather than Novels. And what Catherine Gallagher spoke of as the great innovation of the eighteenth century, the telling of "Nobody's Story" – pure fiction about characters with whom we can let ourselves identify because we are sure they are unreal – is no more. It has given way to "Somebody's Story," a fictionalized version of reality, which may tilt more or less toward the documentary and historical. What we most want to read today are stories about Thomas Cromwell, or about Mason and Dixon, or about Margaret Garner.

The other great change, since the achievements of high modernism, one need hardly point out, is that the novel has become considerably less important than it used to be as a class of cultural objects. Competing for its place in supplying us with objects of feeling and thought are all the latest movies and reality TV shows and music videos and television serials like *Breaking Bad* and *Game of Thrones*. And the fictions that grab us are, more often than not, romances like the *Harry Potter* series, amatory fictions like *Fifty Shades of Grey*, or *chroniques scandaleuses*, thinly veiled *romans à clef* like *The Ghostwriter* or *Primary Colors*. The world of narrative in the early twenty-first century, in other words, looks a lot more like that of the late seventeenth century, messy and turbulent, without a world-historical art form, rather than like the second half of the eighteenth century, when all of Europe was learning to improve on Richardson's *Pamela*.

A Rhetorical Theory of Narrative

Each of following ten chapters considers one, or in a couple of cases two, British narratives written between 1660 and 1830. This is a period when, at its beginning at least, the novel as we understand it today does not yet exist, while by its end the novel will have become an important institution within literature and within culture. And within this period, we will encounter conventions which today's reader, for whom the concept of the novel is a commonplace, will find odd or naive. What follows here is a general discussion of some of the theoretical issues taken up in these chapters.

I should say at the outset that this discussion comes from one of the two major branches of narrative theory, rhetorical theory of narrative, a theory that starts with the premise that the narrative is from the outset a purposive act of communication between a teller and an audience. Rhetorical technique involves setting a point of view, a way or a set of ways in which the message is mediated or transmitted by surrogates the author creates (the "implied author" of the narrative, the narrator, the characters), to a "narratee" within the tale, and to the narrative and authorial audiences outside the tale. And such basic units of structure as plot devices and characters are viewed not as abstract possibilities but as elements constructed as part of the tenor of the message, as elements of what the author is "trying to say." This theory originates in the work of R.S. Crane in the 1940s, and its principal architects are Wayne Booth, James Phelan, and Peter Rabinowitz.

Truth and Fiction

One of the key issues that is problematized in the early novel is the relation between truth and fiction. From the first days of literary criticism, when Plato exiled the poets from the Republic for telling attractive lies about gods and men, it has been necessary to defend the writing and reading of nonfactual narrative. One possible reply was that of Philip Sidney, whose poets in effect take the fifth amendment: they are not liars because "the poet never affirmeth": storytellers tell stories all right, but at least they do not tell them for true.

But if they do not tell the truth, then what do they tell? Aristotle, in the generation after Plato, defended epic and tragedy not merely as refusing any claim to factual and circumstantial truth. He argued that literature was both nobler and more philosophical than factual narrative or history, because its plots were necessary and probable, representing what would happen in life purified from the dross of the accidental and the incidental. Although Aristotle's defense is geared to the notion that fictions are more probable and thus in a sense truer than real life, he nevertheless suggests late in the *Poetics* that the stories of poets

can follow a probability scheme different from that of ordinary contemporary reality. Poets can represent with verisimilitude not merely "the way things are" but "the way things used to be" or "the way things are thought to be" or "the way things used to be thought to be" – so that beliefs about the supernatural, or even superstitions in which people no longer believe, can work in a plot.

A more general statement of this might take the form of viewing fictions as hypotheticals, existing in a separate "possible world" where some of the facts of life or even of the laws of nature we normally recognize are suspended.[5] We require such hypothetical worlds to be consistent (that is, rules like "vampires can be killed by pounding a wooden stake through their heart" should work all the time if they work at all) and coherent (a world in which people can become vampires after death must also be one in which the soul survives the mortal body). These possible worlds of fiction can resemble the world we live in or can be very different. A "conservative" bias is implicit in the reading process, though, since we readers generally try to minimize the adjustments we make, naturalizing the "possible world" in terms of the world we live in till that becomes impossible. And authors usually cooperate with this, since the less the worlds they create resemble the one we live in, the more difficult it is going to be for them to give us a lively sense of the values and the rules by which things happen. As a result, even science fiction stories set far in the future or among strange extraterrestrials seldom change more than a few of the routine scripts about the contemporary world.

The difference between hypothetical stories and narratives claiming falsely to be a factual account of something that actually occurred is a distinction that gets ingrained into us from early childhood. By the age of seven my children knew the difference, not only between truth and falsehood, but between falsehood and "once upon a time." They were even savvy to more complicated hybrids of lies and "once upon a time," like myths, stories – like the tooth fairy's nocturnal substitution of money for deciduous teeth – that adults pretend to believe for ritual purposes while knowing them to be false.

If works of fiction were all pure hypotheticals like fairy tales and fantasies, truth and fiction would be mutually exclusive. There would be one large category of stories that made claims to be true about the actual world (which would include both true stories and lies) and there would be another category of stories that were hypothetically but not actually or factually true. But of course it isn't that simple. Fiction includes allegories and fables, in which impossible events – like a goose that lays golden eggs – can be represented as a way of inculcating homely truths about the real world – like the fact that excessive greed can cause one to lose everything. It includes satires like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in which comic caricatures are meant to represent public figures like Sir Robert Walpole or Joseph Stalin, and historical

novels like *Waverley* and *War and Peace*, in which real-life figures like Bonnie Prince Charlie and Napoleon can influence the action and its outcome for Scott and Tolstoy's imagined characters.

Even more confusingly, the novel includes texts such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders* that are read as "false true stories," a sort of lie, rather than a "let's pretend." As actual readers we know, with one part of our minds, that *Moll Flanders* is by Daniel Defoe, but the experience of reading the text of *Moll Flanders* doesn't convey that fact, not even covertly. As we see in Chapter 3, there are occasional signs of Defoe's authorship, but they are *signs* rather than *signals*, inadvertent traces rather than messages to the reader. The reading experience is close to that of reading a genuine autobiography by a naive and inexperienced author, partly because of the skill of Defoe's impersonation, partly because he carefully avoids giving us any sense of a structured consequential plot.

And on the other hand, the novel also includes high modernist texts like Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* that are aesthetically designed simulations of real life, autobiographies presented in the form of fiction. In contrast to Defoe's "false true stories" these are "true fictions" about the contingent real worlds that Joyce and Woolf grew up in and whose meaning they did not invent. But in each of these cases an autobiographical character within the novel – Stephen Dedalus and Lily Briscoe – discovers that the need to comprehend and to master that contingent world can only be fulfilled by the symbolic triumph of successful artistic representation.[6]

But factual narrative can also be described in such honorific terms as the "triumph of successful artistic representation." Many critics have judged *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote's true crime narrative about Perry Smith and Steve Hickock, the two murderers of the Clutter family in Kansas, as more powerfully written than any of his novels. It can be read as a work of literature, because, like factual texts of the eighteenth century that we read as literature – such as Boswell's *Life of Johnson* – it is a work of the imagination. As we know from their notes and diaries, Capote and Boswell were able to discover within themselves what it was like to be Perry Smith or Samuel Johnson, down to their physical bodily feelings, with the minuteness that we ordinarily think possible only of purely hypothetical creations.

It is true that readers today have no trouble differentiating fictions that take their shape from real life from the biographies, histories, and "factions" that make a claim to historical veracity.[7] But it is important to remember that these distinctions, though theoretically always available, came into existence historically. Catherine Gallagher suggests that the reader of the eighteenth-century novel did not necessarily understand the difference between fiction and

falsehood, and one of the frequent features of early novels is the claims of truth that they make. Aphra Behn claims to have met Oroonoko in Guyana in the 1660s and heard his story from his own lips. The first-person narrator of *Moll Flanders* explicitly tells us that she is suppressing her real name because of her notoriety, while the editor's preface insists that this is a true autobiography ("a private history") and not one of those "novels and romances" that trifle with public credulity. The bookseller Samuel Richardson, in publishing *Pamela*, claims that he is printing the genuine letters and journals of the principal characters of the story. Henry Fielding included in *Tom Jones* references to his friends, acquaintances, and even local businessmen (like "the celebrated Mrs *Hussy*," the "mantua-maker in the Strand" who gets a cameo in Book X, chapter iii). Some time around the middle of the eighteenth century, though, something like the current distinction between falsehood and fiction begins to take hold, and it may be some indication that it is then that we begin to get texts like Charlotte Lennox's *Female Quixote* (1752), whose heroine doesn't get the difference.

Story and Discourse

It's hard to know precisely where to start discussing narrative form, but the most common distinction – and this goes back all the way to Aristotle – is to separate the what from the how, the story that is told from the way that story is told. In his notebooks, Henry James called them the "story" and the "treatment"; Russian Formalist critics of the 1920s used the terms *fabula* and *sjuzet*; the French structuralist Claude Bremond used *récit* and *raconte*; and Seymour Chatman called them story and discourse. These represent two sets of choices the author makes: what will happen in the story, and to whom, and why; and how to go about telling that.

Story: Plot Construction

Sometime people assume the story itself is given, but of course it is constructed, even when an author purloins a plot from some other text. When T.H. White adapted Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* into *The Once and Future King*, he had to decide what to keep and what to omit, where to start and where to leave off, which of Malory's themes to highlight and which to be silent about. Similarly, it's easy to presume that there is a "natural" way of telling a story: "Begin at the beginning, go all the way through to the end, and then stop," says Humpty Dumpty to Alice, as though that were easy and natural. But of course it's not natural at all. When people tell stories to each other, only the very shortest are told in successive time-sequence. When we tell stories of any length we usually put in analepses (flashbacks to a past situation) and prolepses (anticipations of a future situation).

And the places we start and end aren't natural either: they too are choices dictated by any number of considerations, all of which add to or subtract from the impact the story makes. Some novels have to start considerably before the beginning of the plot – there needs to be exposition, to set a scene or set up an unusual character or situation – and some novels will make the strongest impression if we start in the middle and fill in the beginning later. We will use James Phelan's term "launch" to denote the place within the story where the major instabilities of the plot begin, "voyage" to indicate the complication, and "arrival" to indicate the establishment of a new stable situation. Elements of story prior to the launch are in effect exposition (although exposition can be inserted at any time). In some texts like Richardson's *Pamela*, the launch occurs right at the start of the novel; in others, like Fielding's *Tom Jones*, the launch is long delayed, until the fifth book (out of 18).

A unified plot – as opposed to a series of unconnected episodes centering around a single character – is according to Aristotle one with a beginning, middle, and end. The plot begins when an initially stable situation becomes unstable, undergoes further complications, and is finally resolved with the introduction of a new stability. To take the familiar story of *Great Expectations*, it does not launch until chapter 18 (out of 59) when Pip is informed through the lawyer Jaggers, that he is to be taken away from his brother-in-law Joe Gargery's forge and made into a gentleman, courtesy of an anonymous benefactor. In the "middle" the story is complicated by Pip's shifting and equivocal relations with the eccentric heiress Miss Havisham – whom he mistakenly takes for that benefactor – and her circle, including his friend Herbert Pocket and his disdainful beloved Estella, and it includes his partial corruption by the forces of money and snobbery, until his fantasies are snapped by the knowledge that the benefactor is actually Magwitch, a transported convict grown rich in Australia. The end involves the recrudescence of Pip's originally generous and noble character, which we see in his rejection of the money and his heroic attempt to save Magwitch from the death prescribed for returned transportees. In a new stability, Pip becomes a middle-class merchant rather than a leisured gentleman, working for his living with his friend Pocket and married to Estella, who has also been humbled by fate.[8]

This story presupposes many events that precede the launch: Pip's first encounter with Magwitch, which inspires the latter's generosity; his early meetings with Miss Havisham and Estella, which lead him to aspire above his working-class station in life. The economy of a Dickens novel, even a relatively short one like *Great Expectations*, allows for this sort of leisurely opening, with vast quantities of exposition whose relevance may not appear for hundreds of pages. Some Victorian novels (like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*) include epilogue material – episodes from the lives of the main characters after the story is over – that

goes on for dozens of pages. In other eras, novels may have a very different sort of economy, and in some modern novels – such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* – we meet the narrator after the story he means to tell is over, when he is coping with its aftermath; and as Nick Carraway begins his narration of the story proper, he starts in the middle, long after the initial romance of Gatsby and Daisy has begun, presenting the beginning of that story through a series of analepses (flashbacks), explaining the origin of Gatsby's romantic dreams and how they came to be focused on his love for Daisy.

Story: Desires, Expectations, Responsibility

In any rhetorical poetics of fiction, the end of a mimetic narrative will be its power to produce an emotional effect in its audience. The specific effect is determined by three main factors. First, the moral quality of the protagonist(s) inspires us with more or less definite *desires*; depending on our degree of sympathy, we will wish the protagonist good or bad fortune, with greater or less ardor. Second, the events of the plot set up lines of probability that lead us to form more or less definite *expectations* regarding the protagonist's fate. We expect him or her to have either good or bad fortune, in greater or less degree, temporarily or permanently. (We may also have indeterminate expectations, either because we are placed in suspense between two or more well-defined possible outcomes, or because the alternatives for the outcome are poorly defined.) Finally, the protagonist has a more or less definite degree of *responsibility* for what happens. We may be made to feel that he or she exercises definite control through conscious choice or, on the other hand, that the outcome is the result of the planned actions of other agents, or of a benevolent Providence, or malignant Destiny, or blind Chance. If the protagonist controls the outcome, though, it matters whether he or she acts in full knowledge or as the result of a mistake of some sort.

These factors can lead us to make some of the usual generic discriminations between types of plot: Tragedies differ from comedies by whether we are led to expect an unhappy or a happy ending, and comedies are unlike melodramas that end happily because in comedies we are assured of the happy ending almost from the outset, while the melodramas arouse suspense about what will happen. They can also help us make subtle discriminations. Two comedies ending in marriage, such as Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Austen's *Emma,* differ over the protagonist's degree of responsibility. Austen implicitly suggests that her heroine primarily generates her own vexations through her blind egocentric choices, and finally assures her future happiness by gaining self-knowledge and transforming herself into a suitable partner for the man she realizes she loves. Fielding on the other hand insistently reminds us that both the misfortunes

and the happy ending for the hero of *Tom Jones* occur to a great extent because of bad and good luck, respectively. In *Tom Jones*, in other words, our nose is rubbed in the fact that happiness is not always in the power of the innocent, the noble, and the good.[9] To take another example, Godwin's two endings for *Caleb Williams* were both tragic: Caleb's life is blighted in both; but in Godwin's original ending, Caleb is purely a victim of the power of his antagonist Falkland, while in the published ending Caleb succeeds in vindicating his reputation – he is cleared of the charge of theft – but the vindication ends Falkland's life, leading Caleb to condemn himself as a murderer.

Story: Unity and Pattern

We have already mentioned the unified plot. In the eighteenth-century novel, unity of action is not something one can take for granted. *Moll Flanders* is an episodic form with connections to the picaresque; each episode – and a few of them can be quite lengthy – is coherent in itself, but once it is over, Moll counts up her assets and liabilities and goes on to the next episode. *Tristram Shandy* purports to be the narrator's "life and opinions" but the novel is an elaborate series of digressions loosely hung onto a very few "events" in Tristram's life, often ones (like the act of sexual intercourse that initiates the hero's conception) that would not normally appear in an autobiography. But while the incoherence of *Moll Flanders* is proto-novelistic, the apparent incoherence of *Tristram Shandy* is in a sense post-novelistic: what Sterne does depends on the prior existence of already formed conventions of the novel, conventions that he flouts and parodies.

Beginning with Richardson, though, novelistic plots often develop expectations through patterns in the action that the reader can discern. The increasingly tense deadlocks between Lovelace and his prisoner in *Clarissa* point the way to the climactic rape. On the other side, in Fielding's novel, the pattern of Tom Jones getting in trouble through a magnanimous but imprudent act and then getting out of trouble again signals to the reader that, since nothing terribly bad ever seems to happen as a result, nothing very bad ever will. (One of the functions of the delayed launch in *Tom Jones* is to establish such a pattern, which generates comic expectations.)

Pattern can perhaps be a danger to a novelist's intent. In *Pamela*, Richardson escalates, throughout the first volume of the novel, the threats to Pamela's bodily integrity, because the pattern of threatened rape followed by escape leads to the same kind of comic expectations that we find in *Tom Jones*. This not only explains the presence, in the Lincolnshire estate to which Pamela is kidnapped, of the masculine housekeeper Mrs. Jewkes, but also the arrival of the ferocious-looking valet Colbrand. Pamela's fears increase drastically as she realizes that if Mr. B. is determined to have his way with her there will be two strong servants to assist him

and no one to save her. Nevertheless, the experience of many readers is that the repeated pattern of threat followed by escape overwhelms the escalating threats, leading us to expect that the threats will never ultimately be carried out. (And of course Richardson's subtitle, "Virtue Rewarded," reprinted on each recto page, certainly implies a happy ending.)

Discourse: Authors, Narrators, Audiences, and their Surrogates

In the narrative situation, authors (from Aphra Behn to Walter Scott) tell stories to the readers of their novels for some purpose. In the course of doing so they create narrators who may live inside the storyworld (as the narrator of *Oroonoko* does) or outside that storyworld (as the narrator of *Waverley* does). Narrators who live inside the story world may tell their own story, like Defoe's Moll Flanders, and Richardson's Pamela, through her letters. Or the narrator inside the storyworld may be, like Behn's narrator, primarily the observer of another character's story.[10]

Wayne Booth coined the term "unreliable narrator" to characterize narrators who are deficient in: (1) the literal *reporting* of events and characters, or (2) the *interpretation* of events that they observe, or (3) the ethical *evaluation* of characters and their actions, or some combination of these. For example, after Emma Woodhouse meets Harriet Smith in chapter 3 of *Emma* we get the following:

> She was not struck by any thing remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her altogether very engaging – not inconveniently shy, not unwilling to talk – and yet so far from pushing, shewing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of every thing in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense, and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. Those soft blue eyes, and all those natural graces, should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connexions. The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her. The friends from whom she had just parted, though very good sort of people, must be doing her harm.

The passage is character narration employing free indirect discourse, expressing thoughts and judgments by Emma that Austen means for us to distrust. The logic here – the fact Harriet is deferential to Emma implies that she has good sense – is slippery and self-serving, as is the judgment that Harriet's friends are "unworthy of her"; the constant reference to rank (deference, superior style, inferior society, unworthy) indicates that Emma is a snob. But though Emma's evaluations are clouded, her perceptions are not: she is quite aware that Harriet, though physically

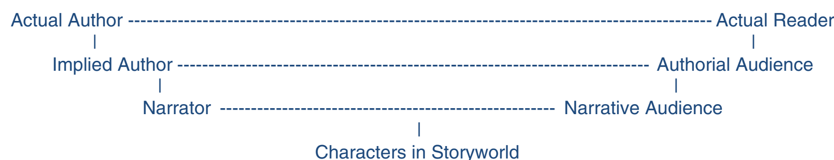
attractive, is not very bright, and later, when she reads Robert Martin's letter of proposal to Harriet, she is impressed in spite of herself by its unaffected language and delicacy of feeling, even though she immediately afterwards bullies Harriet into refusing him. Misevaluation is not the only form of unreliability Emma displays: once she has decided to make a match between Harriet and the bachelor clergyman of the parish, Emma almost willfully misinterprets all the signals that he is romantically interested in her rather than her friend.[11]

If these complex judgments are communicated to the reader over Emma's head or behind her back, who then is doing the communicating? Wayne Booth coined the term "implied author" for the authorial perspective within the text, controlling the "unreliable" third-person character narration. Although some theorists have argued that the "implied author" is an entity without utility, within a theory of the novel as communication, it makes sense to differentiate the author we infer from our reading of the novel from the author we know from biographers.

The audience too is inscribed within the text. Each novel is written for an "implied reader" – which Peter Rabinowitz calls the "authorial audience" – which ideally responds perfectly to the signals within the constructed text. (Actual readers attempt to approximate the response of the authorial audience within the text, with greater or less success.) The narrator, similarly, evokes a "narrative audience" who will be that narrator's receptor; one level further in, the narrative audience is inside the storyworld; for the narrative audience the characters and events are real.

In most realist novels since *Pamela* there will both an authorial audience, who knows that it is reading a fiction and is responding to signals from an implied author outside the storyworld, and a narrative audience who responds to the text as though it were happening in the real world. In *Tom Jones*, the signals that the text is generically a comedy, in which characters' fates are commensurate with their ethical deserts, generate in the authorial audience assurances that Tom will live happily ever after, even when, in Book XVIII, Tom is in Newgate prison awaiting trial for the murder of Mr. Fitzpatrick. Nevertheless, the reader may simultaneously feel intense suspense because she has also joined a narrative audience who does not know that Mr. Fitzpatrick will recover from his wound and Tom will be released.[12]

A complete diagram of this usual arrangement of actual and virtual authors and readers would be as follows:



Fiction before *Pamela* is another story. In texts like *Moll Flanders*, where there are signs but no actual signals that Defoe, rather than Moll, wrote the narrative, there is in effect no authorial audience, so that we respond to the text with the ethical relativism that we would respond to a real person's memoir. As we see in Chapter 3, Moll herself gives the narrative audience signals about how she judges herself and others, and often proleptically signals how episodes are going to turn out. But in texts of this sort there are no signposts for how to judge the narrator, and therefore no right or wrong way of ethically interpreting the characters' behavior. Some readers are appalled by Moll when, after stealing a necklace of gold beads from a little girl, she first thinks of killing the child to assure her own safety, decides against it, and then, forgetting about these thoughts, speaks of the episode as a valuable lesson to the girl's parents for not taking better care of her. Other readers find Moll's responses screamingly funny. And still others may take the "valuable lesson" sentence to be Defoe briefly speaking through Moll – so that for the moment the illusion of Moll's reality dissipates. The "usual arrangement" portrayed above is in the eighteenth century a work in progress.

One other matter is narrative levels. The "usual arrangement" discussed here presumes a single narrative voice within the text. But there are additional complexities if there are several narrators, either "side by side" or "nested" in layers. Epistolary novels like Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* – particularly the latter – can involve multiple correspondences with different narrators and narratees, and the reader is forced to evaluate the veracity, acumen, and prejudices of each correspondent. In *Clarissa*, for example, both Clarissa and Lovelace may produce a narrative of the same meeting between them, in letters to Anna Howe and John Belford, respectively, and the reader will often note how one or both of the characters misinterpreted the words and actions of the other. Nested narratives often are found in Gothic novels; in Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) for example, the story Alonzo de Monçada tells to John Melmoth includes a manuscript titled "Tale of the Indians,"a story in which – among many other things – Francisco de Aliaga visits an inn where a stranger tells him "The Tale of Guzman's Family," and where Melmoth the Wanderer tells him "The Tale of the Lovers." At one point there are five levels of narrative nested within one another like Russian Matryoshka dolls. (Complex nested narratives occur in Alexandrian romances and are also found in the Arabian Nights.)

Finally, we should note with James Phelan that the relationship between the various authors, narrators, and audiences is recursive, rather than stable; it can change both within and between readings of a narrative text. We often misinterpret elements of the text, sometimes because those misreadings are exactly what the implied author has built into the text. Or even without authorial help

we may make guesses about where the narrative is going that are not fulfilled, or ethical judgments about characters that are inconsistent with other textual elements, forcing us to revise our sense of what we are reading. And inevitably some textual elements that may seem relatively inert on a first reading can acquire great significance on a second reading.

Discourse: Point of View, Focalization and Voice, and Representations of Speech and Thought

Beginning with Henry James, theorists of fiction have concerned themselves with the other all-important aspect of the "discourse," the "point of view" from which the story is told. It is conventional to describe narrative technique primarily in terms of the characteristics of the narrator, and to differentiate between first-person narrators telling their own stories, like *Moll Flanders*, first-person narrators telling other people's stories, as in *Oroonoko*; and third-person narrators.[13] First-person narrators can tell us only what they know or can find out; in epistolary novels, for example, like *Pamela* or *Evelina*, the correspondents only know what they have already experienced, while in first-person narratives structured as memoirs (like *Moll Flanders*), the narrators already know how things came out and can anticipate whether their actions were wise or foolish, their interpretations wise or naive. Third-person narrators may have unlimited privilege (the so-called "omniscient" narrator), or they may be limited to knowing a single character's inner life (selective omniscience), or may know a number of character's inner states, each in turn (multiple selective omniscience), or may serve as a virtual camera eye objectively regarding the scene with no privilege to recount any character's thoughts and feelings.[14] As Wayne Booth insists in his classic essay, "Distance and Point of View," the "person" in which the story is told is far less important than the privilege the narrator is accorded to see into the characters' hearts (or to find them opaque), to know the end of the story at the beginning (or to come to each new event as a surprise), to judge and comment on the agents and their acts.

Point of view is usually now split into the separate issues of "focalization" and "voice," which is roughly equivalent to the question of who sees and who speaks, the perspective from which the action is viewed and the language used to convey the action. This distinction is clearly important in any third-person narrative, where the language used may be similar to that which the center of consciousness would have used – or may be very different. Even in first-person narratives, like James Joyce's short story "Araby," for example, the focalizing agent, a pre-adolescent boy, could hardly be responsible for the gnarled syntax and difficult vocabulary in which the narrative is pitched. Readers can

naturalize the difference between focalization and voice here if they think of the story as a retrospective narration by the depressed and disappointed adult into whom the boy of the story grew up – but that is not a fact directly presented in the story.[15]

Speech and thought can be represented directly (as direct quotations in the first person), or can be summarized (by an exterior narrator in the third person). And during our period, before 1800, a special form of free indirect discourse develops, in which a character speaks or thinks in language that conveys the voice of the character, but the words are represented as coming from the narrator, in the third person and in the past tense.

For example from the beginning of chapter 16 of *Emma*:

> The hair was curled, and the maid sent away, and Emma sat down to think and be miserable. – It was a wretched business indeed! – Such an overthrow of every thing she had been wishing for! – Such a development of every thing most unwelcome! – Such a blow for Harriet! – that was the worst of all. Every part of it brought pain and humiliation, of some sort or other; but, compared with the evil to Harriet, all was light; and she would gladly have submitted to feel yet more mistaken – more in error – more disgraced by mis-judgment, than she actually was, could the effects of her blunders have been confined to herself.
>
> "If I had not persuaded Harriet into liking the man, I could have borne any thing. He might have doubled his presumption to me – but poor Harriet!"
>
> How she could have been so deceived! – He protested that he had never thought seriously of Harriet – never! She looked back as well as she could; but it was all confusion. She had taken up the idea, she supposed, and made every thing bend to it. His manners, however, must have been unmarked, wavering, dubious, or she could not have been so misled.

We can see here what is actually a typical blend of the various ways of presenting interiority or consciousness. At the outset there is a *summary*, in the narrator's language, of what is going on in the character's mind ("Emma sat down to think and be miserable."). The theorist Dorrit Cohn refers to this sort of summary as *psychonarration*. Then we get what is usually called *free indirect discourse*, or FID, where the third person and the preterite are used, in the character's language, but shifted from the first person and present tense ("Such an overthrow of every thing she had been wishing for. How could she have been so deceived!").[16] And we also get direct quotations of Emma's interior monologue, like "If I had not persuaded Harriet into liking the man …." The sympathy (or irony) with which characters are regarded often depends on the particular way their thoughts are framed. In chapter 11, I speculate that Austen

increases our sympathy for Emma when she uses FID, and increases irony at Emma's expense when she uses quoted interior monologue.

Discourse: Order, Pacing, Frequency

One obvious sign of authorial manipulation is telling the story out of order. Although, as I have already noted, naive nonliterary narratives frequently include proleptic statements indicating where the narrative is going, and also analeptic flashbacks, going back to fill in a previous event which is necessary to understand the speaker's reaction to what happened, we usually assume that a story will be told in chronological order and that any deviation from that order is done for effect. What we learn first is viewed as a given, the status quo, the point from which change is registered. Scott Fitzgerald created an indelible sense of Gatsby as a man of mystery and glamour by introducing him near the end of his life's saga, and only much later allowing us to view, in a flashback, how he had transformed himself into an icon of the jazz age from a Midwestern country boy.

Richardson starts *Clarissa* in the middle of things as well, with the aftermath of the duel between James Harlowe and Robert Lovelace, leaving the motives for the duel, and the underlying tensions within the Harlowe family to come out gradually. Fielding starts *Tom Jones* with Tom's discovery as an infant, long before any instability arises; on the other hand, he avoids giving any hint of Bridget Allworthy's romance with Mr. Summers in the previous year because, far from wanting to prepare the reader, he wants the mystery of Tom's birth to continue into the denouement. Fielding also reverses time, when necessary, to give us a sense of the simultaneous but separate journeys of Tom and Sophia from Somersetshire to London. *Tristram Shandy* plays with every aspect of narrative including order: we usually, in fact, are told first about effects, allowing Tristram to hark back to explain causes. Tristram's deformed nose is ascribed to Doctor Slop's wounded thumb, which in turn harks back to the knots Obadiah has tied to secure Slop's obstetrical instruments. And the novel as a whole, beginning with Tristram's conception and birth, ends with a final tableau at a time years before Tristram was born.

Gérard Genette's analysis of time in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* takes this sort of manipulation essentially for granted and concentrates more intensely on two other methods by which narrative can manipulate the sense of time. The second method, which Genette calls "duration" and which is more usually called pacing, refers to the relationship between story-time and reader-time and can be gauged by how many words in the narrative are used to convey how much time in the storyworld. In Proust, years can pass in the course of a few sentences, while

some of the soirees that Proust describes can take longer to read than to live through. Fielding telescopes time during Tom Jones's first eighteen years, but he slows the pace at points of crisis. Laurence Sterne self-consciously manipulates pacing to even greater extremes: Tristram at one point takes several chapters to describe his father and uncle descending a single flight of stairs.

What Genette calls "frequency" – whether a particular action is performed once or repeatedly, over and over again, is a third way of manipulating the reader's time sense. "In the evening … the little Englishman, Hawkins, would light the lamp and bring out the cards," we are told at the start of Frank O'Connor's story "Guests of the Nation," and the use of the modal auxiliary "would" lets us know that the scene being described is a repetitive everyday occurrence. At the beginning of section II, however, we read "One evening, Hawkins lit the lamp …" and we know at once that we are now in a section of the narrative where what happens will happen only once. Frequency can also be used together with pacing for a specific effect: "Guests of the Nation," for example, uses the repetitive mode at the beginning of the story as a way of telescoping the time sense, of conveying in a few words the habits formed over months. As the story goes on to recount the singular events leading to the execution of two British prisoners by their IRA guards, O'Connor progressively slows the pace as the moment of violence approaches in a way that intensifies the horror of the spectacle. Repetition is used primarily for comic effect in *Tristram Shandy*, from minor moments like Corporal Trim's inability to tell the story of the King of Bohemia and His Seven Castles, to major movements like Uncle Toby's all-consuming obsession with fortifications.

I shall be using the ideas and distinctions presented here, about story and discourse, structure and texture, in the ten following chapters analyzing representative novels in its first century or so of the novel's development.

Notes

1. In fact the epic, by the early nineteenth century. has become, in M.M. Bakhtin's terms "novelized": Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Byron's *Don Juan* are *bildungsromane*, while Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* is explicitly a novel in verse.
2. Ralph W. Rader, "The Emergence of the Novel in England: Genre in History vs. History of Genre," *Narrative* 1 (1983): 69–83.
3. To the extent that Rader cares about what happened earlier, it is in terms of predecessor forms like Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (which Defoe calls "private history" and Rader calls "naive incoherent autobiography"), forms that died out after the novel as such appeared, though they became influential much later upon what he calls the "simular" novel, texts like Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* or Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, which (in a very different way) imitate autobiography.

4. "The claim [to historicity] and its subversion end in the triumph of the creative human mind, a triumph already prefigured at the moment of the novel's emergence: in Richardson the triumphant mind is that of the protagonist; in Fielding it is that of the author. The implications of the formal breakthrough of the 1740s are pursued with such feverish intensity over the next two decades that after *Tristram Shandy*, it may be said, the young genre settles down to a more deliberate and studied recapitulation of the same ground, this time for the next two centuries" (McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, 418–19). McKeon's belief that the novel spends the entire period from 1760 to 1960 without moving past the dialectical space represented by Richardson and Fielding in effect reduces the history of the English novel to the history of its origin, and, in a sense, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of his dialectical method and his vision of history written from the topos of the predisposing cause.
5. Theorists of narrative sometimes differ in the degree to which they are willing to problematize the notion of the "real world" against which we naturalize the "possible worlds" of fiction. Umberto Eco exteriorizes the "real world" as a set of scripts in which that world is represented; he calls those scripts "the encyclopedia" and allows for the fact that his own encyclopedia is likely to differ from other people's. Marie-Laure Ryan, to the contrary, takes the "real world" as something to which all of us have equal and common access.
6. Woolf appears in *To the Lighthouse* as both the object and subject of representation, as Cam Ramsay and as Lily Briscoe. On the other side, the usual sort of autobiographical novel, such as *David Copperfield*, presents selected elements of the life of the author within the hypothetical probability scheme of the novel's possible world. It is interesting to know that Dickens actually pasted labels in a blacking factory just as David pastes wine labels at the warehouse of Murdstone & Grinby, but it isn't essential to understanding the story, because every character is invented to play his or her role in David's odyssey. *Portrait of the Artist*, like true stories, includes characters (like Dante Riordan and Mr. Casey) – and actions (like Stephen's bedwetting) – whose existence derives from an uninvented reality outside the fiction, and whose presence has no justification except that they actually happened.
7. Some narratives still "break the rules" of the genre to which they assign themselves. There are hoax memoirs, like *The Education of Little Tree* (1976), which pretended to be the autobiography of a native American, actually written by a white supremacist named Asa Earl Carter. A somewhat different case is Edmund Morris's *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (1999): Morris's narrative stance as a childhood friend of President Reagan was what he called a "literary device" – Morris actually grew up in Kenya and South Africa, far from Reagan's Illinois – but most of what he tells about Reagan's life was gathered by painstaking research, including access to Reagan himself.
8. Or a contented bachelor not married to Estella, as in Dickens's original denouement.
9. Similarly there are tragedies in which the protagonist's doom seems self-imposed (like Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*) and others where the protagonist seems an innocent victim of a malignant destiny (as in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*).

10. Gérard Genette coined the terms *homodiegetic* and *heterodiegetic* for narrators who are inside or outside the storyworld, respectively; he also used the term *autodiegetic* for protagonist-narrators.
11. Misreporting occurs most often with morally or mentally defective narrators, like Benjy in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, but some preternaturally repressed narrators like Stevens the butler in Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day* underreport events; on the night Stevens' father dies we learn that he has been crying only when someone else remarks about it to him. James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin suggest further that unreliable narrators may under-interpret as well as misinterpret events in the storyworld, and may underevaluate as well as misevaluate the behavior of other characters. See James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin, "The Lessons of Weymouth: Homodiegesis, Unreliability, Ethics, and *The Remains of the Day*," in David Herman (ed.), *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999): 88–109.
12. Rabinowitz includes a fourth audience for texts with flagrantly unreliable narrators, the "ideal narrative audience" which believes, agrees with, and sympathizes with the narrator. In Ring Lardner's "Haircut" the narrative and the ideal narrative audiences will be at odds: the former will reject and the latter accept the values and understanding of "Whitey" the barber.

    There is yet one more virtual reader that ought to be mentioned. Gerald Prince has proposed a figure he calls the narratee (*narrataire*) whose job it is to mediate between the narrator and the actual reader. As Prince says, "He constitutes a relay between the narrator and the reader, he helps establish the narrative framework, he emphasizes certain themes, he contributes to the development of the plot, he becomes the spokesman for the moral of the work." Minimally, the zero-degree narratee understands the language of the story and the objects and processes of its social world. This implicit receptor of the text knows what is assumed to be known and is ignorant of whatever needs to be explained. When Jake Barnes, in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, let us know that "Pernod is green imitation absinthe" or explains the order of events in a Spanish bullfight, that is because the narratee of that novel does not know such things. Most narratees are characterized only by the implicit assumptions of the text about their knowledge and opinions. But sometimes without actually speaking a word, a narratee can be an actual individual within a story, like the person ("you who know the secrets of my soul") who listens to Montresor reveal how he murdered Fortunato in Poe's "A Cask of Amontillado," or the Parisian attorney who listens to the monologue of Jean-Baptiste Clamence in Camus's *La Chute*, or the former sailor who listens to Marlow's tale in *Lord Jim*. Prince's narratee resembles Rabinowitz's "narrative audience," though there are subtle differences.
13. A small number of narratives are written in the second person, such as Jay McInerny's novel *Bright Lights, Big City*. Usually the narrative "you" telling the tale equates roughly to a first-person narrator, but sometimes serves to implicate the narratee and the audience in the tale.
14. Even cameras can take sides, of course: the narrator of Hemingway's 1927 story "The Killers," who refrains from reporting the inner lives of any of the characters,

immediately gives us the names of Nick and George, who live in Summit, Illinois, where the story takes place, but not the names of the paid assassins, Al and Max; their names are withheld until they have addressed each other.

15. It may be indirectly presented, though: about the girl for whom the narrator goes to Araby to buy a gift, he tells us that "her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood" but he never actually tells us that name; she is referred to only as "Mangan's sister," and we are asked perhaps to infer that over the years he has forgotten her first name.
16. In free indirect discourse, deictics (temporal or spatial locator terms, like "now" or "soon" or "here") do *not* shift along with the person and tense, with the result that fictional texts can produce sentences like, "Now he was free of her, he felt," that would be impossible in normal spoken English. Ann Banfield, analyzing the phenomenon, calls them "unspeakable sentences."

Chapter 2

Oroonoko (1688)

Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave: A True History

The plot of *Oroonoko* is quickly told. The hero is an African prince, grandson and heir of the aged King of Coramantien, handsome, noble, and brave as a lion in battle. He falls in love with Imoinda, and she with him; they are secretly betrothed. But Imoinda is sent the royal veil by Oroonoko's grandfather and is forced to become one of his many wives. Through the intrigues of his friend Aboan, who romances Onahal, one of the king's cast-off concubines, Oroonoko gains access to the harem and he and Imoinda consummate their love. When this is discovered, Imoinda is sold into slavery, though all are told that she is dead. Oroonoko gets this news when he is inland in command of the army and with courage continues to fight, defeating his foe and taking the survivors as slaves; their leader Jamoan becomes Oroonoko's prized companion. Returning to Coromantien, Oroonoko is decoyed aboard a European ship, whose captain flatters him and plies him with liquor, and on awakening Oroonoko discovers himself in chains, a slave on the Middle Passage between Africa and the Americas.

On arrival at the English colony of Surinam, Oroonoko is bought by Trefry, the agent of the Governor-General Lord Willoughby, who does not put him to work in the fields. Oroonoko soon discovers that a beautiful and chaste female slave on the same plantation is none other than his Imoinda. Oroonoko then tries to negotiate his return with his wife to Africa, while the Deputy Governor, Byam, meditates how he can be properly dealt with. As time passes, Imoinda becomes pregnant, and Oroonoko becomes desperate to arrange for their freedom so that his son will not be born into slavery. The narrator of the tale is

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meanwhile assigned to befriend Oroonoko, to keep him busy and to spy on him. The outnumbered white settlers fear a revolt of the African slaves led by an experienced commander whom they recognize as their king. Realizing at length, that his negotiations with the settlers are leading nowhere, Oroonoko leads a revolt of the slaves against their English owners. The English are too cowardly to fight, but the slaves are persuaded to abandon Oroonoko and return for a promise of amnesty. Alone, Oroonoko is tricked by Trefry and Byam into surrendering, then savagely beaten, after which he vows revenge. He plans to kill Imoinda with her consent (so that she will not be dishonored after his death), then to kill Byam, and finally himself, but after killing Imoinda he is recaptured and, in the absence of his partisans like Trefry and the narrator, Byam has Oroonoko savagely executed by being dismembered while alive.

***Oroonoko*: The Initiation**

Oroonoko is a good place to begin the study of eighteenth-century fiction because it exemplifies so perfectly what fiction before the novel was like. The first thing the reader will notice is that it claims on the title page not to be fiction at all, but rather a "True History," and the narrator's insistence on the truth of the story takes up the first two paragraphs:

> I do not pretend, in giving you the History of this Royal Slave, to entertain my Reader with the Adventures of a feign'd Hero, whose Life and Fortunes Fancy may manage at the Poet's Pleasure, nor in relating the Truth, design to adorn it with any Accidents, but such as arriv'd in earnest to him. And it shall come simply into the World, recommended by its own proper Merits, and natural Intrigues, there being enough of Reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the Addition of Invention.
>
> I was my self an Eye-Witness to a great part, of what you will find here set down, and what I cou'd not be Witness of, I receiv'd from the Mouth of the chief Actor in his History, the Hero himself, who gave us the whole Transactions of his Youth.

Aphra Behn made the very same truth-claim, almost verbatim, in the initiation phase of another narrative she published the same year as *Oroonoko*, *The Fair Jilt:* "I do not pretend here to entertain you with a feign'd Story, or any thing piec'd together with *Romantic Accidents*, but every Circumstance, to a Tittle, is Truth. To a great part of the Main, I my self was an Eyewitness." In fact all of *The Fair Jilt* is pure invention except for its climactic incident, a botched public execution in Antwerp that was reported in the *London Gazette* for May 1666.

And Aphra Behn may in fact have been present at that time; she was then in the Low Countries employed as a spy in the service of King Charles II.

Similarly in *Oroonoko*, the title character is invented, along with his history in Africa, but five historical figures populate the part of his tale set in the English colony of Surinam. The actual Governor-General of the English colonies in the Caribbean during the early 1660s, Francis Lord Willoughby of Parham, who is mentioned but never appears in person in the narrative, was stationed in Barbados, and there are ample records of the two English colonists who admire Oroonoko (John Trefry and George Marten), and of the two who betray and execute him (William Byam and James Banister).

Aphra Behn

And what of the sixth historical figure, the first-person narrator "eye-witness" Aphra Behn, who claims to have known Oroonoko, both within the novel itself and in her Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Maitland? Though the occasional scholar has been sceptical – because so much of the local color in *Oroonoko* could have been picked up from other travel literature – most are convinced that Behn had indeed been there.

The consensus is that she was christened "Eaffrey Johnson" in 1640 near Canterbury in Kent, and there is evidence that she crossed the Atlantic to Surinam in 1663, staying for some months. She may indeed have been living with her mother and sisters at St. John's Hill, a plantation whose owner, Sir Robert Harley, was not in residence, and where we have a record in 1664 of "ladies" being present. But Behn was, as Mae West said, no lady, and in fact we have no firm idea of why she came to Surinam or what Aphra's status may have been there. The wildly implausible explanation given in *Oroonoko* is that her father (Bartholomew Johnson, a mere barber) had been appointed by Lord Willoughby to be his lieutenant-general over England's Caribbean colonies but died on the voyage to the New World. (In real life it had been Lord Willoughby who died at sea, in 1666.) Aphra is probably the "Astrea" mentioned in William Byam's March 1664 letter as leaving the colony for England via Barbados, followed by her "Celadon," an aspiring but impecunious suitor, William Scot. ("Astraea" was later to be Behn's pen name, taken from the heroine of the 1607 pastoral romance by Honoré D'Urfé.) Behn claims in *Oroonoko* to have presented the "King's Theatre" (the Theatre Royal at Covent Garden) with exotic feathers brought from Surinam, feathers that costumed the heroine of *The Indian-Queen*, a popular heroic drama by Sir Robert Howard and John Dryden. But she could not have returned in time for that play's opening in January 1664, though these feathers may have graced the stage for a revival later in the decade.

Much of the rest of Behn's life has similar lacunae that have to be filled in by scholarly speculation. Her early years, which coincided with the English Civil War and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, are a complete blank, but we know she had been educated well beyond what would have been typical for her social class and her sex, perhaps by having been informally adopted by the aristocratic Culpeper family of Kent, for whom her mother was a wet-nurse. This might account for the extreme royalist sympathies and Tory politics evident in all her writings. She returned from Surinam in 1664, and signed herself "Behn" from 1666. The name suggests marriage to someone of German or Dutch extraction, but we know nothing of husband or marriage except that it must have been short lived, as no husband is in evidence during her later career. In July of 1666 she was employed in the Netherlands as a spy by Charles II's government, which was at war with the Dutch, but payment for her services must have been lax as she was threatened in 1668 with imprisonment for debt in Antwerp, and she sent frantic letters of appeal for relief to Charles's court. She returned to London and began to write for the stage; in 1670, her first play, *The Forc'd Marriage*, was a success. Behn followed that up with eighteen other dramas, primarily romantic comedies; the most frequently revived was *The Rover* (1677). Behn's dramatic works were called sexually indecent, even in her lifetime, but they were typical of the comedies of her time. What was unique was the sex of the author, who was, as Virginia Woolf pointed out, the first woman to live by her pen.

Truth-Telling

After Behn's opening truth-claim for the story, she delays the launch again in order, she says, to tell us how African slaves are brought to Surinam, but she gets to that point by a highly circuitous path. The colonists, she tells us, live with the native Guyanans "in perfect Amity, without daring to command 'em, but on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly Affection in the World." The word "daring" is in some tension with "brotherly and friendly Affection," and Behn spells that tension out a few paragraphs later: "these People … being, on all Occasions, very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as Friends, and not to treat 'em as Slaves; nor dare we do other, their Numbers so far surpassing ours in that *Continent*." In other words, the English would happily have enslaved the Guyanans had they been able safely to do so. Behn's digression on Guyana wanders through descriptions of the fauna and flora of Surinam, and the dress of the native Guyanans, before going into their character, which "represented to me an absolute Idea of the first State of Innocence, before Man knew how to sin." And at this point Behn tells a little story about

their innocence that thematizes the issue of truth and deception, so important in the main story of *Oroonoko*:

> They once made Mourning and Fasting for the Death of the *English* Governor, who had given his Hand to come on such a Day to 'em, and neither came, nor sent; believing, when once a Man's Word was past, nothing but Death cou'd or shou'd prevent his keeping it: And when they saw he was not dead, they asked him, what Name they had for a Man who promis'd a thing he did not do? The Governor told them, Such a man was a *Lyar*, which was a Word of Infamy to a Gentleman. Then one of 'em reply'd, *Governor, you are a Lyar, and guilty of that Infamy*. They have a Native Justice, which knows no Fraud; and they understand no Vice, or Cunning, but when they are taught by the *White Men*.

These prelapsarian innocents, without vice or cunning, nevertheless "take Slaves in War," and as we discover shortly, so does Oroonoko as a war-chieftain in Africa. Slavery seems to be universal and not an evil peculiar to European culture. More on this later.

Fiction: Romance, Novel, History

As Lennard Davis and Brian Corman have suggested, the somewhat inchoate genre-system for narrative literature in the late seventeenth century had three important slots, for history, novel, and romance, which differed in their degree of verisimilitude, if not truth. The playwright Congreve's first publication was a comic novel titled *Incognita* (1692), and in his preface, Congreve characterized the romance as "composed of the Constant Loves and invincible Courages of Hero's, Heroins, Kings and Queens, Mortals of the first Rank," with "lofty Language, miraculous Contingencies and impossible Performances"; novels, on the other hand, "delight us with Accidents and odd Events, but not such as are wholly unusual or unprecedented, such which not being so distant from our Belief bring also the pleasure nearer us."

Oroonoko seems to be a blend of all three genres, although its tragic structure most resembles that of Restoration heroic drama. Many of the minor episodes in the story, the behavior of the exotic animals and the indigenous people of Surinam appear much as they do in the factual travel literature of the time; indeed, Behn may have refreshed her memories of South America by reading George Warren's *Impartial Description of Surinam* (1667) or John Ogilby's *America* (1671).

The segment of the narrative set in Coramantien (Koromantyn, a port on the Gold Coast of Africa, now Ghana) is pure romance, set in an exotic warlike society like the ancient Persia and Rome imagined in the popular contemporary

romances by Mlle. de Scudéry (*Artamène* and *Clélie* respectively). The amorous intrigue, especially the double bank-shot by which Aboan seduces the former beauty Onahal in order to provide his friend with access to Imoinda, is very typical of that literature, and the improbable coincidence by which Oroonoko and Imoinda are sold as slaves in the very same Caribbean colony, each not knowing that the other is even alive, recalls the chance reunion of the lovers in the much older romances from ancient Alexandria, like Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* (see Chapter 1). The hero's imperviousness to pain – he endures being dismembered while calmly smoking a pipe of tobacco – is on this same fabulous level, though the popular romances usually ended with the lovers living happily ever after.

On the other side, the line of action set in Surinam has considerable verisimilitude: African slaves were being imported to the Caribbean to work plantations there because the indigenous people vastly outnumbered the colonists, and could not be forced to work at agricultural tasks since they could easily escape into the uncultivated hinterland. (Even the African slaves, an ocean away from their homelands, often succeeded in running away from their owners and in setting up their own "maroon" societies on the fringes of the European settlements.) And slave rebellions occurred with great frequency in the Caribbean and on the continents of North and South America beginning as early as 1605; they were punished with extreme ferocity. Behn also portrays the political chaos that prevails in the colony, in which Byam, the lieutenant governor, has official authority, but is unable to effectively use that authority and meet in battle the challenge of Oroonoko's rebellion, partly because of the cowardice of most of the white settlers, partly because his authority is challenged by other colonists like Trefry and Marten. The narrator gives pride of place to Oroonoko's tragedy, but makes us aware also of the tragic consequences for England of this political chaos, including the loss of Surinam to the Dutch in 1667 in the second Anglo-Dutch war.

The Role of the Narrator

The first-person narrator of *Oroonoko* is first and foremost Oroonoko's friend and his eulogist. She says proleptically soon after his arrival in Surinam that: "his Misfortune was, to fall in an obscure World, that afforded only a Female Pen to celebrate his Fame." And she concludes her tale with a similar expression of modesty: "Thus Dy'd this Great Man; worthy of a better Fate, and a more sublime Wit than mine to write his Praise, yet, I hope, the Reputation of my Pen is considerable enough to make his Glorious Name to survive to all Ages." She claims to have written the section of Oroonoko's history set in Coramantien "from the Mouth of … the Hero himself" and the Surinam section from her own observations. Even so, she writes herself into a few corners: for example, the king's decision to transport

Imoinda and Onahal into slavery abroad is said to have been "put in Execution … with so much Secrecy that none … knew any thing of their Absence, or their Destiny"; if so, this is something Oroonoko cannot have told her, and even Imoinda cannot know anything about the decision to keep her fate a secret.

But of course the narrator's role in the story is more ambiguous than that of a mere chronicler. Oroonoko attempts to negotiate his freedom from the day he awakens on the slave ship, but there comes a point where the tension between his royal nature and his slave status becomes a genuine instability as he anticipates the birth of his child by Imoinda. It is at this point that the narrator becomes an agent for the English settlers who fear the prospect of a rebellion.

> They fed him from Day to Day with Promises, and delay'd him till the Lord Governor should come; so that he began to suspect them of falsehood, and that they wou'd delay him till the time of his Wives delivery, and make a Slave of that too: for all the Breed is theirs to whom the Parents belong. This Thought made him very uneasy, and his Sullenness gave them some Jealousies of him; so that I was oblig'd, by some Persons, who fear'd a Mutiny (which is very Fatal sometimes in those Colonies, that abound so with Slaves, that they exceed the Whites in vast Numbers), to discourse with *Caesar* [Oroonoko's slave name], and to give him all the Satisfaction I possibly cou'd …. I had Opportunity to take notice to him, that he was not well pleas'd of late, as he us'd to be, was more retir'd and thoughtful; and told him, I took it ill he shou'd Suspect we wou'd break our Words with him, and not permit both him and *Clemene* [the slave name of Imoinda] to return to his own Kingdom …. He made me some Answers that shew'd a doubt in him, which made me ask him, what advantage it wou'd be to doubt? it would but give us a Fear of him, and possibly compel us to treat him so as I shou'd be very loath to behold: that is, it might occasion his Confinement. Perhaps this was not so Luckily spoke of me, for I perceiv'd he resented that Word, which I strove to Soften again in vain …. Before I parted that Day with him, I got, with much ado, a Promise from him to rest yet a little longer with Patience, to wait the coming of the Lord Governor …; and this Promise he desired me to know was given perfectly in Complaisance to me, in whom he had an intire Confidence.

Since the narrator has no power to do the one thing Oroonoko most desires, to return him and Imoinda to Africa, her mission to give Oroonoko "all the Satisfaction I possibly cou'd" means deceiving him about the colonists' intentions, just as the captain of the slave ship had done, and just as the English governor Byam would consistently do. And the first time the narrator slips out of her role for a moment and tells Oroonoko the truth – that displaying his dissatisfaction might result in his being put in chains – she finds she has to spend the rest of that day soothing his resentment. She remains his best friend

in Surinam (he calls her "his Great Mistress"), but she is also an agent set to spy on his intentions, and her actual loyalties at any given moment are never certain. Whenever she uses the word "we," the reader is well advised to think carefully about whether she means "Oroonoko and I" or "the English colonists and I" because her references switch rapidly between the two.

Once the narrator's waiting game is over, the rebellion and its sadistic aftermath quickly follow, but though the narrator tells the story as though she were there, she is physically absent from the colony during the entire action. And this is something we find out only after the narration of Oroonoko's surrender and its fatal consequences.

> You must know, that when the News was brought on Monday Morning, that *Caesar* had betaken himself to the Woods, and carry'd with him all the Negroes, we were possess'd with extream Fear, which no perwasions cou'd Dissipate, that he wou'd secure himself till Night; and then, that he wou'd come down and Cut all our Throats. This apprehension made all the Females of us fly down the River, to be secur'd, and while we were away, they acted this Cruelty. For I suppose I had Authority and Interest enough there, had I suspected any such thing, to have prevented it; but we had not gone many Leagues, but the News overtook us that *Caesar* was taken, and Whipt like a common Slave.

As before, the incoherent juxtaposition of conflicting motives and sentiments is striking: on the one hand, she is overcome by the terror that Oroonoko will descend upon the English houses and cut everyone's throat, so she flees the settlement with the rest of the women; but on the other hand, she declares that, had she stayed, she could have controlled somehow the retribution that Byam takes in whipping Oroonoko "like a common slave." When Oroonoko is executed, too, a few days later, the narrator has taken herself away from Parham, "about three Days Journy down the River," because she fears that she might "fall into Fits of dangerous Illness upon any extraordinary Melancholy."

The Digressions

The section of the novel that falls between Oroonoko's discovery that his bride Imoinda is pregnant with "the last of his race" and his decision on that account to attempt a slave revolt consists of a series of three episodes in which the narrator relates "the diversions we entertain'd him with, or rather he us." The episodes are fairly lengthy – about 4500 words, or roughly one sixth of the tale; the first narrates two successful tiger-hunts, the second narrates Oroonoko's disastrous attempt to fish for an electric eel, and the third recounts a visit to a tribe of

Guyanan natives up the river from the English settlements. And when they are done, Behn says that "it was thus, for some time we diverted him," drawing a circle as it were around these digressions in order to resume the plot.

The two tiger-hunting episodes are, like some of the African episodes, designed to show the prowess, bravery, and endurance of Oroonoko. In the first, there is no intention to perform a brave act: Oroonoko has sought and found a tiger cub[1] he means to present to the English ladies when its mother returns and attacks; the ladies flee at the approach of the tiger, but Oroonoko quickly kills it with a sword borrowed from Henry Marten, getting pierced by the tiger's claws as it dies. In the second, Oroonoko is actively hunting, with bow and arrows, another tiger, one that has been killing the colonists' sheep and oxen and has apparently been unsuccessfully pursued by the English for some time, and he dispatches it easily with two accurate shots.

What readers may find most peculiar about these narratives are the pronouns Behn uses for the tigers, which vary inconsistently between feminine and masculine. In the first episode the tiger is "the dam," or mother to the cub Oroonoko plans to steal, but she is "bearing a buttock of a cow, which *he* had torn off with *his* mighty paw." Later the tiger "quit *her* prey," after which Oroonoko runs his sword "quite through *his* breast down to *his* very heart." The second tiger is consistently a "she" while it is alive and a "he" when it is dead. Oroonoko "going softly to one side of *her* ... he shot *her* in the eye [which] made *her* caper .... [B]eing seconded by another arrow, *he* fell dead upon the prey. Caesar cut *him* open with a knife." Jacqueline Pearson has argued that for Behn nature is gendered as female and culture as male, so that the second "tiger is female when strong and aggressive ... and male when powerless and defeated."[2] Gendering nature and culture as male and female is a fairly standard trope, but it's not clear why a dead tiger is cultural rather than natural, and in any case even the alive/dead reading doesn't work for the first tiger, "who was laid in *her* blood on the ground." Thus far the bisexual tigers – who were emended by editors to make them both consistently female from the third edition onward – are a puzzle no one has successfully solved.

The episode of the "numb-eel" seems more clearly thematic. Oronooko goes out fishing for the eel, laughing at the very idea that a man could be hurt by a mere fish, and gets the shock of his life: he is shocked unconscious while standing in the river and is only saved from drowning by natives in a boat, who pick up both him and the eel that is still attached to his pole and line. The episode displaces to the natural world what happens to Oroonoko in his contacts with European culture: he is overweeningly self-confident about his abilities and therefore vulnerable to an attack he fails to foresee, like that of the sea-captain who makes him drunk in the port of Coromantien; and it may foreshadow the broken promises after the failure of Oroonoko's rebellion. Most obviously, though, it reflects his relationship with the narrator, who together with other

colonists, have successfully kept Oroonoko "numb," or insensible, to his real status as a slave by entertaining him with these diversions.

The last of the three episodes, the voyage eight days upriver to native Guyanan towns, concludes the digressions with a crowning success on Oroonoko's part. The narrator cites "disputes" with a particular tribe of natives which cause the colonists a great deal of fear. But after a number of meetings with the tribe, "Oroonoko begot so good an understanding between the Indians and the English, that there were no more fears or heartburnings during our stay." Thematically, this is primarily a meeting between the natives, who represent nature, and are entirely unclothed,[3] and the cultured Europeans together with the African prince. The narrator speculates about the natives that, owing to their ignorance and simplicity, "it were not difficult to establish any unknown or extravagant religion among them, and to impose any notions or fictions upon them," thus raising again the theme of European duplicity, the power to enslave non-Europeans with their lies. Proleptically, this episode predicts an aspect of the story's catastrophe. The narrator notices that among the natives "some wanted their noses, some their lips …, and others their ears." Among Europeans we would suspect either disease or criminal penalties,[4] but the explanation Behn gives is that the war-captains of this tribe of natives compete with one another for the leadership of their army, showing their courage by self-mutilation. This is, she says, "a sort of courage too brutal to be applauded by our black hero." But in fact the conclusion of *Oroonoko* involves an episode of self-mutilation where the hero shows his contempt for the slaves who have surrendered by cutting a piece of flesh from his throat and throwing it at them, then attempting to disembowel himself.

Slavery in *Oroonoko*

It often surprises many readers that *Oroonoko* is by no means an abolitionist text, finding slavery an outrage against the natural freedom of man. On the contrary, to Behn slavery is a universal feature of societies, civilized or otherwise; even the "noble savages who are native to Guyana" – and Behn describes them as prelapsarian beings, more innocent than Adam and Eve in the Garden – take prisoners of war as slaves. Nevertheless, commercial slavery, having forever to serve not one's captor but a mere purchaser, is something that does seem unnatural to her, or at least to Oroonoko himself:

> "Have they Vanquish'd us Nobly in Fight? Have they Won us in Honourable Battel? And are we, by the chance of War, become their Slaves? This wou'd not anger a Noble Heart; this wou'd not animate a Souldiers Soul: no, but we are Bought and Sold like Apes or Monkeys, to be the Sport of Women, Fools, and Cowards."

To the reader, given the narrator's heroic presentation of the "royal slave," the implicit argument of *Oroonoko* would be anti-slavery. But abolitionist opinion would develop during the eighteenth century, not through Tories like Behn posing a paradox of noble savages debased by chattel slavery, but through Whig and radical dissenters, often Quakers and Unitarians, who believed in the brotherhood of man. British abolitionism culminated first in the 1807 prohibition of the slave trade and the subsequent abolition of slavery itself throughout the British Empire in 1833.

History, News and the Royal Slave

In addition to its links to romance and factual travel literature, *Oroonoko* can be seen as a historical allegory of the martyrdom of Charles I. The conflict she portrays in *Oroonoko* – disunity between Royalists and Parliamentarians leading to the savage execution of a noble prince – was analogous in Behn's eyes to the English Civil War, culminating in the decapitation of Charles I. But there was also a second historical allegory, one that was "ripped from the headlines." As a Tory, Behn saw the current monarch, James II, as a "royal slave" whose tense standoff with Parliament had reached a tipping point with the birth of a son and heir by his Catholic second wife Mary of Modena. Did Behn expect the Dutch to take over England, in the person of William III, hereditary Stadtholder of Holland, James II's son-in-law and nephew, just as they had taken over Surinam in 1667? Did she publish *Oroonoko* in 1688 partly as a warning against a similar regicidal ending to the revolution that was brewing?

If this is what she indeed expected, she was right about the Dutch victory and takeover but wrong about the regicide. James abandoned London after the battle of Reading, then departed for France just before Christmas of 1688. A good deal of blood was subsequently spilled in battles between Jacobite and Williamite forces in Scotland and Ireland, but in England the takeover by William was nearly bloodless. Behn lived long enough to hear about the coronation of William and Mary; she died in London on April 16, 1689.

In a more minor way, there is perhaps yet another transfer of history to fiction in *Oroonoko* in the African romance plot that brings Imoinda to Surinam. The story of a bride wooed and won by a prince who finds he cannot marry her because she has been claimed by his grandfather for himself might remind us of a similar story set in Spain in 1559. Don Carlos of Spain was set to marry Elizabeth of Valois when she was claimed by his father (not grandfather), King Philip II. Similarly Aboan and Onahal, the prince's friend and the king's former lover correspond to the Marquis of Posa and the Countess of Eboli. Behn was probably not attempting to adapt the actual historical events of more than a century earlier, but rather the tragedy of *Don Carlos* written by her dramatist

friend Thomas Otway and staged in 1676. To the extent that we become aware of these transpositions of past history and current events into *Oroonoko*, they make Behn's narrative seem both less factual – we are less likely to believe that Oroonoko and Imoinda actually existed – and less fictional.[5] This is one sign among many that the novel has not yet been born.

A Few Words about *Fantomina*

Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina, or Love in a Maze* (1725) runs to around 12,000 words, much too short to be considered a novel, but it is an excellent representative of "amatory fiction," one of the most significant prose genres in the decades before Richardson's *Pamela*, and one that clearly derives from the romance tradition of Honoré D'Urfé and Madeleine de Scudéry discussed in Chapter 1. *Love in Excess*, Haywood's considerably longer but not necessarily more complex text in the same genre, was one of the best sellers of 1719 – the other being Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Partly because of *Fantomina*'s brevity, it has recently become one of the early texts by women that are most often assigned in courses on the eighteenth-century novel. And partly because of its ethical complexity – it presents transgressive behavior on the part of both male and female characters without clumsy moralizing, and it lends itself to discussion from the perspectives of cultural studies and contemporary gender theory – it has recently generated a great deal of critical commentary.

The nameless heroine, identified initially as "a young Lady of distinguished Birth, Beauty, Wit, and Spirit," sitting in a box at the theatre, sees the young gentlemen of London paying their addresses to courtesans in the pit, is first outraged, but then becomes curious about what it would be like to be the object of that sort of desire. Accordingly, she dresses the next night as a prostitute, muffled in a hood, and enjoys their interest and flattery until she espies a man she knows from her life in the beau monde, "the accomplished Beauplaisir," joining those bidding for her favors. Attracted to him, she wants to meet with him privately, but has no place prepared for that purpose, so calling herself Fantomina, she puts him off with various excuses until the following night. By the next night, she has rented a furnished apartment, hired servants, and prepared a supper for them after the theatre. Once installed there in amorous conversation with Beauplaisir, Fantomina discovers that she is in over her head: her desires and his expectations from her self-presentation as a prostitute are leading them too swiftly to a conclusion that she does not in fact want, at least not then, but which she seems to have no power to stop.

What follows in the fifth paragraph of *Fantomina*, and how to define or describe what follows, has divided readers. In my own classroom experience,

male and female readers often differ: most but not all women readers view it as a description of date rape, while men reading the passage often see it as far more ambiguous, and this division is mirrored in the scholarly literature on *Fantomina*.

> Supper being over, which was intermixed with a vast deal of amorous Conversation, [Beauplaisir] began to explain himself more than he had done; and both by his Words and Behaviour let her know, he would not be denied that Happiness the Freedoms she allow'd had made him hope. – It was in vain; she would have retracted the Encouragement she had given: – In vain she endeavoured to delay, till the next Meeting, the fulfilling of his Wishes: – She had now gone too far to retreat: – *He* was bold; – he was resolute: *She* fearful, – confus'd, altogether unprepar'd to resist in such Encounters, and rendered more so, by the extreme Liking she had to him. – Shock'd, however, at the Apprehension of really losing her Honour, she struggled all she could, and was just going to reveal the whole Secret of her Name and Quality, when the Thoughts of the Liberty he had taken with her, and those he still continued to prosecute, prevented her, with representing the Danger of being expos'd, and the whole Affair made a Theme for publick Ridicule. – Thus much, indeed, she told him, that she was a Virgin, and had assumed this Manner of Behaviour only to engage him. But that he little regarded, or if he had, would have been far from obliging him to desist; – nay, in the present burning Eagerness of Desire, 'tis probable, that had he been acquainted both with who and what she really was, the Knowledge of her Birth would not have influenc'd him with Respect sufficient to have curb'd the wild Exuberance of his luxurious Wishes, or made him in that longing, – that impatient Moment, change the Form of his Addresses. In fine, she was undone; and he gain'd a Victory, so highly rapturous, that had he known over whom, scarce could he have triumphed more.

The ambiguity of the passage stems from the instability of the focalization of the narrative, which alternates between Fantomina and Beauplaisir. The passage – "He began to explain … let her know, he would not be denied" – begins with Beauplaisir speaking, but after he refers to "the Freedoms she allow'd," we switch to Fantomina thinking as she listens: "It was in vain; she would have retracted the Encouragement she had given." And "would have" suggests that she does not in fact "retract." Instead, she attempts to "delay, till the next Meeting" but that too is "in vain": "she had now gone too far to retreat." The deictic "now" suggests that we are reading free indirect discourse, many decades before its controlled use by Burney and Austen, and each internal thought suggests Fantomina's ambivalence about the encounter. We see her as she sees herself: "fearful, – confused, altogether unprepared to resist in such

Encounters"; and even the token resistance she thinks of putting up is tempered by her own desire, by "the extreme Liking she had to him." As the brink of "really losing her Honour" approaches, she tells him part of the truth – that she is a virgin who dressed as a courtesan to provoke his desire – and she thinks about telling him exactly who and what she is, a young lady of distinguished birth, someone of Beauplaisir's own class. But she doesn't do that: when it comes to the point, she is less afraid of "losing her Honour" than of having "the whole Affair made a Theme for publick Ridicule" – and over the brink they go. Would anything have changed if she had? At the crucial point Haywood withdraws from Fantomina's thoughts and considers Beauplaisir's from some distance, saying that "'tis probable" that knowing all this would have made no difference, would not have "curb'd the wild Exuberance of his luxurious Wishes" or would not have, as Haywood euphemistically puts it, "made him … change the Form of his Addresses."

While Margaret Croskery and Ros Ballaster read what happens in this sequence as rape pure and simple, Jonathan Kramnick has interpreted this passage through the philosophy of John Locke and contemporary ideas about the psychology of consent (as in the political "consent of the governed," which is given tacitly, for the most part). He argues that the ambiguity of this section of Haywood's narrative "is inextricable from the ways in which the novel wants us to understand agency. Either the young lady's behavior has been misunderstood by Beauplaisir and she was never consenting at all, or she had consented up to a point in time and now attempts to draw back, or she is unable to separate her internal volition from the external world it inhabits and wants what she doesn't want. Haywood seems to suggest all three at once and to show, thereby, the difficulty of pinpointing this particular kind of volition in the abstract."[6]

But the narrative does not brood about Fantomina's loss of honour. Instead, Fantomina suggests that her injury can be compensated, not by money – Beauplaisir's first impulse, given who he thinks Fantomina is, is to take out his purse – but by Beauplaisir's future behavior: if he is "sincere and constant" to her, all will be well. They embark upon a love affair, to the satisfaction of both, until Beauplaisir, like the Restoration rake he is, begins to tire of his conquest: "The rifled Charms of *Fantomina* soon lost their Poinancy, and grew tastless and insipid," we are told, and when the season for going to Bath approaches, he makes his excuses to go without her.

But Fantomina does not accept this rejection. Having masqueraded as a courtesan to win Beauplaisir, Fantomina now masquerades as Celia, a country girl of the working classes, and dressed in the appropriate "round-ear'd Cap, a short red Petticoat, and a little Jacket of Grey Stuff," and sporting a broad countrified accent, she seeks employment on her arrival in Bath in the very building where Beauplaisir is lodging. And Beauplaisir pursues Celia with the same

ardor he had pursued Fantomina, and the love affair continues to the satisfaction of both parties, for another month, until Beauplaisir again becomes sated with his "new" conquest.

By this point, Fantomina is already anticipating Beauplaisir's behavior, and she quits her job as a servant to prepare her next disguise. This time she dresses as the young widow of a Bristol merchant, in full mourning, and stations herself at an inn outside Bath where Beauplaisir's carriage will stop on its way back to London, so that she can address him to help her in her distress. Ever courteous to beautiful women, Beauplaisir offers to assist her, and another "new" affair between them begins. On their arrival in London, Fantomina takes a different apartment to receive Beauplaisir as Mrs. Bloomer. She also writes to Beauplaisir as Fantomina, and is annoyed to find that he puts off meeting with until a later day because of unspecified "business," and even more so when she discovers that his ardency and physical pleasure with her seems considerably less with her as Fantomina than that with which he had bedded the Widow Bloomer the previous night. Nevertheless, she has what she desires for the present, though yet again she is prepared for the waning of Beauplaisir's affection and desire.

The final masquerade is as Incognita, the ultimate mystery woman who offers herself to Beauplaisir provided he come to her house – yet a third set of lodgings – and that he never see her face nor inquire after her name. The ruse succeeds, and, by wearing a mask at dinner and by making love in the dark and leaving him before dawn, she takes advantage of her novelty and frustrates Beauplaisir's desire to find out more than she is willing to show.

As Incognita, she is enjoying Beauplaisir's intense ardor, and is planning to drop the Fantomina and Bloomer personas (who receive only "insipid caresses" whenever Beauplaisir visits them), when she discovers that she is pregnant. Her mother arriving in London at this time, Fantomina no longer has the freedom of action she had before, and all of her plots are unraveled. Summoned by the mother, Beauplaisir has had no idea that he has been sleeping for months with a genteel lady of fashion, whom he recognizes from the royal court, and to whom he might well have paid his addresses as to a future wife. He offers to make amends by providing for the child he has begotten, but the mother dismisses this offer, and any further attentions to her daughter, whom she sends for her delivery "to a Monastery in *France*, the Abbess of which had been her particular Friend."

Fantomina became an attractive text for third-wave feminists today because of its embrace of both female agency and the performative nature of desire and sexuality. The heroine wants to gaze as well as be gazed at, candidly desires sexual satisfaction and though herself faithful to her only lover, energetically performs a series of characters – courtesan, servant-girl, bourgeoise widow, and lady of fashion – in order to keep exciting the desire of the fickle Beauplaisir.

As she says to herself toward the end of the narrative – and it is the most explicit piece of moralizing, if one can call it that, in the novella: "[T]he most violent Passion, if it does not change its Object, in Time will wither: Possession naturally abates the Vigour of Desire, and I should have had, at best, but a cold, insipid, husband-like Lover in my Arms; but by these Arts of passing on him as a new Mistress whenever the Ardour, which alone makes Love a Blessing, begins to diminish, for the former one, I have him always raving, wild, impatient, longing, dying."

And its denouement is sufficiently ambiguous: Fantomina goes off to have her baby in "a Monastery in *France*," and although defenders of female agency, like Mary Ann Schofield, read this ending as a hint that in France, with its own aristocratic court, Fantomina will only find a larger and even more elaborate sphere of action to pursue her transgressive desires, other readers, like Alexander Pettit, take Fantomina's mother as Haywood's moral raisonneur and the prescribed voyage to France as the mother's final gesture washing her hands of her guilty daughter. The truth may lie somewhere in between: the denouement may be Haywood's admission that anatomy is indeed destiny, limiting the freedom of action of women who might wish to emulate the Restoration rake, but Fantomina's masquerades suggest a way of rekindling marital desire for eighteenth-century belles who have grudgingly agreed, like Congreve's Millamant, to "dwindle into a wife."

Once primarily known as a minor author satirized by Alexander Pope in Book II of the *Dunciad*, where she holds two love-children and participates in the pissing contest, Eliza Haywood is now considered one of the major female writers of the eighteenth century. Like Aphra Behn, Haywood lived by her pen, continued to write fiction into the 1750s, moving from amatory narratives like *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina* to political satire – her 1736 *Adventures of Eovaai* was a spoof on Robert Walpole – and to parody in her *Anti-Pamela, or Feign'd Innocence Detected* (1741), one of the many comic ripostes to Richardson's *Pamela*. But Haywood learned a great deal about plot construction and the deployment of an omniscient narrator from Richardson and Fielding, respectively, and her late novel, *Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), a comic novel of education, something like a female *Tom Jones*, is probably her most accomplished work.

Notes

1. Since tigers are not native to the Americas, it is to be assumed that these are pumas.
2. Jacqueline Pearson, "Gender and Narrative in the Fiction of Aphra Behn," *Review of English Studies* 41 (1991): 185.

3. This contradicts a statement earlier in the novel that the natives wear "little short habits" and "aprons" along with elaborate feathered headdresses.
4. Pamphleteers under Charles I were punished by the loss of their ears.
5. Behn had done something roughly similar in *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (published in three volumes 1684–87). The action takes place in Holland and France, and the characters have romance type-names (e.g., Philander, Silvio, Cesario), but the story is a lengthy and embellished version of the adulterous affair between Ford, Lord Grey of Werke, and his sister-in-law, Lady Henrietta Berkeley. The third volume presents, in transposed form, the Duke of Monmouth's armed rebellion in 1685 to take the throne from James II.
6. See Margaret Croskery, "Masquing Desire: The Politics of Passion in Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina*," in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood*, ed. Kirstin Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000): 69–94, and Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1680 to 1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 181–92; Jonathan Kramnick, "Locke, Haywood, and Consent," *ELH* 72.2 (Summer 2005): 453–70.

Chapter 3

Moll Flanders (1722)

Daniel Defoe

Like Aphra Behn, but with the opposite political principles, Daniel Defoe led an active life in the world of business and politics before becoming a professional writer. He was born Daniel Foe in 1660, the year of Charles II's restoration, the son of a successful candle-maker living in the city of London. He and his family survived the outbreak of bubonic plague that decimated London in 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666, which consumed all but three houses in their neighborhood. His family were dissenters (Protestants who refused to conform to the rites of the Anglican Church, which had been re-established at the Restoration) and Defoe was educated at schools run by dissenting ministers, including the academy of Charles Morton at Newington Green, probably with the initial intention of becoming a clergyman. Instead he became a merchant, trading in wine and tobacco, hosiery, bricks, and tiles, and he married the daughter of a wealthy wine importer, who bore him eight children. The most odoriferous of his enterprises, ethically and otherwise, was a scheme to raise civet cats, whose musk glands could be used to make perfume; he bought the cats on credit and then sold them to his mother-in-law, who sued him when she discovered that Defoe did not legally own them. Other business dealings of Defoe's, like insuring merchant ships that were picked off by French privateers, ran into sheer bad luck. He went bankrupt in 1692 for £17,000 (about $4 million in today's purchasing power), but settled with his creditors and over the next twenty years attempted with great energy and some success to repay his debts.

His political dealings were equally fraught with danger. In 1685 he joined Monmouth's Rebellion to displace the Catholic James II, and by his own

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admission fought at the battle of Sedgemoor, but avoided the fearful retribution meted out to hundreds of Monmouth's soldiers by Justice Jeffreys' "Bloody Assizes." Defoe's name appears on a General Pardon issued by James II in 1687. At the Glorious Revolution, he was among the London merchants who welcomed William III, who favored the Dissenters, and Defoe wrote poems and journalism in his praise and was even employed by William as a secret agent in Scotland.

With the death of William and the succession of Anne in 1702, Dissent immediately came under attack by Anne's Tory government, which attempted to pass a bill to repeal William and Mary's Act of Toleration (1688), which had granted full citizenship rights to Dissenters who took Anglican communion at least once in a calendar year. Defoe responded with an anonymous pamphlet, "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters," in which he put on the mask of a radical Tory churchman, an impersonation so complete that no one suspected the writer was a Whig Presbyterian. His arguments advocating the execution of Dissenting ministers and the transportation of their flocks were radical but not preposterous by the standards of that age.[1] Defoe declared that he meant it as "a banter," but, far from being read as irony, "The Shortest Way" was read literally, with terror by Dissenters who feared that its principles might be put into practice, and with dismay by the radical Tories, who were uncomfortable seeing their unspoken fantasies exposed in cold print.

No straightforward presentation of his genuine political sentiments could have accomplished what Defoe achieved through his imposture. On the one hand, complacent Dissenters were alerted that the Bill to Prevent Occasional Conformity was only the first step in a program of persecution; and on the other, the more moderate Tories, like Prime Minister Robert Harley, were made to see the alarming potential consequences of their alliance with the extremists within their party. In terms of concrete political action, Defoe hoped to give the Whigs in the House of Lords the courage to defeat the Occasional Conformity Bill, which they did.

It was a brilliantly successful political hoax, except in its consequences for Defoe. The pamphlet was declared a seditious libel, and Defoe was tried and condemned to stand in the pillory for three days and to pay a huge fine. The pillory was a triumph – the sympathetic onlookers threw flowers rather than rotten vegetables at Defoe – but the fine was beyond his means, and he was held in Newgate for eight months, while his principal business – a brick and tile works – went bankrupt. Eventually, Robert Harley visited Defoe in Newgate and recognized his potential usefulness; Harley had his fine paid from secret service funds and Defoe, freed from prison, became a secret agent and journalist, a professional writer with a dangerous talent for impersonation.

From 1703 until his death in 1731, Defoe became one of the most prolific writers in the first age of journalism. Because most work was published anonymously, as many as 545 different titles have been ascribed to Defoe; more conservative bibliographical scholars have cut that back to the high two hundreds, ranging from four-page pamphlets to multi-volume works, the most massive of which was *The Review*, a four-page newspaper written entirely by Defoe issued three times a week for most of Queen Anne's reign. Much of Defoe's other journalism is factual, like his account (*The Storm*, 1704) of the impact of a hurricane that hit England in 1703. He also wrote lengthy "self-help" works like *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726), a manual explaining current business practices, including accounting, for aspiring merchants, and travel literature, like *A Tour thro' the Whole Isle of Great Britain* (1724–27). Two of his early works (*The Consolidator*, 1705, and *Atlantis Major*, 1711) were fiction, at least technically, but they are not much like the novels Defoe was later to write: these were allegorical narratives satirizing British politicians from Harley's perspective, heading off the possible charge of libel by using invented names, and by setting the action on the moon and on the island of Atlantis.

Defoe's major novels were all produced in a short phase of Defoe's career, and all of them are impersonations, fictional autobiographies with a complex factual basis, beginning with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and ending with *Roxana*: *The Fortunate Mistress* (1724).[2] Just as *Robinson Crusoe* was based on factual stories of a number of castaways including Alexander Selkirk, expanded and reimagined by Defoe, *Moll Flanders* was based on the factual stories of a variety of female adventurers and criminals from Mary Carleton during the Restoration to Mary Godson alias "Moll King," who was in Newgate awaiting transportation when *Moll Flanders* was published. It was written rapidly: in addition to *Moll Flanders*, Defoe published two other pseudofactual novels in 1722: *A Journal of the Plague Year*, a first-hand account of what London was like during the bubonic outbreak of 1665,[3] and *Colonel Jacque*, an episodic narrative about a young rogue who successively becomes, through either happenstance or divine Providence, a cutpurse, a slave, a soldier, and a tradesman.

The World of Moll Flanders

The last five words of the novel, "Written in the Year 1683," taken with Moll's statement that she is "almost seventy Years of Age," might misleadingly suggest a historical narrative of the seventeenth century, which is certainly not what Defoe wrote. Though Moll herself ages from a child to an elderly woman, history in effect stands still in the novel; the penal laws, social structures, and domestic fashions all belong to the date of publication, 1722. It is not merely

that the novel omits any mention of the social upheavals of the seventeenth century, such as the English Civil War, the Protectorate of Cromwell, and the Restoration. There are also anachronisms in what does happen. For example, Moll's mother is transported as a convicted felon to Virginia soon after Moll's birth, though transportation as an alternative to capital punishment was extremely rare before the Transportation Act of 1718, and the Virginia colony would have been in its earliest days in 1613.[4]

While Defoe doubtless wrote primarily to entertain the reader, he was very mindful, as he stresses in his Preface, to convey what he considered useful information that might benefit his readers. So it is no accident that, during the crime wave of the 1720s, Defoe's novel gives us an extensive compendium of the tricks that thieves used to relieve London's shopkeepers and pedestrians of their money and valuables. Technically, these matters are presented from Moll's perspective, though occasionally, when the impersonation thins, we may feel we are hearing the journalist Daniel Defoe rather than Moll the thief warning imprudent readers how to protect themselves. Larceny is Defoe's most fascinating topic, but the novel also presents Defoe's analysis of women's inferior legal position, inside and outside marriage; of the dog-eat-dog world of early capitalism, including the insecurity of money investments; and of the defects, both accidental and systematic, of the current legal system.

The Initiation

We have come to call Defoe's novel *Moll Flanders*, but the actual title is one of those monstrous outlines of the entire contents of the novel common in the eighteenth century:

> The FORTUNES and MISFORTUNES of the Famous *Moll Flanders*, &c.
>
> Who was Born in NEWGATE, and during a Life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a *Whore*, five times a *Wife* (whereof once to her own Brother) Twelve Year a *Thief*, Eight Year a Transported *Felon* in *Virginia*, at last grew *Rich*, liv'd *Honest*, and died a *Penitent*. *Written from her own* MEMORANDUMS.

Moll's story is often designed to be suspenseful, but the title page and Defoe's Preface outline the contents in such a way that our interest in the narrative is refocused away from what is going to happen toward how and why it comes about. Like *Oroonoko*, *Moll Flanders* purports to be a factual narrative, a "private

History," and not one of those "Novels and Romances" that are currently being published. Unlike *Oroonoko*, it is written from the title character's own perspective, with the editor intervening with her at the verbal level, to tell her story "in Language fit to be read." The editor also confesses to omitting stories too vicious to be told at all, and to abbreviating others, so as not to "offend the chastest Reader or the modestest Hearer." The editor claims, in fact, that "there is not a wicked Action in any Part of it, but is first or last rendered Unhappy and Unfortunate." It's not exactly true, but it allows Defoe's contemporary reader to indulge in the pleasures of a racy narrative with plenty of sex and violence with the promise that the experience will also be morally improving.

Story and Discourse

A fair amount of ink has been spilled about whether *Moll Flanders* is or is not a picaresque novel, the controversy centering of whether Moll herself should be considered a *picara* (Spanish for "rogue"), given her aspiration, throughout most of her life, to become a "gentlewoman" and her flirtation with penitence during her stay at Newgate. It's also true that Moll changes in character as she goes through life in ways that the archetypal *picaro*, Lazarillo de Tormes, does not. What is not controversial is that *Moll Flanders* is an *episodic* novel: there is a single line of action rather than several interwoven lines, and the action takes place in discrete episodes. Most characters appear in only a single episode and disappear forever once the episode concludes.

Only two characters are exceptions: Moll's Lancashire husband Jemy, whom Moll spots briefly as a highwayman shortly after they have agreed to "divorce" and whom she rediscovers in Newgate Prison after the commutation of her death sentence; and Moll's "governess," whom we meet as her hostess for her last lying-in, and who becomes her fence during her career as a thief, and her agent on her return to Virginia. Defoe at one point hints that both these characters have interesting stories of their own, preparing the reader for sequels such as the one he wrote for *Robinson Crusoe*, but he never got around to writing them. An anonymous imitator of Defoe, however, published in a single volume an abridged life of Moll, followed by an invented life of her Governess ("Jane Hackabout") and of Moll's favorite husband ("James MacFaul").[5]

Defoe's episodes differ wildly in length: Moll's career as a thief is told in what are usually very brief episodes, some running to only a single paragraph. The lengthiest episode is that of Moll's first love affair, her secret liaison with the eldest son in the family where she is a servant and her marriage to his younger brother, which runs close to 20,000 words, about one-seventh of the entire novel. Even here the action is comparatively rapid, though: a more prolix author

like Richardson would narrate a tale of similar complexity – the first part of *Pamela* – in over 200,000 words.

Another feature of *Moll Flanders* is that it is a *retrospective* narration: Moll at the age of around 70 is purportedly writing the events of her long and varied life. This feature allows Defoe to present a double perspective: we can see the event as Moll saw it at the time, or as she views it in the light of experience, or Moll can present both visions at once, with Defoe allowing the reader to sort out the differences. During Moll's first love affair, with the eldest son of the family she serves at Colchester, her lover gets her to agree to a private engagement, professing his intent to marry her once he comes into his estate and is free to do as he pleases, giving her £100 in gold at the outset and the promise of more to come – after which the virginal Moll, who is indeed passionately attracted to him, allows him "the last Favour." For the most part, we follow these maneuvers from the perspective of the young inexperienced Moll, dizzy with both the kisses he gives her and the gold he puts into her hand, but at one point Defoe gives us Moll's retrospective comment on all this:

> Nothing was ever so stupid on both Sides, had I acted as became me, and resisted as Virtue and Honour requir'd, this Gentleman had either Desisted his Attacks, finding no room to expect the Accomplishment of his Designs, or had made fair, and honourable Proposals of Marriage, in which Case, whoever had blam'd him, no Body could have blam'd me. In short, if he had known me, and how easy the Trifle he aim'd at, was to be had, he would have troubled his Head no farther but have given me four or five Guineas, and have lain with me the next time he had come at me; and if I had known his Thoughts, and how hard he thought I would be to be gain'd, I might have made my own Terms with him; and if I had not Capitulated for an immediate Marriage, I might for a Maintenance till Marriage, and might have had what I would; for he was already Rich to Excess, besides what he had in Expectation; but I seem'd wholly to have abandoned all such Thoughts as these, and was taken up Only with the Pride of my Beauty, and of being belov'd by such a Gentleman.

The mature Moll views what happens from a commercial perspective, seeing two parties negotiating, both underestimating their own bargaining position. The elder brother does not realize that Moll is so ready to consummate their relationship that a minor bribe would be enough to secure what he desires, while Moll does not realize that her lover might actually have married her if she had prudently held back. Both young Moll and old Moll further realize that the illicit sexual relationship is both sinful according to religion and dishonorable according to current social mores, but neither Moll is much influenced by either one, provided their affair is prudently and secretly conducted, as in fact it is.

Psychological Realism

Ian Watt considered Defoe a pioneer of what he called "formal realism," but Defoe was not particularly interested in conveying physical descriptions of people or of clothing or furniture. We know from others quoted as well as her own testimony that Moll herself is a handsome woman and, when she cross-dresses during her years as a thief we learn that she is tall but "too smooth-faced for a man," but we never learn whether she is a blonde or a brunette. What Defoe excels at is presenting the inner life of his characters with the kind of detail that conveys a sense of its psychological truth.

This is a talent Defoe developed in the course of his novelistic experiments. Sometimes, in *Robinson Crusoe*, we may have a sense that we are reading something crudely manufactured, as in this passage taken from Crusoe's final attempt to salvage useful objects from the wreck of his ship. Crusoe smiles at the sight of money, preaches himself a sermon on its uselessness on his desert island, where nothing has exchange value, then by force of habit takes it off the ship along with the useful tools he has also found:

> I discover'd a Locker with Drawers in it, in one of which I found two or three Razors, and one Pair of large Sizzers, with some ten or a Dozen of good Knives and Forks, in another I found about Thirty six Pounds value in Money, some *European* Coin, some *Brasil*, some Pieces of Eight, some Gold, some Silver.
>
> I smil'd to my self at the Sight of this Money, O Drug! Said I aloud, what art thou good for, Thou art not worth to me, no not the taking off of the Ground, one of those Knives is worth all this Heap, I have no Manner of use for thee, e'en remain where thou art, and go to the Bottom as a Creature whose Life is not worth saving. However, upon Second Thoughts, I took it away.

That money is carefully put away, and although it grows moldy, Crusoe eventually takes it off the island and it returns to England with him. What feels wrong is the sermon: it interests Defoe, but the mask slips and the careful impersonation of Crusoe temporarily lapses. There are episodes like this in *Moll Flanders* as well, as when Moll and her Governess moralize together over her theft of money and valuables from a gentleman in a coach, who picks Moll up at Bartholomew Fair, whose drunken state had made him her prey: "The usage may, for ought I know, do more to reform him, than all the Sermons that ever he will hear in his Life, and … so it did." Serves him right, Moll says, but how are we to take these animadversions against drunkenness coming from a thief and her fence? (The question of whether Defoe meant these passages, among others, as irony against the hypocrisy of his narrators is taken up later.)

But *Moll Flanders* is also full of passages that penetrate to the heart of human psychology, as in this vivid narrative of Moll in Newgate. Condemned to death – but temporarily reprieved through the mediation of a clergyman – she waits in the condemned cell as those who, like her, had been sentenced to hang prepare for their final journey to Tyburn:

All the while the poor condemn'd Creatures were preparing to their Death, and the Ordinary, *as they call him*, was busy with them, disposing them to submit to their Sentence – I say, all this while I was seiz'd with a fit of trembling, as much as I cou'd have been if I had been in the same Condition, as to be sure the Day before I expected to be; I was so violently agitated by this Surprising Fit, that I shook as if it had been in the cold Fit of an Ague, so that I could not speak or look but like one Distracted. As soon as they were all put into the Carts and gone, which, however, I had not Courage enough to see – *I say*, as soon as they were gone, I fell into a fit of crying involuntarily, and without Design, but as a meer distemper, and yet so violent, and it held me so long, that I knew not what Course to take, nor could I stop, or put a Checque to it, no, not with all the Strength and Courage I had.

This fit of crying held me near two Hours, and, as I believe, held me till they were all out of the World, and then a most humble, Penitent, serious kind of Joy succeeded; a real transport it was, or Passion of Joy, and Thankfulness, but still unable to give vent to it by Words, and in this I continued most part of the Day.

Moll Flanders is not primarily a religious narrative, but Defoe is recording a kind of "born again" experience that Moll undergoes in Newgate, and it feels intense and genuine in its violent physicality. Once Moll's sentence has been commuted to transportation, she begins to think less about the afterlife and more about what her life will be like in Virginia and, on the voyage there, practical matters intrude and take over the narrative, but Defoe has had his spiritual moment.

Defoe also brilliantly conveys the way in which Moll quickly acclimatizes herself to the trade of stealing. Her very first theft is of "a little Bundle wrapp'd in white Cloth" which she takes unobserved from an apothecary's shop in Leadenhall Street:

When I went away I had no Heart to run, or scarce to mend my pace; I cross'd the Street indeed, and went down the first turning I came to, and I think it was a Street that went thro' into *Fenchurch-street*; from thence I cross'd and turn'd thro' so many ways and turnings that I could never tell which way it was, nor where I went, for I felt not the ground, I stept on, and the farther I was out of Danger, the

> faster I went, till tyr'd and out of Breath, I was forc'd to sit down on a little Bench at a Door, and then I began to recover, and found I was got into *Thames-street* near *Billingsgate*.

The fugue state with which Moll walks and runs with her little bundle contrasts with the intelligent deliberation with which she makes her escape from her second theft, a necklace of golden beads worth £12, from a little child:

> I went thro' into *Bartholomew Close*, and then turn'd round to another Passage that goes into *Long-lane*, so away into *Charterhouse-Yard* and out into *St. John's-street*, then crossing into *Smithfield*, went down *Chick-lane* and into *Field-lane* to *Holbourn-bridge*, when mixing with the Crowd of People usually passing there, it was not possible to have been found out.

After her first theft, Moll is lucky not to have boxed the compass in her panic and returned to the apothecary's shop, but after this next adventure Moll seems to know exactly where she is at each moment and is headed indirectly toward a busy thoroughfare where she knows she can get lost in the crowd.

The only element that may strain our credulity, if we bother to reflect on it, is Moll's being able to remember that precise route from Bartholomew Close to the Holborn Viaduct at the time she writes her "memorandums," some twenty years after the event. Defoe occasionally leaves signs of an authorial presence behind Moll's retrospective narrative, but they are signs and not signals; we aren't meant to pick them up, because the illusion of the fiction disappears as soon as we do.

Irony in *Moll Flanders*

Once she has escaped with the golden necklace, Moll's reflects on her theft:

> The last Affair left no great Concern upon me, for as I did the poor Child no harm, I only said to my self, I had given the Parents a just Reproof for their Negligence in leaving the poor little Lamb to come home by it self, and it would teach them to take more Care of it another time …. [The necklace] was too big for the Child's wear, but that, perhaps, the Vanity of the Mother to have her Child look Fine at the Dancing School had made her let the Child wear it; and no doubt the Child had a Maid sent to take care of it, but she, like a careless Jade, was taken

up perhaps with some Fellow that had met her by the way, and so the poor Baby wandred till it fell into my Hands. However, I did the Child no harm; I did not so much as fright it, for I had a great many tender Thoughts about me yet.

. . . .

We hear about Moll's "many tender Thoughts" only two sentences after she tells us that, right after lifting the necklace from the little girl, "the Devil put me upon killing the Child in the dark Alley, that it might not Cry." And like her sermon on drink the morning after robbing a drunken gentleman in a coach, Moll's argues that the child's vain mother and careless maidservant will be taught a valuable lesson by the loss of the necklace to behave with less vanity and with more prudence. We know from his nonfictional writings that Defoe would be in essential agreement with what Moll says: he knew how dangerous London was to those who were careless, distracted or impaired. But in *Moll Flanders*, these sentiments can come from nowhere except from Moll, so how is the reader to take a statement about the dangers of London from a woman who has become precisely one of those dangers? Are we meant to agree with her, to laugh at her shameless hypocrisy, or what?

Passages like this one occur throughout the novel. Once Moll's repentance in prison has helped procure the commutation of her death sentence, Moll goes back into action as the economically driven survivor we have seen throughout her life, taking with her to Virginia £300 in gold and stolen goods worth far more than that, without even thinking of making restitution, and lying both to Jemy and to her son Humphry as needed to get herself the most secure life in that colony. Horrified from childhood at the thought of servitude, Moll buys in Virginia a white woman and a black man, whom she dehumanizes, calling them "*things* absolutely necessary for all People that pretended to Settle in that Country."

Clearly there is massive moral muddle here, but whose muddle is it and what is the reader to think about it? Ian Watt has put this formal question with great clarity:

. . . .

The problem, very baldly stated, finally involves a choice between three positions: first, the view shared in different ways by many formalist and historical critics, that Defoe is so muddled or careless that the question of an ironical interpretation of the novel, hardly arises; second, the full-fledged ironic interpretation …, according to which Moll is consistently portrayed as muddled by a Defoe who knew just what he was doing; and lastly, the compromise position that both Moll and Defoe are muddled at times, like the rest of us, and that therefore we can find, both in Moll and Defoe, a good deal of irony, some conscious and some unconscious, but no all-encompassing and coherent ironic structure.[6]

. . . .

Another sort of contradiction has to do with matters factual. Moll tells us that "the first Account I could ever recollect … of my self" was of travelling with a band of Gypsies, and hiding so that she was left by them in Colchester and picked up by the parish authorities. But if this is so, then it is impossible that Moll could have proven to her mother in Virginia "by … Tokens she could not deny that I was no other, nor more or less than her own Child, her *Daughter* born of her Body in *Newgate*" because there is no way she could have any such tokens. After Moll is arrested and taken to Newgate, she is at first horrified by the prison, but after a few days she becomes acculturated and is "as naturally pleas'd and easie with the Place as if indeed I had been Born there." As if indeed! The readers can hardly have forgotten that Moll was born in Newgate – it is the crux of the incestuous third marriage – and if we had, Moll reminded us of it only a few pages earlier. Could Moll be so muddled? Could Defoe?

Naive Incoherent Autobiography

Ralph Rader's characterization of *Moll Flanders* as an "imitation of naïve incoherent autobiography" seems the most adequate that has been developed, because it accounts not only for what readers find in the novel but the way in which scholars have argued about it. The authorial plane, which gives us a place to stand and judge literary characters, is missing here; and because of Defoe's virtual absence, we have to judge the characters in *Moll Flanders* as we do actual people in an autobiography or memoir, about which readers can legitimately differ. Defoe built his novel on the basis of real memoirs, as a false true story.

Of course, using real autobiographies and memoirs as models will get Defoe only so far, and there is also the danger of losing one's audience by writing as badly as semiliterate authors. Defoe accounts for the general decorousness of Moll's language in his Preface: she has been "edited" into conformity with contemporary taste. And Defoe ensures that the content will be interesting by stuffing the narrative full of incident: Moll gets married not once but five times, for example, each time to a different sort of husband with a different mode of courtship. (Once married, though, Moll has nothing much to say about her life within marriage, aside from accounting for the number of children she has had and the amount of cash with which she is left once the relationship ends. Moll makes all her husbands happy, and happy families are all alike.)

Some of the episodes are interesting because they are extraordinarily improbable. What are the odds that Moll's third husband would turn out to be her own half-brother? What are the odds that Moll would notice that a fleeing highwayman, seen from a distance, was her fourth husband Jemy, and be able to turn the hue and cry after him and his gang in the wrong direction? What are the

odds that Moll, a long-known but never convicted criminal, would get her sentence commuted to transportation? There is even a supernatural moment when Moll calls out to Jemy after they part and he hears her calling though she is by now twelve miles away.

In addition to these extraordinary moments there are episodes which Rader terms the "unsensational ordinary made interesting … by systematically crossing the lines of expected effect."[7] (*Fact, Fiction and Form*, 2011, 180–1). When Moll finds out she has inadvertently married her own brother, we expect an explosion; instead she comes to the conclusion that "it was absolutely necessary to conceal it all and not make the least Discovery to Mother or Husband," and she holds her peace for three whole years. Moll sleeps in bed with the Man from Bath for "near two year," without having sex with him. Moll, when she has become a thief, is given a horse to hold while she is standing in the street, and out of force of habit she walks off with it; it seems to be found money, except that she realizes, after she has brought it to her lodgings, that there is no safe way to dispose of it. And once Moll has been taken to Newgate, Moll's Governess offers one of the witnesses £100 not to testify against her – and we are told that this represents over 30 times her annual wage – but for no particular reason the "jade" absolutely refuses to go along.

Another source of the realistic effect has to do with the *texture* of the narrative, particularly the clunky transitions between episodes. One can see this most easily at the end of Moll's first marriage to Robin, her first lover's younger brother, which lasts for five years, until Robin's death. Moll immediately casts her accounts, letting us know that Robin "left me a Widow with about £1200 in my Pocket. My two Children were indeed taken happily off of my Hands by my Husband's Father and Mother, and that by the way was all they got by Mrs. Betty."[8] That sounds like an authoritative ending to the episode, closing off all the causal lines before Moll begins the world again, as she is to do repeatedly in the rest of the novel. Yet the next paragraph harks back to the torch she carried for her lost first love, Robin's elder brother: "I confess I was not suitably afflicted with the loss of my Husband," and concludes that: "I committed Adultery and Incest with [the elder brother] every Day in my Desires, which without Doubt was as effectually Criminal in the Nature of the Guilt, as if I had actually done it." Is that it, end of story? No, for a further paragraph tells us about her removal with Robin to London, and about her first lover's marriage in Colchester, and her maneuvers to avoid going to the wedding because "I could not bear the sight of his being given to another Woman, tho' I knew I was never to have him my self." And finally, after two false endings, that segment of story is over ("I was now, as above, left loose to the World") and the narrative is now free to begin the sequence that will lead to Moll's second marriage. Professional writers – and Defoe was a consummate professional – don't

generally end story segments that way, which makes us believe the more firmly that Moll was real and that these are, more or less, her very words.

The incoherence of the writing is matched by the incoherence of the *structure*. Life in *Moll Flanders* is very much like our own lives: one damned thing after another. The courtship/marriage stories don't build up to a climax; we have no way of predicting by its place in sequence whether Moll will wind up wealthy, moderately comfortable, or impoverished when her current husband dies or runs away, or agrees to separate. But there is a transition: after the final marriage, Moll slowly sinks into poverty and, once she is almost entirely without funds, is tempted to become a thief. The crime narratives are shorter, but equally unpredictable: Moll grows in skill as she learns her craft, but she also takes great risks at times. She admits that she has realized enough from her crimes to retire, but she does not do so; she has found something she is good at and she enjoys practicing her craft. As with the final marriage, we know that the final episode in her life of crime must be a disaster – because only being caught will lead Moll to the next phase of her life, to Newgate and the Old Bailey, to trial and condemnation and penitence, and ultimately to her new life with Jemy in Virginia. These phases of Moll's life are emplotted, but they are emplotted the way our own lives are. We are all children, then grownups; we marry and have children, sometimes more than once; we have jobs and we succeed or we fail; ultimately, we retire, grow old, decline, and die. Similarly, here Moll has phases as a girl, a wife, a thief, a prisoner, a transportee.

Within an episode, Moll may keep us in the dark about the outcome for a long while, but at other times she will predict in advance the way things are going to go. "I was not averse to a Tradesman," Moll tells us when she is on the lookout for a second husband, "but then I would have a Tradesman, forsooth, that was something of a Gentleman too; that … he might become a Sword, and look as like a Gentleman, as another Man." In seeking this "amphibious Creature … call'd, a Gentleman-Tradesman," she says, "I was not Trepan'd I confess, but I betray'd my self." Given this prolepsis (flash-forward), we are hardly surprised when Moll's second marriage ends in failure, in her husband's bankruptcy and his flight abroad, and with Moll much less wealthy than she had been before she met him. Similarly, during the life of crime, Moll proleptically flags the episode when she works with "a young Woman and a Fellow that went for her Husband," by telling us that, "they robb'd together, lay together, were taken together, and at last were hang'd together."

Since we know from the title page and the preface that Moll's career as a thief leads to her becoming a transported felon, we are certain that some day or other she is going to be caught. But, in addition, we are reminded of this several times as we draw closer to the end of Moll's career. The first foreshadowing occurs when Moll is falsely arrested by a shopkeeper (both she and the actual

thief were wearing widow's weeds). The real thief is caught while Moll is in the hands of the constable, and Moll demands reparation for the false arrest, and gets £150 plus a black silk dress, and her attorney's fees to boot. Moll totals up her wealth and discovers that though she has over £700 and could retire from the life of crime, she "could not forbear going Abroad again." Six episodes further on, there is a second foreshadowing: her Governess "began to talk of leaving off while we were well" but Moll sees no reason to stop. What follows is a complex narrative in which Moll travels into East Anglia where she preys on shopkeepers in market towns and on other travelers. We follow her route from London to Cambridge to Bury St. Edmunds, then to Harwich and Ipswich, and from there to Colchester. Colchester, we cannot have forgotten, is where her youth was spent, where as a servant girl Moll fell in love with a young gentleman and wound up marrying his younger brother. So, in a sense, the traveling episode has us circling back to Moll's past, and the only place before Colchester is her birthplace, in Newgate Prison. And indeed, when Moll brings her narrative back to London, she is caught almost immediately. This is the most "shapely" and proto-novelistic element in *Moll Flanders*, the one episode which seems to hint at a novelist pulling the strings, rather than life in the raw. The full emergence of the authorial plane, though, we find in the next chapter on Richardson's *Pamela*.

Notes

1. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes – which had guaranteed toleration for the Huguenots – resulting in the emigration of close to a million French Protestants to England, Holland, and other Protestant lands.
2. Until fairly recently one might have said that Defoe's last novel was *Madagascar, or Robert Drury's Journal* (1729), a first-person account of shipwreck and fifteen years in captivity on Madagascar, claimed for Defoe as fiction by scholar Arthur Secord. Michael Parker Pearson, a British archeologist, recently discovered evidence of Drury's ship and of the village in which he was enslaved, though he agrees that it was probably Defoe who ghost-wrote the narrative for the illiterate Drury.
3. Defoe was only five years old during the "plague year" of 1665, but he had an uncle, Henry Foe, who like the narrator H.F. was a mature adult living in the Aldgate neighborhood of London. Did Defoe compile the book from factual accounts (including his uncle Henry's memoirs), or did he reimagine what life in the doomed city would have been like? The answer to both questions is probably yes.
4. To be precise, in 1613 John Rolfe was planting his first tobacco crop, Pocahontas would not marry him until the following year, and there were no indentured servants in Jamestown, much less transported convicts. And there are many other anachronisms relative to the ostensible time scheme of the novel. Moll's

fourth husband, Jemy, asks her whether she has her money "in the Bank of England" – which would not open until 1693. Tunbridge Wells is mentioned as a busy resort when Moll is a thief in her 50s, but it would not become one until the end of the 1680s. Paul Alkon has speculated that the 1683 date on the last page, the only actual date in the novel, was chosen in order to require the reader to assume that by the 1722 date of publication Moll was dead and subject to divine and not human judgment (personal communication).

5. *Fortune's Fickle Distribution* (Dublin, 1730).
6. Ian Watt, "The Recent Critical Fortunes of *Moll Flanders*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* I.i (1967): 121.
7. Rader, *Fact, Fiction and Form*, 2011, 180–1.
8. Betty was the conventional name for a chambermaid at the time; it does not mean that Moll was originally christened Elizabeth. As Moll says at the beginning of the novel, she will not divulge her real name.

Chapter 4

Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740)

The Author of *Pamela*

Like Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson was of middle-class origins. His father was a joiner (a skilled carpenter who made cabinets and furniture) whose workshop was in Aldersgate Street in the commercial district in London; his mother was perhaps of somewhat higher class: Richardson refers to her as coming from "a family not ungenteel." His father had been patronized by the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Monmouth, and like many other Londoners with Monmouth connections, including Daniel Defoe, thought it prudent to leave London; he went to Derbyshire in the north of England, where Samuel was born, returning to London only after the Glorious Revolution. Richardson was taught to read and write and to do sums at the Merchant Taylors' School in London, and hoped for a career as an Anglican clergyman, but his father was unable to support the higher education that would have enabled his son to do so. In 1706, by his own choice – he hoped to be able to indulge his taste for reading – Richardson was apprenticed to John Wilde, a printer, and the industrious young man learned the business well enough to set himself up in his own print shop in Fleet Street in 1720.

Richardson's first marriage, in 1721, was to Martha Wilde, the daughter of his former employer (by whom he had six children, none of whom survived to adulthood), and who died in 1731. Two years later, Richardson married Elizabeth Leake, daughter to a printer and bookseller of Bath, by whom he had six more children, including four daughters who survived him. Richardson was an extremely successful printer and publisher: his connection with Arthur Onslow, the Speaker, won him the contract to print the Journals of the House

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of Commons, a job that was not lucrative in itself – in fact Richardson claimed that the government had never paid him a shilling for his work – but which opened to him other doors, mercantile, genteel, and aristocratic. By 1739, the year Richardson began to become a man of letters, in both senses of the word, he was the wealthy owner of one of the most prestigious publishing firms in London, with a house in town and another in the countryside.

Aside from his enormous industry, nothing in his previous public career gives any indication that Richardson would become one of the great novelists of his day, and, via translations into every European tongue, perhaps the most influential novelist of the eighteenth century. The other side of Richardson, a life in letters starting in his boyhood, was revealed in his correspondence with his Dutch translator Johannes Stinstra, as here where he discusses some of his earliest writing impersonating women old and young:

From my earliest Youth, I had a Love of Letter-writing. I was not Eleven Years old when I wrote, spontaneously, a Letter to a Widow of near Fifty, who … was continuously fomenting Quarrels and Disturbances, by Backbiting and Scandal, among all her Acquaintance …. Assuming the Style and Address of a Person in Years, I exhorted her, I expostulated with her. But my Hand-writing was known. I was challenged with it, and owned the Boldness, for she complained of it to my Mother with Tears. My Mother … commended the Principles, tho' she censured the Liberty taken.

As a bashful and not forward Boy, I was an early Favourite with all the young Women of Taste and Reading in the Neighbourhood. Half a Dozen of them when met to work with their Needles, used, when they got a Book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them; their Mothers sometimes with them; and both Mothers and Daughters used to be pleased with the Observations they put me upon making.

I was not more than Thirteen when Three of these young Women, unknown to each other, having a high Opinion of my Taciturnity, revealed to me their Love-Secrets, in order to induce me to give them Copies to write after, or correct, for Answers to their Lovers Letters: Nor did any one of them ever know, that I was Secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, or even repulse, when an Offense was either taken or given, at the very time that the Heart of the Chider or Repulser was open before me, overflowing with Esteem and Affection; and the fair Repulser dreading to be taken at her Word, directing *this* Word, or *that* Expression, to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her Lover's Fervour and Vows of everlasting Love, has said, when I have asked her Direction: I cannot tell you what to write; But (her Heart on her Lips), you cannot write too kindly; All her Fear only, that she should incurr Slight for her Kindness.

(Letter of June 2, 1753, ed. William C. Slattery)

So as with Defoe, Richardson came to writing from a practice of impersonation, and in Richardson's case he was used to impersonating women writing and responding to letters of courtship.

The Creation of *Pamela*

In the course of his career as a publisher Richardson had done some writing of his own, such as *The Apprentice's Vade-Mecum* (1734), a guide for young men to their rights and responsibilities as indentured trainees. In 1739, two of his friends in the publishing business, Charles Rivington and John Osborne, approached Richardson to do a book containing exemplary letters that might serve as guides for less literate young men and women not used to business and social correspondence. Many of the letters take up very commonplace practical issues: one letter gives an idea of what a young man might say writing to a young woman's father asking for her hand in marriage; a set of successive letters give an idea of what one might say in a letter of recommendation for a kitchen-maid or for a valet. A set of eleven letters details what sights a visitor from the country might see in different parts of London. Still others, though, seem to be samples taken from unwritten epistolary novels, such as letter 137, in which a young woman parries with indignation the suggestion, proposed by a wealthy young man, that he set her up as his kept mistress. And the following two letters, published with the rest of *Familiar Letters* in 1741, seem to contain the germ of *Pamela*:

Letter CXXXVIII

A Father to his Daughter in Service, on hearing of her Master's attempting her Virtue.

My dear Daughter,

I understand with great Grief of Heart, that your Master has made some Attempts on your Virtue, and yet that you stay with him. God grant that you have not already yielded to his base Desires! For when once a Person has so far forgotten what belongs to himself, or his Character, to make such an Attempt, the very Continuance with him, and in his Power, and under the same Roof, is an Encouragement to him to prosecute his Designs. And if he carries it better, and more civil, at present, it is only the more certainly to undo you when he attacks you next. Consider, my dear Child, your Reputation is all you have to trust to. And if you have not already, which God forbid ! yielded to him, leave it not to the Hazard of another Temptation; but come away directly (as you ought to have done under your own Motion) at the Command of

Your grieved and indulgent Father.

Letter CXXXIX

The Daughter's Answer

Honoured Father,

I received your Letter yesterday, and am sorry I stay'd a Moment in my Master's House after his vile Attempt. But he was so full of his Promises, of never offering the like again, that I hoped I might believe him; nor have I yet seen anything to the contrary: But am so much convinced, that I ought to have done as you say, that I have this Day left the House, and hope to be with you soon after you will have received this Letter. I am

Your dutiful Daughter.

It may be that composing these letters stimulated something in Richardson that caused him to put aside the manuscript of *Familiar Letters*, and to compose at white heat between November of 1739 and January of 1740, as he claimed, the two volumes of *Pamela*.[1]

Richardson also claimed that *Pamela* had a factual basis. In a 1741 letter to his friend Aaron Hill, Richardson reported hearing a second-hand story "about twenty-five years ago" from a gentleman of his acquaintance no longer living who had been told by an innkeeper about a young chambermaid who became, through her virtuous resistance to seduction, the beloved and respected wife of Mr. B., a landowner with estates in several counties:

That the Girl, improving daily in Beauty, Modesty, and genteel and good Behaviour, by the Time she was Fifteen, engaged the Attention of her lady's Son, a young Gentleman of free Principles, who, on her lady's Death, attempted, by all manner of Temptations and Devices, to seduce her. That she had Recourse to as many innocent Stratagems to escape the Snares laid for her Virtue; once, however, in Despair, having been near drowning; that, at last, her noble Resistance, Watchfulness, and excellent Qualities, subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his Wife. That she behaved herself with so much Dignity, Sweetness, and Humility, that she made herself beloved of every body, and even by his Relations, who, at first despised her; and now had the Blessings both of rich and poor, and the Love of her Husband.

Richardson told much the same story about the factual basis of *Pamela* in a 1753 letter to his Dutch translator Stinstra, this time dating his hearing of the anonymous gentleman's story some ten years later: "Fifteen Years before I sat down to write it."

One may be skeptical about this loosely dated claim – and literary historians have been unable to unearth plausible real-life models for the chambermaid and Mr. B – but Richardson's writing certainly brought Pamela to life for his contemporary readers. Published in November of 1740, *Pamela* became, in the words of William B. Warner, a "media event." A gushing review was published in the *Weekly Miscellany* three weeks prior to the novel's release, in the form of an anonymous letter claiming that the "edifying and instructive" *Pamela* would be the antidote to the "pernicious Novels" by which "the World" is "too much as well as too early debauched," and urging Richardson to publish. By December, Richardson's *Pamela* was being recommended by clergymen from the pulpit, and by January the *Gentleman's Magazine* predicted that a second edition would be called for because of inordinate demand for the book, "it being judged in Town as great as Sign of Want of Curiosity not to have read *Pamela* as not to have seen the French and Italian Dancers." In fact four new editions of *Pamela* came out in 1741 and a sixth octavo edition on fine paper, with 29 illustrations by Gravelot, in 1742. (Today the best-known *Pamela* illustrations are the suite of paintings by Joseph Highmore, begun the same year.) Meanwhile, Pamela fans and playing-cards were produced, and there were dramatic versions: a *Pamela* comedy by Henry Giffard was enacted in 1741 and a *Pamela* opera in 1742. The novel was also translated into the important European languages.[2]

Reading *Pamela*

Unlike *Moll Flanders*, which is written retrospectively, *Pamela* is in the form of letters, all but a few of them by Pamela herself, and, when Pamela is in Lincolnshire and unable to post letters, the novel continues as a voluminous journal that she writes, often adding entries many times in a single day. In the Preface to *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), Richardson called this writing "to the Moment, while the Heart is agitated by Hopes and Fears, on Events undecided." This gives the narrative an intensity and generates considerable suspense, which is only slightly relieved by our knowledge that the subtitle of the novel is *Virtue Rewarded*.

But while *Pamela* is technically in the form of letters, they are not realistic letters in the sense that they resemble those that you or I wrote at the age of 15, or received from our children of that age. They are always a device for Richardson to reveal the scene that he places dramatically before us, and for Pamela to meditate on its possible significance. What Phelan calls the launch and the entrance begin simultaneously, with the first letter, as our subsequent analysis will show:

. . . .

Dear Father and Mother,

I have great Trouble, and some Comfort, to acquaint you with. The Trouble is, that my good Lady died of the Illness I mention'd to you, and left us all much griev'd for her Loss; for she was a dear good Lady, and kind to all us her Servants. Much I fear'd, that as I was taken by her Goodness to wait upon her Person, I should be quite destitute again, and forc'd to return to you and my poor Mother, who have so much to do to maintain yourselves; and, as my Lady's Goodness had put me to write and cast Accompts, and made me a little expert at my Needle, and other Qualifications above my Degree, it would have been no easy Matter to find a Place that your poor *Pamela* was fit for: But God, whose Graciousness to us we have so often experienc'd at a Pinch, put it into my good Lady's Heart, on her Death-bed, just an Hour before she expir'd, to recommend to my young Master all her Servants, one by one; and when it came to my Turn to be recommended, for I was sobbing and crying at her Pillow, she could only say, My dear Son! – and so broke off a little, and then recovering – Remember my poor *Pamela!* – And these were some of her last Words! O how my Eyes run! – Don't wonder to see the Paper so blotted!

Well, but God's Will must be done! – and so comes the Comfort, that I shall not be oblig'd to return back to be a Clog upon my dear Parents! For my Master said, I will take care of you all, my Lasses; and for you, *Pamela (*and took me by the Hand; yes, he took me by the Hand before them all) for my dear Mother's sake, I will be a Friend to you, and you shall take care of my Linen. God bless him! and pray with me, my dear Father and Mother, for God to bless him: For he has given Mourning and a Year's Wages to all my Lady's Servants; and I having no Wages as yet, but what my Lady said she would do for me as I deserv'd, order'd the House-keeper to give me Mourning with the rest, and gave me with his own Hand Four golden Guineas, besides lesser Money, which were in my old Lady's Pocket when she dy'd; and said, If I was a good Girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a Friend to me, for his Mother's sake. And so I send you these four Guineas for your Comfort; for God will not let me want: And so you may pay some old Debt with Part; and keep the other Part to comfort you both ….

I know, dear Father and Mother, I must give you both Grief and Pleasure; and so I will only say, Pray for your *Pamela;* who will ever be,

Your most dutiful Daughter.

I have been scared out of my Senses; for just now, as I was folding this Letter, in my late Lady's Dressing-room, in comes my young Master! Good Sirs! how was I frightned! I went to hide the Letter in my Bosom, and he seeing me frighted, said, smiling, Who have you been writing to, *Pamela?* – I said, in my Fright, Pray your Honour forgive me! – Only to my Father and Mother. He said, Well then, Let me see how you are come on in your Writing! O how I was sham'd! – He, in my Fright, took it, without saying more, and read it quite thro', and then gave it me

again; – and I said, Pray your Honour forgive me; – yet I know not for what. For he was always dutiful to his Parents; and why should he be angry, that I was so to mine! And indeed he was not angry; for he took me by the Hand, and said, You are a good Girl, *Pamela*, to be kind to your aged Father and Mother. I am not angry with you. Be faithful, and diligent; and do as you should do, and I like you the better for this. And then he said, Why, *Pamela*, you write a very pretty Hand, and spell tolerably too. I see my good Mother's Care in your Learning has not been thrown away upon you. My Mother used to say, you lov'd reading; you may look into any of her Books to improve yourself, so you take care of them. To be sure I did nothing but curchee[3] and cry, and was all in Confusion, at his Goodness. Indeed he is the best of Gentlemen, I think! But I am making another long Letter. So will only say more, I shall ever be,

Your dutiful Daughter, Pamela Andrews.

. . . .

Richardson has artfully designed the letter to seem artless, beginning with Pamela's description of her news as "great Trouble, and some Comfort." Almost immediately, though, the narrative situation is presented dramatically: a deathbed scene opens, with "my good Lady" speaking of each of the servants to Mr. B., her son and heir, and breaking down when she comes to Pamela herself, and then Mr. B.'s response, first collectively to "my Lasses" and then specifically to Pamela again, whom he singles out for special treatment ("he took me by the Hand before them all"). Emblematically, a woman's hand is what a man takes when he espouses her: in that sense the scene in the opening letter predicts the ending, the reward of Pamela's virtue. But his promise "to be a Friend" is ambiguous ("friend" could mean "lover" as it does in *The Way of the World*), and so is the action of giving Pamela money "with his own Hand": a young gentleman can hardly be a friend in any usual sense to a chambermaid of fifteen.

Pamela's "God bless him" signals her current unawareness of the danger of her situation, which as readers we understand, as we understand the emblematic taking of Pamela's hand, as signaling the existence of an authorial plane – Richardson's design in constructing his plot and directing our expectations as well as our desires for his protagonist. And our sense of that danger is sharpened by the sudden and dramatic intrusion of Mr. B. into the scene of writing in the dressing-room, with Pamela frightened, attempting to hide her letter in her bodice, Mr. B. taking it from her and reading it before returning it. Pamela's last comment in her letter, "Indeed, he is the best of Gentlemen," again signals her willed downplaying of his encroachment on her body and her writing, and sets up our expectations that this is the first, but not the last, of what will become an escalating sequence of predatory attempts on Pamela.

Pamela's commentary on the scene, interspersed with these details, also clarifies the background of her parents' situation: Pamela is in service at least partly because her parents are in debt, not owing to any extravagance of theirs, but rather because they guaranteed a loan by a relative who defaulted. Theoretically, as she becomes aware of it, Pamela could escape the danger that Mr. B. represents by resigning her position and going back to live with her parents, but in practice she does not want to "return back to be a Clog," an encumbrance, to her father and mother. Later, when she understands her danger and has resolved to return home, she always has one last task she wants to complete – such as an embroidered waistcoat for Mr. B. – that delays her exit from the Bedfordshire estate until she is carried up to Lincolnshire, far from her parental home, and effectively imprisoned there with servants who have no history with Pamela and who therefore can be more effectively used by Mr. B. to seduce or force her to his will.

By the end of the first letter, in other words, Richardson has given the reader the key to how the novel will develop as a cognitive structure. As Ralph Rader has put it, *Pamela* is a serious novel of represented action in which the protagonist's "merit and fate develop along a line of branching alternatives, where one branch, always closed by circumstance or choice, leads to an ethically acceptable but materially undesirable safety, while the other leads overtly and immediately to greater danger but covertly and ultimately to the most desirable resolution of her difficulties."[4] This key – an algorithm through which we read the novel – operates on the authorial plane: it operates as a form of communication between the implied author and the implied reader of the narrative, as discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 25).

Richardson's strategy to keep up the suspense is to escalate the threats by Mr. B. as the novel progresses: seduction by words gives way to surprise and physical assault – at one point B. disguises himself as a female servant to creep into bed with Pamela – but he always stops short of rape. Richardson takes these matters about as far as they can go, given the limits imposed by his projected happy ending. Since Mr. B. is not only the threat to Pamela's virtue but its promised reward, Richardson cannot allow him to offer violence that would preclude Pamela from accepting him as a husband she can love, honor, and obey. In the Lincolnshire section of the novel Richardson in fact eases off on most of the physical threats coming from Mr. B. personally, substituting as his surrogates the obese and repulsive housekeeper Mrs. Jewkes, whose fondling suggests the sexual threat, and the Swiss manservant Colbrand, whose powerful physique appears irresistible, but who never actually touches Pamela. But Richardson has Mr. B. rage against Parson Williams, who has attempted to help Pamela escape, and this rage suggests the violence that he might use against Pamela. Nevertheless, the reader, aware that the protagonist has parried every

attack over the course of many months, may well feel that, since nothing very serious has yet happened, nothing ever will.

By the start of the second volume, the chief threat to Pamela's happiness is an anonymous letter in a disguised hand that warns her that Mr. B. plans a sham marriage with a disbarred attorney masquerading as a parson. This leads Pamela to assume that any proposals of marriage Mr. B. might make are fraudulent and, when after reading her journals he does make a proposal, she is incredulous about his intentions and asks only to be returned to her home. Nevertheless, the narrative we have been reading – Pamela's letters and journal – now becomes a part of the plot itself, crucially influencing Mr. B. by convincing him, not merely of the fear and pain he has put her through, but of her tender heart, generous feelings, and disinterested affection for him. Providentially, Mr. B. becomes ill when Pamela is on her way back home, and she yields to his entreaties to see him, realizing that in spite of his treatment of her she loves him. He recovers and they quickly marry. This is in effect the arrival.

In what is left of the second volume the primary instability is resolved, and a secondary set of tensions are created. These hinge on whether Pamela can be accepted as Mr. B.'s wife, in spite of her class origins, and whether she can accept her husband's libertine past. Pamela's chief antagonist in this section of the novel is Mr. B.'s haughty sister, Lady Davers, who arrives at his Lincolnshire house in his absence and, assuming that the former chambermaid is only her brother's mistress and not his wife, treats Pamela with the contempt she thinks she deserves. Pamela's challenge is to maintain her position as Mr. B.'s lady with civility during this mistreatment, neither acceding to it nor engendering further hostility, until finally Pamela feels she has no choice but to exit the parlor though a window to escape Lady Davers's provocations. Pamela's final trial, a fairly easy one by comparison with the others, is her ready acceptance of, and affection for, Miss Goodwin, the illegitimate daughter of Mr. B. by Sally Godfrey, a young lady whom he had seduced and who is now living, married, in Jamaica. But because the primary instability has already been resolved, many readers find that *Pamela* ends anticlimactically, and the sequel published the following year is of little interest except to Richardson scholars.

Misreading/Rewriting *Pamela*

Pamela was a media event in the sense that its celebrity created opportunities both for its author and for others. Richardson was rumored to have bribed clergymen to praise *Pamela* from the pulpit, and he leaked to the press Alexander Pope's praise of the novel. It also generated a backlash,

both serious and satirical. *Pamela Censured* (anonymous, 1741) attacked Richardson's immodesty in publishing, together with the work, a preface by Richardson as the self-styled editor of the letters and journal, detailing the unparalleled entertainment and moral instruction to be found in a text that he himself had written from beginning to end. The anonymous pamphlet also argued that the scenes in which Pamela is physically attacked by Mr. B. (Richardson referred to them as his "warm scenes") will give young men the desire to imitate Mr. B.; and as for women: "the Modest Young Lady can never read the Description of Naked Breasts being run over with the Hand, and Kisses given with such Eagerness that they cling to the Lips; but her own soft Breasts must heave at the Idea and secretly sigh for the same Pressure." Richardson bridled at such criticism but he also took it seriously enough to revise his novel. Later editions tone down, though they do not entirely eliminate, the "warm scenes," and Richardson also improved Pamela's language, removing countrified vocabulary and grammar, making her read less like a working-class servant and therefore lessening the apparent class differences between her and her master.[5]

One thing Richardson's revisions could not change was the impression many contemporary readers had that Pamela, despite her self-presentation, was a little minx who had all along intended to become Mr. B.'s wife and who had aroused and frustrated his desires in much the same way that Moll Flanders managed the elder brother in Colchester. This was an unintended consequence of Richardson's narrative technique. Richardson needed to tell the story through Pamela because only by our exposure to Pamela's inner life could we understand her worth, but because Pamela alone is telling the story, it is through her vision that we learn how wealthy Mr. B. is and how magnificent all his possessions. At one point the narrative juxtaposes within a single sentence Pamela's innocent terror and the affluence that potentially will be hers:

> I pulled off my Stays, and my Stockens, and my Gown, all to an Under-petticoat; and then hearing a rustling again in the Closet, I said, God protect us! but before I say my Prayers, I must look into this Closet. And so was going to it slip shod, when, O dreadful! out rush'd my Master in a rich silk and silver Morning Gown.

Two alternative texts of 1741 revised the *Pamela* narrative by explicitly exploiting this unintended consequence. Eliza Haywood, who had specialized in amatory fiction earlier in the century – her *Love in Excess* was one of the two best-sellers of 1719 – published in June *Anti-Pamela, or Feign'd Innocence Detected*. Haywood's anti-heroine, Syrena Tricksy, is a *picara* who goes through

an elaborate series of amorous adventures, learning as she goes how to use her beauty and her pretended innocence to extract money and other gifts from her lovers. Each of her adventures alludes to an episode in *Pamela*, but though Syrena initially succeeds in captivating men, she is too extravagant to save the money she acquires and too imprudent to evade the detection of her impostures. Haywood subjects Syrena to poetic justice: she ends up in the Bridewell (the London prison for prostitutes and other petty criminals), from which she is freed only to enter what may be an even worse captivity in the isolated hinterland of rural Wales. The overt moral is to warn young gentlemen that apparently innocent young ladies may be nothing of the kind, but the novel as a whole is as cynical about men's professions of honor as about women's professions of virtue. Haywood includes letters between Syrena and her mother, but most of the novel is written in the third person.

The other 1741 revision was Henry Fielding's *Shamela*, a hilarious parody that took on every aspect of Richardson's novel. As with *Anti-Pamela*, Fielding's Pam is a sham, pretending to be innocent, Mr. B. is a booby – Fielding in fact renames him Mr. Booby – and Shamela intends using her beauty and his desire for whatever she can get by them. As she says in a letter to her mother, "I thought once of making a little Fortune by my Person. I now intend to make a great one by my Vartue." Fielding wants us to distinguish between "virtue" as ethical excellence and "vartue," as technical chastity, its debased double. He simultaneously skewers Richardson's "writing to the moment" technique, Pamela's countrified language, and her habit of dropping moral sententiae in italics into her letters:

> Mrs. *Jervis* and I are just in Bed, and the Door unlocked; if my Master should come – Odsbobs! I hear him just coming in at the Door. You see I write in the present Tense, as Parson *Williams* says. Well, he is in Bed between us, we both shamming a Sleep, he steals his Hand into my Bosom, which I, as if in my Sleep, press close to me with mine, and then pretend to awake. – I no sooner see him, but I scream out to Mrs. *Jervis*, she feigns likewise but just to come to herself; we both begin, she to becall, and I to bescratch very liberally. After having made a pretty free Use of my Fingers, without any great Regard to the Parts I attack'd, I counterfeit a Swoon. Mrs. *Jervis* then cries out, O, Sir, what have you done, you have murthered poor *Pamela*: she is gone, she is gone. –
> *O what a Difficulty it is to keep one's Countenance, when a violent Laugh desires to burst forth.*

Shamela also takes on other aspects of *Pamela*, like the self-congratulatory preface and the puff-pieces by clergymen (Parson Tickletext and Parson Oliver)

that Richardson had attached to his novel. One further bit of apparatus, the servile dedication to John, Lord Hervey, parodied the dedication to the same aristocrat in *The Life of Cicero* (1741) by Conyers Middleton, while frequent allusions attack Colley Cibber, the actor, playwright, and poet laureate, who had published a mock-modest self-aggrandizing autobiography in 1740. Fielding's satire in effect widens its scope from *Pamela* to the entire contemporary print culture.

Nevertheless, Richardson's impact on Fielding was not limited to the derision in *Shamela*. Richardson's method of writing dramatically, combining a seemingly autonomous narrative plane with formal plotting under authorial control, taught Fielding a great deal about narrative craft. His earliest narrative, *Jonathan Wild* (written before 1739, though not published until 1743) is relatively inert: the characters do not seem autonomous. *Joseph Andrews* (1742), on the other hand, has both authorial and narrative planes. Haywood, in her *History of Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), would show that Richardson had taught her, too, how to write a fully fledged novel. And the subsequent history of the novel shows the long shadow that *Pamela* threw: the Gothic novel of terror, half a century later, would exploit the delicious sensations of imprisoned heroines, while in the Victorian era Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) seem unimaginable except as *Pamela*'s distant offspring.

The Masterpiece

Pamela made Richardson an important author rather than merely a publisher who dabbled in writing; it founded what he claimed and his readers recognized as "a new species of writing," and in that sense *Pamela* is perhaps the most influential novel that ever existed. But *Clarissa*, Richardson's second novel, published in three installments in 1747–48, far surpassed *Pamela* in every way. In a sense the author took up the same situation that we find in *Pamela* – a beautiful, desirable woman in danger, imprisoned and threatened with rape by a predatory man – but he developed it in an entirely different manner.

Clarissa Harlowe is not an impecunious servant girl but the younger daughter of a wealthy family with new money, and with a plan to rise in the social world by having one of the children raised into the aristocracy. Clarissa's brother James wants her to marry Roger Solmes, a dull and heavy landowner: if she does so, Solmes and James will exchange estates in such a way as to concentrate the Harlowe lands in one county, giving James the political influence to be raised to a barony. But there is another way for a

Harlowe to become a titled aristocrat: Robert Lovelace, the nephew and heir presumptive of an earl, appears interested in courting the beautiful Clarissa, who would become, eventually, his countess. In order to sabotage this possible alliance, James Harlowe provokes a duel with Lovelace: James is slightly wounded but Lovelace, who already has the reputation of a rake, is now seen as the family enemy.

This is the situation where *Clarissa* begins: after the duel, Lovelace is out of the question, and the Harlowes insist that Clarissa marry Solmes, for whom she feels nothing but disgust. Clarissa is persecuted, imprisoned in her room, and threatened with a forced marriage to Solmes; meanwhile she has begun a clandestine correspondence with Lovelace. At the height of her parents' pressure on her, she elopes with Lovelace, who carries her off to London and installs her in what turns out to be merely a different prison, a private house attached to a high-class brothel. Having at one point wanted to marry Clarissa, Lovelace – who has engineered every detail of the elopement – now wants to keep her as his mistress, while the proud Clarissa, having reluctantly accepted Lovelace as her protector, wants more than anything to reconcile with her family, which in turn exacerbates Lovelace's own pride. A kind of duel of wills ensues between Lovelace and Clarissa in which his attempts to charm her, to seduce her, or to attack her when she is off guard, are repulsed. She escapes from the house, Lovelace pursues her, brings her back, and – in a desperate attempt to break her pride – drugs and rapes her, assuming that she will now have no choice but to be his on his own terms. But she defies him and escapes again, finding an asylum where, as she actively wishes, her death soon puts an end to her dishonor. Her final letters seem to come from a heavenly site beyond this world.

Clearly the tawdry morality that had inspired the parodies of *Pamela* is replaced by a higher Christian vision of what we owe to ourselves, to our families and friends, and to God. In contrast to the algorithm of virtue rewarded that underlies *Pamela*, the plot of *Clarissa* develops, as Ralph Rader states, through "branching alternatives where one branch, always refused by Clarissa or closed by circumstance, is defined as ethically acceptable but not impeccable and apparently promises earthly felicity, while the other, always chosen by Clarissa, is defined as ethically impeccable and increasingly excludes the possibility of her earthly felicity." *Clarissa* is thus a tragic novel, one of very few successful tragedies in the eighteenth century, whose aesthetic ideology presumed that characters' fates would be consonant with their ethical deserts. It was immensely popular in its time, and was a strong influence on the two most important continental novels of the eighteenth century, Rousseau's *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Goethe's *Werther*.

Richardson's technique of telling the story through minutely detailed, psychologically astute letters was brilliantly complicated by using not one but two primary sets of correspondents: Clarissa tells the story as she sees it to her friend Anna Howe, while Lovelace corresponds with his friend John Belford. The drama requires us to see the duel between Lovelace and Clarissa from both points of view, with irony that often cuts both ways as we see how each of them misinterprets the other. Nor are Anna and Belford mute recipients; each gives us needed perspective on the principals. Indeed, Belford ultimately switches sides and becomes Clarissa's partisan. These complexities vastly increased the length of *Clarissa*, which runs just under one million words, or four times the length of the two-volume *Pamela*. It is Richardson's masterpiece, but one that few today have read in unabridged form.[6]

Even more unread is Richardson's final novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which approaches the length of *Clarissa* without ever reaching its dramatic heights, much less its moral grandeur. By some accounts, Richardson was responding in this work to Fielding's *Tom Jones*, whose imprudent and sexually impetuous hero was felt to be unacceptably louche; Richardson's friends asked him to design a novel around a man who was both noble and ethically impeccable. The predictable result was a comic novel without laughter and without serious moral conflict, since an ethical paragon with both money and power by definition will always both know what to do and be able to do it. It may be difficult to believe that it was Jane Austen's favorite novel, except perhaps for the catty conversation of Grandison's sister Charlotte. But *Grandison* was culturally influential and indeed crucial for the later development of the novel: Sir Charles redefined gentlemanliness as gallant graciousness to others. This in turn defined what was becoming a general social ideal of masculinity, replacing the swashbuckling rake of the Restoration; and we will see the Grandisonian hero in later novels of the eighteenth century, culminating in Austen's Fitzwilliam Darcy who rises, in the course of that novel, to embody that ideal.

Notes

1. Richardson's second part, or continuation, of *Pamela*, in two further volumes, often referred to separately as *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition*, appeared in December of 1741. It was Richardson's response to various spurious continuations of *Pamela*, such as John Kelly's *Pamela's Conduct in High Life* (September 1741).
2. The Marschallin, in the opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, by Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hoffmanstal, is presented at her levee by her milliner with a fashionable hat, "le chapeau Pamela" – clearly a reference to the international *Pamela* vogue at mid-century.

3. Curtsy. Later editions alter "Clog" to "burden" and "curchee" to "curt'sy" as part of a general attempt to diminish the countrified diction that reminds us of Pamela's class origins.
4. Ralph Rader, "Defoe, Richardson, Joyce, and the Concept of Form in Fiction" in *Fact, Fiction, and Form* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2011), 174.
5. Some modern reading texts of *Pamela*, like the Thomas Keymer text for Oxford World Classics, are based on Richardson's first (1740) edition of *Pamela*. On the other side, Margaret Doody's text for Penguin boasts that it is based on the 1801 edition, which incorporates all Richardson's authorized revisions made during his lifetime. My personal feeling is that Richardson's first thoughts were the best, and that the revisions compromise his original idea.
6. For comparison, *Clarissa* falls midway between the entire King James Bible (around 800,000 words) and Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (around 1.2 million words).

Chapter 5

The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling (1749)

The Author of *Tom Jones*

Henry Fielding is the first of our novelists to come from the gentry. His father Edmund Fielding was a general in the British army related by blood to the earls of Denbigh and Desmond; his mother Sarah Gould was the daughter of Sir Henry Gould, a landowner in Somersetshire in the West Country. Fielding was born in 1709 and spent his youth at Sharpham Park near Glastonbury, the estate of his maternal grandparents. He had a traditional education in Greek and Latin literature at Eton College, where his friends included George Lyttelton (later his patron, to whom *Tom Jones* is dedicated) and William Pitt, later prime minister of England. It was at Eton, too, that Fielding acquired the habit of good living, at or beyond his means. In his late teens, following a romantic debacle – he had attempted to elope with Sarah Andrew, an heiress of Lyme Regis – he registered at the University of Leyden in the Netherlands, where he read literature and law while running up debts he would never repay. He left without a degree and, after a brief tour of the continent, returned to London where, with some help from his literary cousin, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, he placed his first comedy, *Love in Several Masques* (1728) at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

For the next nine years, Fielding was a working dramatist living in London; he wrote 26 plays, primarily social comedies and political satires, of which the most successful, and the best-known today, was the farcical *Tragedy of Tragedies, or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (1731). Fielding's career as a comic playwright came to an abrupt end when his political farce, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, provoked its principal target, the

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Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole, to pass the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, which required all plays to be approved by a government censor, the Lord Chamberlain, before being performed in public – a form of censorship that was not repealed until 1968.

In 1730 Fielding had met Charlotte Cradock, who was to be his muse and the model for two of his heroines, Sophia Western and Amelia Booth. Four years later, his career as a dramatist then flourishing, Fielding and Charlotte, by then the sole heiress to her mother's estate, were married at a village church north of Bath, where Charlotte was caring for her mother during her last illness. But in the fall of 1737, with his dramatic career in ruins and a wife and an infant daughter to support, Fielding began studying law at the Middle Temple, and made such rapid progress that he was called to the bar in June 1740. While studying, Fielding defrayed some of his family's mounting debts by editing and writing editorials for an Opposition journal to the Walpole government titled *The Champion* (1739–41). Nevertheless, Fielding was arrested for debt in February 1741 and confined in a spunging house – a halfway house for debtors' prison – until he found friends to bail him out.

Perhaps it was during this confinement that he found time to read Richardson's *Pamela* and to write his brilliant parody *Shamela*, published in April 1741. He continued for the rest of his life to combine his literary work with a career in the law, first as a barrister and later as a judge. After following the Western Circuit as a barrister in the summer of 1741, Fielding was entertained and perhaps helped out with money by the generous philanthropist Ralph Allen, who had just moved into his stately home, Prior Park, in the woods south of Bath; Allen is alluded to in *Joseph Andrews*[1] and became the model for Mr. Allworthy in *Tom Jones*.

On his return to London, Fielding finished *Joseph Andrews*, selling the copy to the Scottish publisher Andrew Millar for what was then the princely sum of £200. In 1743 Fielding published three miscellaneous volumes, including *Jonathan Wild*, a fictional narrative written years earlier about an actual criminal (executed in 1725) who operated on both sides of the law, supplying testimony to hang thieves but also fencing their stolen goods and collecting rewards for the return of stolen property. Fielding's satirical point was that what Wild had been to organized crime, Sir Robert Walpole was to organized politics of the Whig government.[2] But Walpole had stepped down as prime minister in 1742 and Fielding had to publish his novel before the object of his satire faded in public memory.

In 1744, after a long illness, probably tuberculosis, Charlotte Fielding died. Fielding became wild with grief, friends wondered whether he may have become suicidal; certainly his own once robust health began to deteriorate at this point. In 1745 Fielding started writing *Tom Jones*, but its progress was slowed by Fielding's response to the Jacobite rebellion led that summer by

Bonnie Prince Charlie. During the rebellion Fielding wrote pro-Hanoverian propaganda for the new government (which included his old friend George Lyttelton) in a journal, *The True Patriot*, followed by *The Jacobite's Journal*. In 1747 Fielding married Mary Daniel, his housekeeper and his late wife's former maid – a surprising and ironic event in the life of the man who had ridiculed in *Shamela* the misalliance of a gentleman and a chambermaid; from the records it appears she was pregnant at the time of their marriage, and Fielding sired by her three children in all.

In 1748 he finished *Tom Jones* and sold the copyright to Millar for £600. For his services to the government, Fielding was appointed to the London judiciary, with jurisdiction extended in 1749 to all of Middlesex county. For the rest of Fielding's legal career, he held court in Bow Street near Covent Garden, inventing expedients to make the streets of London safe; he pioneered a detective force, the Bow Street Runners, to infiltrate gangs: they are the predecessors of what is now Scotland Yard. This work was continued after Henry's death by his half-brother John Fielding, who was honored with a knighthood. In 1749 *Tom Jones* was published: it went through four editions totaling 10,000 copies within a year. But by now Fielding's health – he suffered from gout and from congestive heart failure – was in serious decline. His much anticipated last novel, *Amelia*, was published in 1751, but its sales were disappointing compared with its predecessor. In 1754 Fielding was advised to travel for his health to warmer climes; he went to Lisbon, writing a journal during his voyage and after his arrival, but he died soon after landing and is buried there in the English cemetery.

Reading *Joseph Andrews*

Like *Shamela*, discussed in Chapter 4, *Joseph Andrews* begins as another spoof on *Pamela*: the footman Joseph, named for his chaste biblical counterpart, is forced to defend his virtue against the sexual predation of his employer Lady Booby, just as his sister Pamela did against Mr. B. Fielding provokes a few easy laughs at Joseph, who pretends he does not realize what his mistress wants of him; though Fielding's moral point goes deeper than just saying no:

> "Your Virtue!" said the Lady, recovering after a Silence of two Minutes; "I shall never survive it. Your Virtue! – Intolerable Confidence! Have you the Assurance to pretend, that when a Lady demeans herself to throw aside the Rules of Decency, in order to honour you with the highest Favour in her Power, your Virtue should resist her Inclination? that, when she had conquered her own Virtue, she should find an Obstruction in yours?"

"Madam," said *Joseph*, "I can't see why her having no Virtue should be a Reason against my having any; or why, because I am a Man, or because I am poor, my Virtue must be subservient to her Pleasures."

. . . .

Once Joseph has been turned away from Lady Booby's town house in London and joins Parson Abraham Adams on the road to Booby Hall, *Joseph Andrews*, as the title page promises, turns into a free adaptation of *Don Quixote*.[3] The Quixote figure is Adams, whose Christian idealism makes him inevitably misunderstand the intentions and moral character of the various innkeepers, squires, and clergymen they meet along their way, while Joseph is, like Sancho Panza, more realistic and discerning. Fielding imitates the *Quixote* in another respect: like Cervantes, he breaks up the primary narrative with brief narrative digressions tonally different from the main narrative. (One of these digressions, "The History of Leonora, or The Unfortunate Jilt" was written, in whole or part, by Fielding's sister Sarah.)

But unlike the *Quixote*, which is entirely episodic in structure, and simply ends rather than concluding, Fielding's comedy is goal-oriented, like *Pamela*. By the eleventh chapter the reader is aware that the plot's target is the marriage between Joseph and his sweetheart, Fanny Goodwill, which can take place only if all the obstacles to their happiness are eliminated. By using a self-conscious third-person narrator, Fielding is able to create with greater ease and sureness than Richardson the authorial plane of expectations and of values by which we judge the various characters whom we meet in the course of the narrative. Fielding's skill as a dramatist is needed to create the narrative plane, by which we react to the characters as representative of human types whom we know from our own experience. But unlike Richardson, whose principal characters are created from within, Fielding's acquire their sense of life through their vivid interactions with one another, while the narrator creates a connection with the reader in the world they share:

. . . .

Aurora now began to shew her blooming Cheeks over the Hills, whilst ten Millions of feathered Songsters, in jocund Chorus, repeated Odes a thousand times sweeter than those of our *Laureate*, and sung both *the Day and the Song*; when the Master of the Inn, Mr *Tow-wouse*, arose, and learning from his Maid an Account of the Robbery, and the Situation of his poor naked Guest, he shook his Head, and cried, "Good-lack-a-day!" and then ordered the Girl to carry him one of his own Shirts.

Mrs *Tow-wouse* was just awake, and had stretched out her Arms in vain to fold her departed Husband, when the Maid entered the Room. "Who's there? *Betty*?" – "Yes, Madam." – "Where's your Master?" – "He's without, Madam; he

> hath sent me for a Shirt to lend a poor naked Man, who hath been robbed and murdered." – "Touch one if you dare, you Slut," said Mrs *Tow-wouse*: "your Master is a pretty sort of a Man, to take in naked Vagabonds, and clothe them with his own Clothes. I shall have no such Doings. If you offer to touch anything, I will throw the Chamber-Pot at your Head. Go, send your Master to me." – "Yes, Madam," answered *Betty*. As soon as he came in, she thus began: "What the Devil do you mean by this, Mr *Tow-wouse*? Am I to buy Shirts to lend to a sett of scabby Rascals?" – "My Dear," said Mr *Tow-wouse*, "this is a poor Wretch." – "Yes," says she, "I know it is a poor Wretch; but what the Devil have we to do with poor Wretches? … I shall send him packing as soon as I am up, I assure you." – "My Dear," said he, "common Charity won't suffer you to do that." – "Common Charity, a F—t!" says she, "common Charity teaches us to provide for ourselves and our Families; and I and mine won't be ruined by your Charity, I assure you." … With such like Discourses they consumed near half-an-Hour, whilst Betty provided a Shirt from the Hostler, who was one of her Sweethearts, and put it on poor Joseph.

. . . .

The opening clause, with its classical reference to Aurora as the goddess of dawn, reminds us of Fielding's Preface, which had promised a narrative like Homer's, but a comic epic in prose, and situates us in the real world of 1742, with its satirical slap at the current poet laureate of England, Colley Cibber, and his incompetent odes written for each royal birthday. The second rapidly returns us to the fiction, in which Joseph, robbed and stripped naked by highwaymen, has been carried to the Tow-wouse inn. And what follows, the vivid and racy – not to say vulgar – dialogue between the wife and the chambermaid, and the wife and her husband, suggests the mixture of Christian charity and smug self-interest that we will find in Fielding's fictional world. The fortunate end of this brief dispute – the wife gets her way but Joseph nevertheless gets the shirt he needs – functions to help set up the comic expectations through which we will continue to read the adventures of Fielding's hero.

Reading *Tom Jones*

In *Tom Jones*, Fielding doubled down on the narrative techniques he had developed in *Joseph Andrews* to create what he announces in the first chapter of Book II as "a new Province of Writing" and which is universally esteemed as his masterpiece. Epic in length, *Tom Jones* runs to 350,000 words (roughly three times the length of *Joseph Andrews*, but less than half of *Clarissa*) divided into eighteen books. Geographically, the novel parallels *Joseph Andrews* but moves in the opposite direction, from country to town, and now with a symmetrical pattern: The first six books are set in a rural neighborhood in Somersetshire, at

the seats of Squire Allworthy and Squire Western, the middle six are set on the road to London (during the specific summer of 1745 that saw the recent Jacobite Rebellion led by Bonnie Prince Charlie), and the concluding six books are set in London, where the action of *Joseph Andrews* had begun.

The sagacious, self-conscious narrator of *Tom Jones* not only characterizes his fictional world from a position outside it, as before, but chattily addresses us, admonishing or cajoling by turns, writes a brief essay as the first chapter of each book, usually pointed toward our sense of the characters or the action, or the ethical ideas or fictional techniques Fielding is wielding. In fact the narrator represents himself as having formed an acquaintance with his readers over the long journey, from whom he takes a fond farewell at the beginning of the final book. He becomes a vivid character in the text – the most important character, Wayne Booth has argued – although he always subordinates himself to his story, a relationship that will be tested, a decade or so later, by Laurence Sterne. Fielding's narrator is outside the fictional world in the sense that, unlike Behn's narrator in *Oroonoko*, there is no direct interaction between narrator and hero. Nevertheless, although the characters are fictional, including some with characteristic names like Allworthy and Thwackum that might have come out of an allegory by Bunyan, the lifeworlds of the characters and Fielding's contemporary readers intersect: Tom and Sophia Western, the heroine, tread the country roads and London streets that Fielding's readers knew. Sophia is in Book XI mistaken for Jenny Cameron, the Pretender's mistress, and describing fisticuffs between Tom Jones and Nightingale's footman in Book XIII, Fielding twice references John Broughton, a celebrated prizefighter and martial arts teacher of his day.

References to contemporary people and events abound even in the sections of the narrative set in the fictional estates in Somersetshire. (According to one account, Fielding told London acquaintances that his new novel would feature references to all his friends, and rushed to the printer to add to Book X an allusion to Amey Hussey the mantua-maker, in order to make good on this promise.) All this adds to the reality-effect of Fielding's narrative, in a method taken up by most later novelists and still used today, and very different from that of explicit claims, such as Defoe made in *Moll Flanders* or Richardson in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, of the author's merely being the editor of a memoir or letters by real people.

Tom Jones also marks a major advance in the way Fielding develops his characters. While most of the major agents in the story are flat characters who never change, and others (like Roger Thwackum the bigoted birch-wielding tutor) are merely what Sheldon Sacks termed "walking concepts," Fielding's hero is a complex character with both admirable traits and major flaws of character that destroy, at least temporarily, his relationships with those he holds most dear.

As Allworthy says to Tom in Book V, " I am convinced, my Child, that you have much Goodness, Generosity, and Honour, in your Temper: if you will add Prudence and Religion to these, you must be happy; for the three former Qualities, I admit, make you worthy of Happiness, but they are the latter only which will put you in Possession of it." We see his hero grow from a child to manhood, and Tom grows up benevolent and good-natured, preferring others' happiness to his own, but he is also too quick with his fists and too susceptible to amorous women. (He is, however, always the seduced, never the seducer, the opposite of Richardson's predatory males.)

His imprudence in both respects becomes his undoing: during the last third of the novel, he comes to understand that, though he has been plotted against by ill-wishers, his obliviousness to the possible consequences of his actions has made him his own worst enemy. Fielding presents him as credibly resolving to change and as taking the first steps toward eradicating those faults. Neither Tom nor his other vivid characters indulge in the elaborate self-analysis that we find in *Pamela* or even in *Moll Flanders*. As a former playwright, Fielding presents the moral complexities of his characters as they appear from the outside, rather than in terms of struggles within; in fact we are given what might almost be stage directions for an actor, with phrases like "a little ruffled," "a little frightened," to indicate the inner state of those whose words we read, and Fielding also created foils for his major characters (Partridge for Tom, her maid Honour for Sophia) to allow their thoughts to emerge naturally in dialogue. Later novelists like Jane Austen would find new techniques that manage to combine the interior views of Richardson and the exterior views of Fielding.

The Plot of *Tom Jones*

Like its hero, the plot of *Tom Jones* is complex and intricate, with nearly two dozen major characters who appear in more than one episode, and an even larger supporting cast; and presenting all its twists and turns is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, as we can see on viewing the action in retrospect, all the plot strands originate from Bridget Allworthy's plan to safeguard her reputation by placing her own illegitimate son as a foundling in her brother Thomas Allworthy's bed, and by paying Jenny Jones, an intelligent servant, to take the blame as the child's mother, with the intent of eventually informing her brother of the truth. After Bridget marries and produces a legitimate son, Blifil, she delays her confession until she is on her deathbed, and the letter she then writes to her brother is intercepted by Blifil, so that we and Allworthy learn of Tom's parentage only in the very last chapters of the novel. This produces a tension rather than an instability – the reader understands

throughout the novel that there is a mystery about Tom's parentage. Jenny's confession hints at this, Partridge denies the paternity that others lay at his door, and pretty much everyone in the novel, rich or poor, assume upon meeting him that Tom is a gentleman born until they learn the official version of his origins.

For the novel to have closure, this mystery will have to be cleared up, but the primary effect of Tom's putative origin as Jenny's son by Partridge is to give him what becomes an unstable position in the Allworthy household as an adopted "son" who is also a mere foundling who can be repudiated if his behavior seems to warrant it. His legitimate half-brother Blifil, a conniving hypocrite, becomes his rival for the love of the two people about whom Tom cares most, his "father" Allworthy and his sweetheart, Sophia Western, daughter and heir of a neighboring squire. Earlier attempts to blacken Tom's character backfire, but at a crucial point in the narrative, Blifil, aided by the tutors Thwackum and Square, successfully misrepresent Tom's behavior so as to convince Allworthy to expel Tom from his home. Meanwhile, Sophia, whose father and aunt are insistent that she marry the odious Blifil, escapes to seek refuge with her cousin Lady Bellaston in London. The escape and the expulsion initiate the middle section of the plot, in which Tom plans first to go to sea, then to take up arms against the Pretender, and finally – after discovering that Sophia has left Somersetshire for the road to London – to follow her to the metropolis, where the final action of the novel takes place.

In London, Tom displays his mixed character as before: he exerts himself in benevolent and honorable activities that save the lives of the brother and the daughter of Mrs. Miller (in whose house Allworthy stays when in London); but he also becomes Lady Bellaston's kept man, which R.S. Crane calls Tom's "closest approach … to a base act"[4] (628). After seeing Sophia again, Tom extracts himself from this tawdry relationship by proposing marriage, which is effective but ill-advised. Tom foresees that Lady Bellaston would never marry him, but he does not foresee that his letter of proposal has given her a ready-made weapon to use against him with Sophia, who on reading it breaks with Tom completely. Meanwhile Mr. Fitzpatrick, a jealous husband, mistakes Tom for his wife's lover and attacks him in the street, where Tom, aggressively defending himself, apparently wounds him seriously. Tom is taken to Newgate Prison, perhaps to be tried for his life, and it is in a cell that he reads Sophia's letter of dismissal.

His imprudence, aggressive and sexual, have led him to this low point, and it is here at Newgate that, like Moll Flanders, Tom resolves to change his ways. Fitzpatrick soon recovers and admits he started the fight, and the guiltless Tom is released. Meanwhile the Westerns, Allworthy and Blifil arrive in London, along with Jenny Jones, Partridge, and Bridget's solicitor, Lawyer Dowling.

As Crane puts it: "All those … who know Bridget's secret – and Blifil's villainy in suppressing it at the time of her death – are now assembled, for the first time, in close proximity to Allworthy." The denouement comes with great rapidity: Allworthy disinherits Blifil and restores Tom to his position as his adopted son. With Tom now Allworthy's heir,[5] Squire Western is now enthusiastic about his marrying Sophia. And Sophia – who has forgiven Tom for his illicit relations with other women in the past – agrees, with a show of reluctance that is partly mere show, to become his wife.

Plots that turn on the revelation of secrets, like mystery stories, notoriously lose their power on second reading; but Fielding has built enough irony into his complex structure to compensate for what we lose in suspense. For example, when Tom gets drunk after he learns of Allworthy's recovery from his illness, he is reproached by Blifil, who is in mourning for his mother's recent death. Tom immediately apologizes, but instead of accepting, "Blifil scornfully rejected his Hand; and, with much Indignation answered, 'It was little to be wondered at if tragical Spectacles made no Impressions on the Blind; but, for his Part, he had the Misfortune to know who his Parents were, and consequently must be affected by their Loss.'" There follows a scuffle, and, in the next chapter, a full-scale fist-fight between Jones and Blifil, aided by Thwackum, which, reported to Allworthy, causes Tom's expulsion from his home. But what we see only on a second reading of the novel is that from his perspective, Blifil's provocative words refer to the fact that, having intercepted his late mother's letter and learned the secret of Tom's birth, he knows as Tom does not that Tom is his elder brother and is bereaved exactly as he is. (Similarly, on a second reading we will understand, when Lawyer Dowling first meets Tom at a roadside inn in Book XII and speaks of "your Uncle Allworthy," that he is not talking loosely but assumes that Tom knows his precise relationship to his foster father.)

The Delayed Launch

Unlike Richardson's *Pamela*, whose narrative begins precisely where the plot instability does, or *Clarissa*, where the narrative begins with the plot already under way, Fielding opted for an unusual quantity of exposition prior to the launch of the plot, which takes place in Book VI, nearly a third of the way into the novel. Tom is introduced as a newborn infant in the second chapter, but two books are taken up with the search for Tom's putative parents, Jenny Jones and Partridge, who reappear in different guises later in the novel, in ways Fielding needs for his brilliant denouement. These two books also contain the courtship of Bridget Allworthy, Tom's actual mother, by Captain John Blifil, who marries Bridget and becomes the father of Tom's rival and half-brother. Part of what

Fielding accomplishes in this segment of the opening has to do with managing the reader's expectations: Captain Blifil plans to succeed Squire Allworthy as the greatest landowner in Somerset, but dies unexpectedly of an apoplexy while greedily calculating his brother-in-law's wealth. This episode foreshadows the younger Blifil's plot against Tom and its outcome, which backfires badly on him. Two more books present episodes from Tom's youth, in which generosity and good nature combined with imprudence lead him into trouble again and again; but each time he is reconciled with Allworthy with warmer feelings than before. As with *Pamela*, the reader comes to assume that since nothing irrevocable has happened, nothing will, and we carry those expectations into the plot launch in which Tom is ejected from Allworthy's estate with nothing but the clothes on his back.

There are, of course, other elements in the plot that generate comic expectations other than the pattern that has been set up during the launch. As R.S. Crane puts it, Tom's antagonists are not powerful villains but rather "persons for whom … we are bound to feel a certain contempt" (634). Blifil is a sniveling tattle-tale, and is also obliquely characterized as what would be called in British slang a wanker: "The Charms of *Sophia* had not made the least Impression on *Blifil*; not that his Heart was pre-engaged; neither was he totally insensible of Beauty, or had any Aversion to Women; but his Appetites were by Nature so moderate, that he was able, by Philosophy, or by Study, or by some other Method, easily to subdue them."[6]

The delayed launch also directs our values: we are constantly presented with the difference between those who speak the language of religion and virtue, like the tutors Thwackum and Square, and the hypocritical villain Blifil, and those who actually practice benevolence and the love of one's neighbor (Fielding calls it simply "goodness"), like Allworthy, Tom, and Sophia. This distinction appears as early as our first sighting of Tom in Squire Allworthy's bed in Book I, chapter iii. Fielding's narrator focalizes the scene first through Allworthy, whom he presents as attentive to his public duties,[7] his private duty (to his sister), and even his duty to God, since despite extreme fatigue, he spends "some minutes" in prayer, before finding the "little Wretch" in his bed, who inspires in him "Sentiments of Compassion." Indeed, Allworthy is so rapt in contemplating the innocence of the baby that he is oblivious that he is wearing nothing but his shirt.[8] As he calls for his housekeeper to take care of the child, Fielding suddenly shifts the focalization to Deborah Wilkins, emphasizing first her personal vanity (spending "many Minutes" doing her hair), in which she indulges despite the possible emergency, and then her prudish shock at finding Mr. Allworthy dressed for bed. The narrator then backs away asking us to contemplate the contradiction between her primping – to make oneself sexually attractive – and her priggishness. Characteristically, the narrator gives the

reader two equally unsatisfactory alternatives: we certainly don't want to be one of those "Sneerers and prophane Wits" who just laugh at the housekeeper, but we also don't want to be "my graver Reader" who "will highly justify and applaud" her "most terrible Fright" – at seeing "a Man without his Coat." (The "graver Reader" may be the ideal reader of Richardson, for whom predatory males are stock characters.) The narrator finally ironizes the situation by providing a third alternative: "unless the Prudence which must be supposed to attend Maidens at that Period of Life at which Mrs *Deborah* had arrived, should a little lessen his Admiration." Only then do we hear her response to the foundling:

> When Mrs *Deborah* returned into the Room, and was acquainted by her Master with the finding the little Infant, her Consternation was rather greater than his had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great Horror of Accent as well as Look, "My good Sir! what's to be done?" Mr *Allworthy* answered, she must take care of the Child that Evening, and in the Morning he would give Orders to provide it a Nurse. "Yes, sir," says she; "and I hope your Worship will send out your Warrant to take up the Hussy its Mother (for she must be one of the Neighbourhood) and I should be glad to see her committed to *Bridewel*, and whipt at the Cart's Tail. Indeed, such wicked Sluts cannot be too severely punished. I'll warrant 'tis not her first, by her Impudence in laying it to your Worship." "In laying it to me, *Deborah*!" answered *Allworthy*, "I can't think she hath any such Design. I suppose she hath only taken this Method to provide for her Child; and truly I am glad she hath not done worse." "I don't know what is worse," cries *Deborah*, "than for such wicked Strumpets to lay their Sins at honest Men's Doors …. [B]ut for my own Part, it goes against me to touch these misbegotten Wretches, whom I don't look upon as my Fellow Creatures. Faugh! how it stinks! It doth not smell like a Christian. If I might be so bold to give my Advice, I would have it put in a Basket, and sent out and laid at the Church-Warden's Door. It is a good Night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapt up, and put in a warm Basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the Morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our Duty in taking proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such Creatures to die in a state of Innocence, than to grow up and imitate their Mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them."

It is hard to know which is worse, Deb Wilkins's defining "taking proper care" of the infant as leaving it in a basket out of doors on a rainy and windy night, or her invoking the Christian idea of dying in a state of grace as justification. And this scene prepares us for the frequent combination of hypocrisy and inhumanity that we find throughout the novel, and that is the primary threat to Tom Jones. Deb Wilkins's principal hypocrisy – her primping prudery – has a

sexual tinge, and that may have been chosen because the primary fault that threatens to overbalance our hero's virtues is sexual incontinence. By satirizing Deb Wilkins's misplaced prudery, including her savage indignation about the infant's mother, the reader is being asked to lower the position of chastity and raise the position of active benevolence in the hierarchy of moral values.

The delayed launch also allows Fielding to mold our expectations as well as our values. In Book IV, chapter iv, for example, around the table of Squire Western, various characters discuss the behavior of Blifil in freeing a singing bird that Tom had trained and given to the squire's daughter Sophia. After Thwackum the clergyman and Square the philosopher have justified Blifil's spiteful and mean-spirited action (as Christian and as according to the Rule of Right, respectively), Western turns to his lawyer:

> "So between you both," says the Squire, "the young Gentleman hath been taught to rob my Daughter of her Bird. I find I must take care of my Partridge Mew. I shall have some virtuous religious Man or other set all my Partridges at Liberty." Then slapping a Gentleman of the Law, who was present, on the Back, he cried out, "What say you to this, Mr Counsellor? Is not this against Law?"
>
> The Lawyer with great Gravity delivered himself as follows: –
>
> "If the Case be put of a Partridge, there can be no Doubt but an Action would lie; for though this be *ferae Naturae*, yet being reclaimed, Property vests: but being the Case of a Singing Bird, though reclaimed, as it is a Thing of base Nature, it must be considered as *nullius in Bonis*. In this Case, therefore, I conceive the Plaintiff must be non-suited; and I should disadvise the bringing any such Action."
>
> "Well," says the Squire, "if it be *nullus Bonus*, let us drink about, and talk a little of the state of the Nation, or some such Discourse that we all understand; for I am sure I don't understand a Word of this. It may be Learning and Sense for aught I know; but you shall never persuade me into it. Pox! you have neither of you mentioned a Word of that poor Lad [Tom] who deserves to be commended: to venture breaking his Neck to oblige my Girl was a generous-spirited Action: I have Learning enough to see that. D—n me, here's Tom's Health! I shall love the Boy for it the longest Day I have to live."

This brief vignette tells us all we need to know about the law as it will function in *Tom Jones*: lawyers are free with Latin terms of art that nobody but they understand, but the law has nothing much to do with equity or justice. When Tom is imprisoned for injuring Fitzpatrick in a fight that Fitzpatrick provoked, we are not to expect that Tom's actual innocence will be of any interest to the legal system any more than Sophia Western's actual ownership of the singing bird had been. And we know that Lawyer Dowling – one of the few who know

the secret of Tom's birth – will not clarify matters until he perceives that it is no longer in his interest to keep the secret. (At the end of the novel, when justice is being handed out, Black George's finding and keeping for himself Jones's bank bills for £500 is discovered – along with the fact that, owing to a legal technicality, he cannot be prosecuted.)

Fielding similarly manipulates our sense of the medical profession and its prognoses. Allworthy makes his will in Book V, because his physician – in order to take the more credit for curing his fever – has suggested that his recovery would be a miracle. After he has told his household of his bequests, however, the narrator informs us that "Mr Allworthy's Situation had never been so bad as the great Caution of the Doctor had represented it," and that indeed he has already recovered. This is useful knowledge, for when Ensign Northerton throws a bottle at Tom's head in Book VII, chapter xii, and the surgeon who examines him gives Tom a dire prognosis, we are not surprised that, at the beginning of chapter xiv, Tom is up and around and eating like a starved adolescent. And given this pattern, as soon as we are told in Book XVI, about the injured Mr. Fitzpatrick, that he is "at a Tavern under the Surgeon's Hands …, that the Wound was certainly mortal, and there were no Hopes of Life," we can expect, as in the previous cases, that Fitzpatrick is bound to recover very quickly, as indeed he does.

The Digressions

Like *Don Quixote* and like Fielding's earlier *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* includes digressions, semi-independent narratives told to one of the main characters, whose relation to the main action can be puzzling. The three lengthiest digressions, all located in the relatively picaresque "road to London" sequence of Books VII–XII, are The Man of the Hill's story, told to Tom and Partridge, which takes up much of Book VIII, Mrs. Fitzppatrick's story, told to Sophia, which takes up much of Book XI, and the episode of the Gypsies, which makes up Book XII, chapter xii. The episode of the Gypsies is perhaps the most puzzling of the three: the best guess is that it is an apologue arguing that public shame might be the most effective punishment for rooting out anti-social behavior, a topic that probably interested Fielding the judge more than Fielding the novelist.

The other two digressions bear on the main action in interesting ways. The Man of the Hill, whom Tom saves from some ruffians, seems to be a debased version of Tom Jones himself. When Tom calls himself "the most unhappy of Mankind" the Man of the Hill asks, "Perhaps you have had a Friend, or a Mistress?" Tom is indeed suffering from separation from Allworthy and from

Sophia, and we expect to hear a story similar to Tom's. But the story of the Man of the Hill is very different: his Sophia was a common prostitute who encouraged him to steal money from a wealthy friend to support her pleasures; his Allworthy was a card-sharper who betrayed him to the authorities after his involvement in the 1685 rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth. The Man of the Hill explains he has withdrawn from humankind because of his experience of treachery, which leave him wondering why a benevolent God would have created "so foolish and so vile an Animal" as man. But he does not convince Tom to renounce the active quality Fielding calls "goodness" and become, like him, a hermit. Indeed, our last view of the Man of the Hill contrasts him and Tom: he is waiting "with great Patience and Unconcern" (with his gun in hand) while Tom rushes into trouble with only his walking-stick to save Mrs. Waters from the brutality of Ensign Northerton. Harriet Fitzpatrick's story begins by implicitly suggesting similarity between her lot and that of her cousin Sophia: both fell in love with a man and eloped in order to marry him. But the subsequent adventures of Harriet – her imprisonment by her persistently unfaithful husband and her escape with the help of her own lover, an Irish peer – make clear to Sophia that "her cousin was not better than she should be," and Sophia departs her company as quickly as she politely can. In both cases the reader is treated to a story in which our attention is split between the tale itself, a variation on our central plot, and what the tale tells us about the hero and heroine, about their responses as readers of others.

A much shorter digression, which begins and ends in three paragraphs, has a very different relation to the principal narrative. This is the story told by Broadbrim the Quaker, whom Tom meets at an inn in Book VII, chapter x:

. . . .

> After they had past some Time together, in such a Manner that my honest Friend might have thought himself at one of his Silent-Meetings, the Quaker began to be moved by some Spirit or other, probably that of Curiosity; and said, "Friend, I perceive some sad Disaster hath befallen thee; but pray be of Comfort. Perhaps thou hast lost a Friend. If so, thou must consider we are all mortal. And why shouldst thou grieve, when thou knowest thy Grief will do thy Friend no Good? We are all born to Affliction. I myself have my Sorrows as well as thee, and most probably greater Sorrows. Tho' I have a clear Estate of £100 a year, which is as much as I want, and I have a Conscience, I thank the Lord, void of Offence. My Constitution is sound and strong, and there is no Man can demand a Debt of me, nor accuse me of an Injury—yet, Friend, I should be concerned to think thee as miserable as myself."
>
> Here the Quaker ended with a deep Sigh; and *Jones* presently answered, "I am very sorry, sir, for your Unhappiness, whatever is the Occasion of it." "Ah! friend," replied the Quaker, "one only Daughter is the Occasion. One who was

my greatest Delight upon Earth, and who within this Week is run away from me, and is married against my Consent. I had provided her a proper Match, a sober Man and one of Substance; but she, forsooth, would chuse for herself, and away she is gone with a young Fellow not worth a Groat. If she had been dead, as I suppose thy Friend is, I should have been happy!" "That is very strange, Sir," said *Jones*. "Why, would it not be better for her to be dead, than to be a Beggar?" replied the Quaker: "For, as I told you, the Fellow is not worth a Groat; and surely she cannot expect that I shall ever give her a Shilling. No, as she hath married for Love, let her live on Love if she can; let her carry her Love to Market, and see whether any one will change it into Silver, or even into Halfpence." "You know your own Concerns best, Sir," said *Jones*. "It must have been," continued the Quaker, "a long premeditated Scheme to cheat me: For they have known one another from their Infancy; and I always preached to her against Love, and told her a thousand Times over it was all Folly and Wickedness. Nay, the cunning Slut pretended to hearken to me, and to despise all Wantonness of the Flesh; and yet at last broke out at a Window two Pair of Stairs: for I began, indeed, a little to suspect her, and had locked her up carefully, intending the very next Morning to have married her up to my Liking. But she disappointed me within a few Hours, and escaped away to the Lover of her own chusing, who lost no Time: For they were married and bedded and all within an Hour.

"But it shall be the worst Hour's Work for them both that ever they did; for they may starve, or beg, or steal together, for me. I will never give either of them a Farthing." Here *Jones* starting up cry'd, "I really must be excused, I wish you would leave me." "Come, come, Friend," said the Quaker, "don't give way to Concern. You see there are other People miserable besides yourself." "I see there are Madmen, and Fools, and Villains in the world," cries *Jones* – "But let me give you a piece of Advice: send for your Daughter and Son-in-law home, and don't be yourself the only Cause of Misery to one you pretend to love." "Send for her and her Husband home!" cries the Quaker loudly; "I would sooner send for the two greatest Enemies I have in the World!" – "Well, go home yourself, or where you please," said *Jones*, "For I will sit no longer in such Company." – "Nay, Friend," answered the Quaker, "I scorn to impose my Company on any one." He then offered to pull Money from his Pocket, but *Jones* pushed him with some Violence out of the Room.

. . . .

Here the relation between the main story and the digression is perfectly clear: Broadbrim is in the same situation as Squire Western, with a daughter he had intended to marry to a man of his choosing, who has been frustrated by her elopement. Like Broadbrim, Western has, not long ago, told Sophia: "I am resolved upon the Match, and unless you consent to it I will not give you a Groat, not a single Farthing; no, though I saw you expiring with Famine in the Street, I would not relieve you with a Morsel of Bread." The primary difference, apart from the Quaker's lower rank in society, is that while Tom and Sophia have the good fortune to be the hero and heroine of Fielding's comedy, which will end with their

happy marriage, the Quaker's daughter and son-in-law, for all we know, live miserably ever after. The lifeworld of *Tom Jones* is one in which Providence does not shine on everyone, and this gives moral seriousness to Fielding's comedy.

Fortune vs. Providence

Tom Jones is a novel whose complex plot depends at many turns on coincidence. Blifil's plot against Tom requires that Bridget's deathbed letter arrive while Allworthy is ill with fever, while its exposure depends on the chance meetings of Allworthy with Jenny Jones/Mrs. Waters, Partridge, and Dowling in London. Fielding does not hide these coincidences as other novelists (like Jane Austen) often do: in fact he flaunts these clockwork plot devices, the narrator ironically telling the reader that bringing his "Favourites" from misery to happiness seems "a Task so hard that we do not undertake to execute it," and urging readers with a taste for public hangings to take "a first Row at *Tyburn*" for the final scene of "poor *Jones*." The question is what we are to make of them. Are we to see them as the result of Fortune, of pure random chance, or of the workings of divine Providence? (A third alternative would be some form of Cosmic Injustice, but given the distribution of punishments and rewards according to the characters' deserts in *Tom Jones*, we are clearly not in a lifeworld like that of Thomas Hardy, in which a malignant fate seems to pursue all who aspire to happiness.)[9] R.S. Crane in "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*" took up the first alternative, which Ralph Rader attempted to refute in "*Tom Jones*: The Form in History."[10]

Crane argues that Tom has had a "hairbreadth escape" in a serious world in which most people are selfish and some actively malicious; "we realize … that [Tom] has, in truth, needed all the good luck that has been his." This is not a merely amiable comedy: "Though the pleasure remains consistently comic, … [w]e are not disposed to feel, when we are done laughing at Tom, that all is right with the world or that we can count on Fortune always intervening, in the same gratifying way, on behalf of the good" (638).

Rader, for his part, argued quite cogently that Fielding believed in a version of the Anglican faith known as Latitudinarianism, which argued the complementary nature of faith and good works, and that God's reward for his faithful servants would arrive, though through secondary causes. And Rader quotes Isaac Barrow, the Latitudinarian divine, to the effect that:

> If … one Thing should hit advantageously to the Production of some considerable Event, it may with some Plausibility be attributed to Fortune …: yet that divers Things having no Dependence or Coherence one with the other, in

divers Places, through several Times, should all join their Forces to compass it, cannot well otherwise than be ascribed to God's special Care wisely directing, to His own Hand powerfully wielding, those concurrent Instruments to one good Purpose. For it is beside the Nature, it is beyond the Reach of Fortune, to range various causes in such order.[11]

The concatenation of coincidences that bring about the happy denouement of *Tom Jones*, Rader argues, are beyond what mere "fortune" can accomplish and must be ascribed to divine Providence.

While I agree with Rader that Fielding probably held a personal belief in Providence, and while it is true that several of Fielding's characters (including both Tom and Allworthy) ascribe coincidences to divine will rather than mere chance, I feel that Crane is closer to the truth about Fielding's narrative. First, the complex and rich economy of Fielding's novel allows us to become acquainted with a series of episodes like that of Broadbrim's daughter, presenting us with people who will suffer or have suffered a harsh fate through no fault of their own.[12] Second, the word "Providence" is spoken by characters but never by Fielding's narrator, who consistently ascribes coincidences to "Fortune."[13] Third, Fielding's meta-discussion of coincidence within the novel explicitly rejects the Providential view. In Book XII, for example, the narrator says that:

I am not writing a System, but a History …. [W]ise and good men may consider what happened to *Jones* at *Upton* [he fails to meet up with Sophia, who also discovers he is in bed with Mrs. Waters] as a just Punishment for his Wickedness with Regard to Women, of which it was indeed the immediate Consequence; and silly and bad persons may comfort themselves in their Vices by flattering their own Hearts that the Characters of Men are rather owing to Accident than to Virtue. Now, perhaps the Reflections which we should be here inclined to draw would alike contradict both these Conclusions, and would show that these Incidents contribute only to confirm the great, useful, and uncommon Doctrine, which it is the Purpose of this whole Work to inculcate.

The "wise and good" reader believes in divine punishment for wickedness – negative Providence, if you will; the "silly and bad" reader believes that our reputations are at the mercy of mere chance. Fielding's "great, useful, and uncommon Doctrine" is the one implicit in what Allworthy says to Tom in Book V: "I am convinced … that you have much Goodness, Generosity, and Honour, in your Temper: if you will add Prudence and Religion to these, you must be happy; for the three former Qualities, I admit, make you worthy of

Happiness, but they are the latter only which will put you in Possession of it." Prudence here is the key: it does not make us worthy of happiness, but it decreases the degree to which our happiness depends on mere chance. Fielding's narrator, in the opening chapter of Book XV, explicitly argues against the Providential view "that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true." Indeed, Fielding argues that this view is not only fallacious but "is destructive of one of the noblest Arguments that Reason alone can furnish for the Belief in Immortality."[14]

The reason why both Crane and Rader may both seem to be right is that Fielding, the divine master builder of his lifeworld in *Tom Jones*, has designed matters so that all works out by chance precisely as a wise and beneficent Providence would have decreed.[15] The implied author's comic universe thus creates a special Providence for Fielding's "Favourites" while often, indeed everywhere else, questioning whether such a view rightly explains the real world in which we live.

Notes

1. "I could name a commoner, raised higher above the multitude by superior talents than is in the power of his prince to exalt him, whose behaviour to those he hath obliged is more amiable than the obligation itself; and who is so great a master of affability, that … would often make the lowest of his acquaintance forget who was the master of that palace in which they are so courteously entertained." *Joseph Andrews*, Book III, chapter 1.
2. The comparison between Walpole and Wild had also been made in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, in which the Wild/Walpole figure is renamed Peachum.
3. The full title is *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, *Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote*. *Don Quixote* had been translated into English as early as 1612; other early English translations are by Pierre Antoine Motteux (1700) and Charles Jervas (1742). *Joseph Andrews* is the first free adaptation of *Don Quixote* but by no means the last: Charlotte Lennox would create a *Female Quixote* a decade later (1752); Tobias Smollett's road novels such as *Launcelot Greaves* (1760–62) and *Humphry Clinker* (1771) are indebted both to Cervantes and to Fielding; and Charles Dickens's road novels like *Nicholas Nickleby* hark back to Smollett and Fielding.
4. R.S. Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*," in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 616–47.
5. Heir by intention but not, at this point, by English law: Homer Obed Brown cites Blackstone's *Commentaries* on the legal point that a bastard cannot inherit land unless he is legitimized "by the transcendent power of an act of Parliament," and suggests that Tom could acquire Allworthy's lands only by "a deed in trust" and not as a legacy.

Homer Obed Brown, "*Tom Jones*: The 'Bastard' of History," in *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 84.

6. Similarly, Fielding suggests that the amorous Lady Bellaston is not only in "the autumn of life" but has halitosis: "She had, besides, a certain Imperfection, which renders some Flowers, though very beautiful to the Eye, very improper to be placed in a Wilderness of Sweets, and what above all others is most disagreeable to the Breath of Love."
7. He has been away from his estate for three months, for the first time ever: the implication is that Allworthy is not an absentee landlord who spends his rents in London.
8. Eighteenth-century shirts were usually about a meter in vertical length, and so would have covered the squire down to the knee at least without a split before or behind; Allworthy is far from naked. See http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O13939/shirt-unknown/.
9. Hardy personifies that malignant fate in his famous sentence from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: "'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess.") For the best general discussion of coincidence in fiction, see Hilary Dannenberg's *Coincidence and Counterfactuality: Plotting Time and Space in Narrative Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).
10. See Crane, above, and Ralph W. Rader, "*Tom Jones*: The Form in History," in *Fact, Fiction and Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 234–57.
11. Sermon 11 ("On the Gunpowder-Treason").
12. Other examples are the lieutenant of infantry who appears in Book VII, chapter xii, or the unfortunate amateur highwayman whom we meet in Book XII, chapter xiv, whose family distress Tom relieves, and who turns out to be Mrs Miller's cousin Enderson.
13. The words "Providence" or "providential" occur eleven times in the novel, while "Fortune" occurs 304 times.
14. Fielding is implying that the prosperous wicked and the unfortunate good people would get their just deserts in an afterlife.
15. "As luck would have it, Providence was on my side," says the narrator of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*.

Chapter 6

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent. (1759–1767)

"*Tristram Shandy* is the most typical novel in all literature." So said Viktor Shklovsky in *Theory of Prose* (1921). This is decidedly not the reaction of most people encountering the novel for the first time. Anyone looking for a conventional plot, or even a picaresque series of episodes such as we find in *Moll Flanders*, will be disappointed. Such story as there is circles around a set of misfortunes that Tristram presents as a series of obscene disasters unique to him; but they are the ones that happen to us all, and that we are helpless to prevent or change: our conception, our birth, our names, our sexual attractions, our accidental injuries, our declining health and death. It is around these misfortunes that Sterne spins one of the funniest books ever written.

Structure

The usual terms for understanding the plot of a novel and its representation in ordered language simply do not work for *Tristram Shandy*, a text that takes for granted the constructional principles of the novel created in the 1740s by Richardson and Fielding only in order to work against them. That was what Shklovsky meant when he said that *Tristram Shandy* was "typical": "By violating the form, [Sterne] forces us to attend to it." By 1759, when the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* appeared, readers would expect the circumstances of the narrator/hero's birth to be mentioned briefly, after which there might be some background about his or her education, with the narrative slowing down and dilating as he or she reached the threshold of adulthood, when one falls in love or becomes the object of desire, and when the emplotted events would truly begin.

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Sterne does the opposite: he chooses to start at the very beginning, before the hero's birth, with the act of coitus in March of 1718 by which he was conceived – disastrously conceived, according to Tristram's father, because of the damage to the "homunculus" caused by an inopportune question posed by Mrs. Shandy.[1] After four chapters on Tristram's conception, the focus shifts to his birth, which occurs in Volume III. Tristram is christened, equally disastrously, on the very day of his birth, in Volume IV. In Volume V, Tristram suffers an accident to his private parts caused by a falling window-sash, but in Volume VI his parents decide to breech him – that is, to have breeches made for him instead of his wearing the gowns that young boys wore then. That is all we hear about Tristram's youth, and we hear nothing of his young manhood. We learn that Tristram the middle-aged narrator is not well – he speaks of a "vile asthma" that he got "skating against the wind in Flanders," and of coughing up quantities of blood, and Volume VII consists of a trip to France in the hope of outrunning Death. Finally, Tristram shifts his focal topic to what he calls his "choicest morsel," the "amours" of his uncle, Captain Toby Shandy, specifically Toby's courtship of the Widow Wadman, a development that begins in Volume VI and is continued through Volumes VIII and IX. And that is where the novel ends: since Toby's amours conclude in the summer of 1713, the novel ends chronologically five years before it began. And Sterne plays the same game of countering our expectations with the standard authorial apparatus: for example, the author's preface appears, not at the beginning of Volume I, but following chapter 20 in the middle of Volume III, and the "invocation" to Sterne's muse shows up in the middle of Volume IX, a volume in which chapters 18 and 19 are placed after chapter 25.

In a sense, though, the major "events" of the story as outlined here are a mere scaffolding secondary to another plot, which we might call "the story of the struggle to get the story told." Our primary focus is not on whether Tristram will succeed in getting born – he has after all been talking to us nonstop since page 1 – but on whether he will succeed in telling the story of his birth. Tristram's writing is far from transparent: he not only tells us what happened, but how he came to know it, and as soon as he reaches a situation that seems to call for expansion and rumination, all chronological movement ceases as the explanation dilates and proceeds. He is, furthermore, highly aware of the presence of his readers: early on in the book he sends us back to re-read a previous chapter, where we had missed some subtle implication.

But the writing Tristram does takes time from the living of his life, and drawing out the full implications of a single event may take a year. Tristram's father, Walter Shandy, has a similar difficulty; in V.16, he decides to "write a TRISTRA-paedia, or system of education" for Tristram. But writing takes time and whilst Walter is a-writing, Tristram is busily growing older. "In about three years, or something more, my father had got advanced almost into the middle of his

work .... The misfortune was, that I was all that time totally neglected .... By the very delay, the first part of the work ... was rendered entirely useless. – every day a page or two became of no consequence." Earlier on, chapter 13 of volume IV, in a brief interval between Tristram's birth and his christening, Tristram makes us very aware of the similar paradox of autobiography:

. . . .

> I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve-month; and having got, as you perceive, almost into the middle of my fourth volume – and no farther than to my first day's life – 'tis demonstrative that I have three hundred and sixty-four days more life to write just now, than when I first set out; so that instead of advancing, as a common writer, in my work with what I have been doing at it – on the contrary, I am just thrown so many volumes back – was every day of my life to be as busy a day as this – And why not? – and the transactions and opinions of it to take up as much description – And for what reason should they be cut short? as at this rate I should just live 364 times faster than I should write – It must follow, an' please your worships, that the more I write, the more I shall have to write – and consequently, the more your worships read, the more your worships will have to read.

. . . .

The mathematical calculation is pretty close to exact, for the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, which begin the saga of Tristram's birth, had come out in December of 1759; the passage above was published thirteen months later in January of 1761 with volumes III and IV. Other novels, like Richardson's *Clarissa*, had come out in stages rather than all at once, but Richardson from the beginning had his end in view. To the contrary, Sterne's intention from the first was to spin out *Tristram Shandy*, writing two volumes a year, for as long as the public demand continued and as long as his health permitted. Sterne's contemporaries might have likened it to the satires of Jonathan Swift, particularly the free-wheeling *Tale of a Tub*, or to François Rabelais's episodic narratives about Gargantua and Pantagruel. Today we might compare *Tristram Shandy* to a television comedy series, perhaps one like *Seinfeld*, where our pleasure has nothing whatever to do with where the story is going – if indeed it is going anywhere – and where we take pleasure in the local effects: the interactions of a set of diverse eccentric characters who get into situations that exploit the wacky humor of their eccentricities. *Tristram Shandy* is a bit more complex in its texture than *Seinfeld*, though, because it has a narrator whose relationship to the reader arches over the interactions of the characters.

Sterne's third installment (volumes V and VI) came out on schedule, in December 1761, but while celebrating and enjoying his fame in London, Sterne had a serious hemorrhage, and was advised to seek his recovery in a gentler climate than that of rural Yorkshire. Like Tristram fleeing Death, Sterne went to

the south of France, his writing slowed down, and the fourth installment (Volumes VII and VIII) was not published until January 1765. Sterne concluded his story of the Shandies with a single ninth volume in January 1767. Critics have at times wondered whether *Tristram Shandy* was really concluded, whether Tristram actually did get his story told, or whether, like Sterne's second novel, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, it remained unfinished owing to Sterne's death in March 1768.[2] But the last chapter of *Tristram Shandy* seems as conclusive as any conclusion could possibly be to a text of this sort. All the digressive chapters Tristram has promised (on Noses, on Chambermaids, on Buttonholes) have been either written, or conclusively reneged upon (like the chapter on Whiskers, promised at the end of volume IV and defaulted upon at the beginning of volume V). And the discussion at the Shandy family fireside, coming right after the anticlimactic conclusion of Uncle Toby's "amours" with the Widow Wadman, brings together in one place all the novel's continuing characters (except for Tristram, who is narrating the dialogue that took place five years before his birth): Walter and Elizabeth Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Parson Yorick, Doctor Slop, even Susannah the chambermaid and Obadiah the manservant, and Yorick's final joke about Obadiah's "cock and bull story" applies to the whole of the novel as well as the specific episode.

Texture: The Local Effects

Attempting to supply an exhaustive list of the "themes" of *Tristram Shandy* would be insane, since there is almost no topic eighteenth-century people talked about that Tristram and his cast of characters fail to touch upon. World trade? Almost too easy: Walter Shandy was a "Turkey merchant," now retired. The industrial revolution? Well, the novel is set in the early part of the century, before the spinning jenny and power loom revolutionized the wool trade, but Tristram talks in I.23 about the "pentagraph," a mechanical device for reproducing drawings or writing, similar to the auto-pen Thomas Jefferson employed. Racism and the slave trade? Chapter 6 of the final volume is taken up with Trim and Uncle Toby discussing the plight of an African slave girl, within Trim's story about his poor brother Tom:

. . . .

Why then, an' please your honour, is a black wench to be used worse than a white one?

I can give no reason, said my uncle Toby –

– Only, cried the corporal, shaking his head, because she has no one to stand up for her –

– 'Tis that very thing, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby, – which recommends her to protection – and her brethren with her.[3]

. . . .

So the very selective list that follows is chosen with an eye toward textural elements that inflect our sense of the novel as a whole.

The Hobbyhorse

Originally a child's toy, a stick with a carved horse's head at one end, which one could pretend to ride, Sterne re-coined the word as an adult's fixation or obsession, one that can become a lens through which one views the world. For Toby Shandy, the retired captain of infantry, everything reminds him of military matters: let Walter Shandy mention the word "train" (as in one's "train of thought" – Walter is discussing John Locke's theory about the association of ideas), and Toby thinks of "a train of artillery," the complicated logistics by which heavy cannon were moved around a battlefield. Trains get derailed more often than not. Most of the other characters have similar obsessions: Doctor Slop is fascinated by the medical instruments he has developed for the, then, new medical field of obstetrics, while Susannah the chambermaid is always thinking of Mrs. Shandy's wardrobe, and the dresses that might descend to her own use.

Walter Shandy doesn't have a single hobbyhorse but a whole collection of interconnected fixations. Deeply learned in the classical languages, he assumes that ancient texts generate theories that can give him control over the world as a whole. The joke, repeated over and over throughout the novel, is that relying on his theories gives him no control even over his own household, so that he is frustrated and disappointed again and again. In relation to the narrator, Walter fears that his son will be scatter-brained because Mrs. Shandy's question about the clock wrecked his own concentration; he hopes for a Caesarian section or a breech birth – either of which in the eighteenth century were usually fatal to the mother – because he is sure that the infant's brain is injured by the trauma of pushing through the birth canal; he wants his son to have a huge nose, which he is sure is connected with great virility; and he wants him to be named "Trismegistus" ("thrice-greatest" in Greek, and connected with the god of mystical and magical knowledge) and is overcome with depression when he learns that the curate has instead christened him "Tristram" (which Sterne probably thought came from "triste", sad, in French).

The origin of Uncle Toby's hobbyhorse explains why they are so significant in the novel. Toby was a captain of infantry in the army of King William III until he was wounded in battle by shrapnel: "a stone, broke off by a ball … at the siege of Namur, which struck full upon my uncle Toby's groin." It is a serious wound, Toby is confined to his bed or his room for four years, receiving visits from kind friends. Normally, "the history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain

of it," telling the story of his wound would bring about his recovery – at least so we learn from Doctor Freud. But for Toby, telling the story "brought him into some unforeseen perplexities"; instead of helping him they are retarding his cure. What his visitors ask, of course, is precisely where Toby was wounded, and Toby is too delicate and refined to suppose that they are merely asking *where on Toby's body* the wound is, and with what functions of male physiology it might interfere. He supposes instead that they are asking precisely *where on the Namur battlefield* he was wounded. There is a perfectly proper answer to that – it was "in one of the traverses, about thirty toises from the returning angle of the trench, opposite to the salient angle of the demi-bastion of St. Roch" – but how could he explain what that meant to a noncombatant? His first solution is to get himself a map of Namur; to learn the theory – an elaborate one in that day – of offensive and defensive siege warfare; and the mathematical theory of gunnery, which would explain how the cannonball had come to strike the stone that struck his groin.

But going deeper does not make Toby better; the mathematics in fact throws his recovery into a tailspin. He gets better only after his servant, Corporal Trim, suggests that, instead of working with flat maps, Toby should go up to his own little estate near Shandy Hall in Yorkshire and there with Trim's assistance build in three dimensions an exact scale model of the siegeworks. And Toby and Trim not only recreate Namur, they go on to recreate all the sieges and battles in the continental wars of King William and Queen Anne: it becomes Toby's replacement occupation. The hobbyhorse is thus a defensive maneuver: life throws unexpected surprises at us, like random cannonballs, it wounds us in our most private selves, eventually it will kill us. And we must create something, it hardly matters what, to give ourselves the illusion of control.

Satires on Learning

Like Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, *Tristram Shandy* is riddled with outlandish parodies of the discourse of the learned professions including (in Uncle Toby's case) military architecture and the mathematical science of projectiles. Doctor Slop speaks a good deal of medical jargon himself, but we get this equally from Walter Shandy, as he worries about the effects of the pressures in the birth canal on his son's cerebral cortex, reads up on the history of the Caesarian section:

. . . .

> [W]hat a blaze of light did the accounts of the Caesarian section, and of the towering geniuses who had come safe into the world by it, cast upon this hypothesis? Here you see, he would say, there was no injury done to the sensorium; – no

> pressure of the head against the pelvis; – no propulsion of the cerebrum towards the cerebellum, either by the os pubis on this side, or os coxygis on that; – and pray, what were the happy consequences? Why, Sir, your Julius Caesar, who gave the operation a name; – and your Hermes Trismegistus, who was born so before ever the operation had a name; – your Scipio Africanus; your Manlius Torquatus; our Edward the Sixth, – who, had he lived, would have done the same honour to the hypothesis: – These, and many more who figured high in the annals of fame, – all came side-way, Sir, into the world.
>
> . . . .

Mrs. Shandy is not at all amused by these speculations, when she learns about them: she turns pale and Walter drops the subject. Apropos of Mrs. Shandy's pregnancies, Sterne also includes a thick dollop of legal jargon representing a compromise between Tristram's parents: Elizabeth Shandy could give birth in London if she chose, except that, if she caused Walter the expense and trouble of a London journey for a false pregnancy, she would lose her right the next time and must give birth at Shandy Hall. The delicious legal prose of the marriage articles meanders like a burbling brook, declining to actually get anywhere:

> . . . .
>
> All that the manor and lordship of Shandy, in the county of . . ., with all the rights, members, and appurtenances thereof; and all and every the messuages, houses, buildings, barns, stables, orchards, gardens, backsides, tofts, crofts, garths, cottages, lands, meadows, feedings, pastures, marshes, commons, woods, underwoods, drains, fisheries, waters, and water-courses; – together with all rents, reversions, services, annuities, fee-farms, knights fees, views of frankpledge, escheats, reliefs, mines, quarries, goods and chattels of felons and fugitives, felons of themselves, and put in exigent, deodands, free warrens, and all other royalties and seigniories, rights and jurisdictions, privileges and hereditaments whatsoever. – And also the advowson, donation, presentation, and free disposition of the rectory or parsonage of Shandy aforesaid, and all and every the tenths, tythes, glebe-lands.
>
> . . . .

But of course Sterne is most delighted with the absurd excesses of his own profession – he was an Anglican clergyman. Perhaps predictably, several of the theological quotations included in *Tristram Shandy* ridicule Roman Catholic sources. Book III, chapter 11 contains the magniloquent excommunication formula of Ernulphus, an early twelfth-century bishop of Rochester: over five hundred words of choice church Latin curses, translated verbatim by Doctor Slop. Book I contains the query of an obstetrical surgeon asking whether, in cases of a difficult birth, he could perform a conditional baptism of the fetus in utero

before birth with the aid of "a little injection-pipe and causing no harm to the mother"; and there follow seven hundred abstruse words of dense argumentation by the scholars of the Sorbonne tentatively assenting but ultimately referring the question to the local bishop and the Pope.

But when Walter's son is christened Tristram rather than Trismegistus, Walter and Toby travel to York to consult the Anglican canon lawyers at the cathedral as to whether the previous christening can be annulled. In the old days when christenings were in Latin, says one, the ceremony could be annulled if the Latin were faulty. Only if it were very faulty indeed, corrects another canonist: if the priest said, "*in nomino patriae*," which has grammatical errors, the christening would stand, but if he said "*in gomine gatris*," which is utterly meaningless, the christening would have to be done over. None of this is to the point, of course: Yorick's curate christened Tristram in English. But when Toby asks the canonists about the harm to the feelings of the child's closest kin, the poor parents, the clerics prove elaborately, and with precedents, that the parents are not, by church law, either of them, "akin to the child."

We could call this satire, and indeed it is, but it is very gentle satire, akin to the hobbyhorses of the Shandean character. Learning in *Tristram Shandy* is always a good thing, even when it goes over the top as it so frequently does, and Sterne presumes that the reader is as learned as he is. For example, in discussing his decision to begin his "Life and Opinions" with the act of coitus that begat him, Tristram says: "[R]ight glad I am, that I have begun the history of myself in the way I have done; and that I am able to go on, tracing every thing in it, as Horace says, *ab Ovo*. Horace, I know, does not recommend this fashion altogether: But that gentleman is speaking only of an epic poem …." What Horace actually says in his *Ars Poetica* is precisely the opposite, he praises Homer for beginning the *Iliad* ten years into the Trojan War, with the incident in which the wrath of Achilles is kindled, instead of going all the way back to the swan's egg out of which Helen of Troy was hatched. The reader who already knows this – or is reading *Tristram Shandy* in a well-annotated edition – can chuckle at Sterne's playful jest, and jokes of this sort come up on pretty much every page.

The Bawdy Asterisk

Along with its satire on learning, Sterne shares with Rabelais a taste for the tasteless, for bawdy jokes and potty humor. Aside from its beginning in a marital bedchamber, there isn't very much sex in *Tristram Shandy*, since all the Shandy males are as far from Richardsonian predatory gentlemen as one could imagine: the occasionally impotent Tristram, the utterly innocent Toby, and

Walter who, though married, strictly limits his marital duties to the first Sunday night of each month, provided that his health is equal to it. But the narrative is always skating on the edge of the sexual or the scatological, but instead of coming out with it, the narrator usually enlists the aid of the reader to supply mentally what the novel itself refuses to explicitly say. The book has a dirty mind, but to know that the reader needs to have a dirty mind as well.

For example, as Mrs. Shandy's labor with the yet unborn Tristram begins, Doctor Slop is by Mrs. Shandy's insistence to drink a bottle of wine with the men downstairs and not get involved with the accouchement unless there is a medical difficulty the midwife cannot handle. Walter wonders aloud why his wife has taken this position:

....

> Mayhap, brother, replied my uncle Toby, my sister does it to save the expence: – A pudding's end, – replied my father, – the Doctor must be paid the same for inaction as action, – if not better, – to keep him in temper.
>
> – Then it can be out of nothing in the whole world, quoth my uncle Toby, in the simplicity of his heart, – but MODESTY. – My sister, I dare say, added he, does not care to let a man come so near her ****. I will not say whether my uncle Toby had completed the sentence or not; – 'tis for his advantage to suppose he had, – as, I think, he could have added no One Word which would have improved it ….
>
> – Methinks, brother, replied my father, you might, at least, know so much as the right end of a woman from the wrong ….
>
> – Right end! quoth my uncle Toby, muttering the two words low to himself, and fixing his two eyes insensibly as he muttered them, upon a small crevice, formed by a bad joint in the chimney-piece – Right end of a woman! – I declare, quoth my uncle, I know no more which it is than the man in the moon; – and if I was to think, continued my uncle Toby (keeping his eyes still fixed upon the bad joint) this month together, I am sure I should not be able to find it out.

....

The reader is asked to supply the gap – if it is indeed a gap – indicated by the four asterixes at the end of Toby's sentence, but there are two possibilities, both of them with four unprintable letters,[4] corresponding to "the right end of a woman" and "the wrong". But as Toby confesses his utter ineptitude and ignorance about women, his fixed stare at the crack in the chimney-piece suggests that perhaps he does actually know after all.

Toby's naiveté reappears later in the same sequence when Doctor Slop, once arrived in possession of his full bag of medical gear, announces that henceforth fingers and thumbs – the midwife's only tools – will be subordinate to ******. Slop intends to bring forth his newly invented forceps from his bag to end his

sentence, except that "his forceps unfortunately drew out the squirt [syringe] along with it. When a proposition can be taken in two senses – 'tis a law in disputation, That the respondent may reply to which of the two he pleases, or finds most convenient for him. – This threw the advantage of the argument quite on my uncle Toby's side. – 'Good God!' cried my uncle Toby, 'are children brought into the world with a squirt?'" The gentle reader, prodded by the six asterisks, knows that this is exactly how children are begotten, though not how they are delivered.

Carefully spaced asterisks represent words with the same number of letters, which normally are easy to supply, but not always. The most difficult of Sterne's puzzles requiring the reader to translate the asterixes is in VII.29, when Tristram recalls being impotent when attempting to have sex with Jenny, his lover:

> . . . .
>
> – Do, my dear Jenny, tell the world for me, how I behaved under one, the most oppressive of its kind, which could befal me as a man, proud as he ought to be of his manhood –
>
> – 'Tis enough, saidst thou, coming close up to me, as I stood with my garters in my hand, reflecting upon what had not pass'd – 'Tis enough, Tristram, and I am satisfied, saidst thou, whispering these words in my ear, **** ** **** *** ******; – **** ** **** – any other man would have sunk down to the centre –
>
> – Every thing is good for something, quoth I.
>
> . . . .

There are many possible translations of the eight words for which Tristram substitutes carefully spaced asterisks, but one unprintable guess that makes sense both of the situation and of Tristram's reply, is "Fuck me with thy tongue; – lick my cunt."[5]

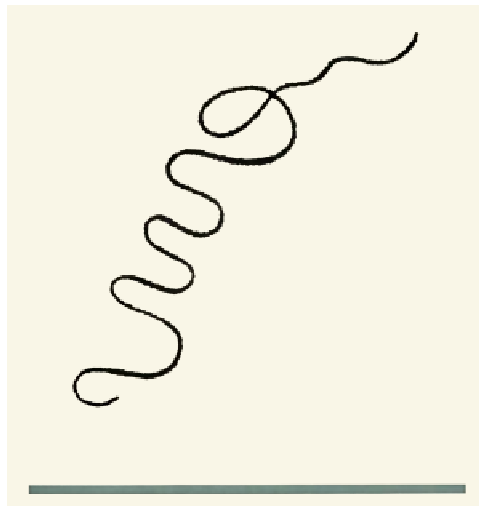
Asterisks sometimes represent lengthier gaps than single letters, depending on how they are spaced. When Trim is explaining in VIII.22 his intense emotional relationship with the young Beguine who nurses him for the wound in his knee that disabled him at the battle of Landen:

> . . . .
>
> The whole night long was the fair Beguine, like an angel, close by my bed-side …. In truth, she was scarce ever from me; and so accustomed was I to receive life from her hands, that my heart sickened, and I lost colour when she left the room: and yet, continued the corporal (making one of the strangest reflections upon it in the world) – '*It was not love*' – for during the three weeks she was almost constantly with me, fomenting my knee with her hand, night and day – I can honestly say, an' please your honour – that * once.

That was very odd, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby.
I think so too – said Mrs. Wadman.
It never did, said the corporal.
. . . .

There the evenly spaced asterisks do not represent recoverable words but a sentence, perhaps more than one, conveying the proposition that something expected did not happen, apparently, from the conclusion of the corporal's amour in the following chapter, something akin to Tristram's failure. These omitted chunks of discourse occur frequently in this book and most often in book IX, where we are invited to reconstruct entire dialogues between Toby Shandy and the Widow Wadman.

In addition to marking Sterne's insistence on the active participation of the reader in recreating the lives and opinions of his characters, the bawdy asterisk is one of many instances of the dependence of *Tristram Shandy* on the developing print culture in England. Others include the death of Yorick, as signaled by an entirely black page in the text, while a blank page is provided for the reader to sketch the face of the Widow Wadman, using the most beautiful woman the reader knows as the model. A set of squiggly-line diagrams of the progress/regress of the novel itself is provided the reader in VI.40, while in IX.4, Trim's flourish with his cane representing the joys of bachelorhood appears in the novel as the following upward swoop of graphic line:



The Sentimental Moment

Sentimentality is a pejorative term today, but the last third of the eighteenth century saw a growing cultural fashion for displaying the tenderest of feelings – particularly on the part of men. And a literature of sentiment grew up that men could use, somewhat like exercise equipment, to train their emotions to a fashionable pitch. In a sense we see the beginnings of this vogue in *Tom Jones*, whose eponymous hero feels such pleasure in benevolence, in being able to save or assist others, that he not only refuses repayment but considers himself already repaid sevenfold. *Tristram Shandy* also somewhat anticipates the height of the vogue for the sentimental, which was marked by Henry Mackenzie's novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771). But Sterne is, unlike Fielding or Mackenzie, quite ambivalent: on the one hand he sees the enormous value of inculcating the Christian virtues of charity and patience, but on the other he sees how ridiculous a figure the sentimental man can cut. Nevertheless, many of Sterne's contemporary readers who were repelled by his bawdy jokes were very attracted by his presentation of Toby Shandy as the man of feeling; the following passage, about Toby and the fly, was perhaps the most often-quoted passage in the novel:

> My uncle Toby was a man patient of injuries; – not from want of courage, – I have told you in a former chapter, 'that he was a man of courage:' … but he was of a peaceful, placid nature, – no jarring element in it, – all was mixed up so kindly within him; my uncle Toby had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly.
>
> – Go – says he, one day at dinner, to an over-grown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time, – and which after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him; – I'll not hurt thee, says my uncle Toby, rising from his chair, and going across the room, with the fly in his hand, – I'll not hurt a hair of thy head: – Go, says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape; – go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? – This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me.
>
> I was but ten years old when this happened: but whether it was, that the action itself was more in unison to my nerves at that age of pity, which instantly set my whole frame into one vibration of most pleasurable sensation; – or how far the manner and expression of it might go towards it; – or in what degree, or by what secret magick, – a tone of voice and harmony of movement, attuned by mercy, might find a passage to my heart, I know not; – this I know, that the lesson of universal good-will then taught and imprinted by my uncle Toby, has never since been worn out of my mind: … I often think that I owe one half of my philanthropy to that one accidental impression.

Sterne means what he says here, but there is also something slightly ridiculous in an oration made to a fly, however "over-grown."

This is a brief example; a more extended one runs through chapters 6–10 of Book VI, on Toby's benevolent relationship with Le Fever, a former fellow-soldier who fought three campaigns with Toby, but who is now dying at an inn near Toby's country house in Yorkshire, accompanied by his little son Billy. Toby is deeply moved by his plight, sends for medical aid (in vain), and promises to raise and educate Billy Le Fever as though he were his own son. And he indeed does as he promises, helps out when young Le Fever is in the army, and gets Walter Shandy to employ him as a tutor for Tristram. Nevertheless, there is something strange and occasionally ridiculous hovering about the edges of the story in the description, first of the death of Le Fever's wife and then of Le Fever himself: Le Fever tells Trim to let Toby know:

. . . .

> that the person his good-nature has laid under obligations to him, is one Le Fever, a lieutenant in Angus's – but he knows me not, – said he, a second time, musing; – possibly he may my story – added he – pray tell the captain, I was the ensign at Breda, whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket-shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent. – I remember the story, an't please your honour, said I, very well. – Do you so? said he, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief – then well may I. – In saying this, he drew a little ring out of his bosom, which seemed tied with a black ribband about his neck, and kiss'd it twice – Here, Billy, said he, – the boy flew across the room to the bed-side, – and falling down upon his knee, took the ring in his hand, and kissed it too, – then kissed his father, and sat down upon the bed and wept.

. . . .

And the death of Le Fever:

. . . .

> before my uncle Toby had half finished the kind offers he was making to the father, had the son insensibly pressed up close to his knees, and had taken hold of the breast of his coat, and was pulling it towards him. – The blood and spirits of Le Fever, which were waxing cold and slow within him, and were retreating to their last citadel, the heart – rallied back, – the film forsook his eyes for a moment, – he looked up wishfully in my uncle Toby's face, – then cast a look upon his boy, – and that ligament, fine as it was, – was never broken. –
>
> Nature instantly ebb'd again, – the film returned to its place, – the pulse fluttered – stopp'd – went on – throbb'd – stopp'd again – moved – stopp'd – shall I go on? – No.

. . . .

Le Fever is never characterized except as the object of Toby's benevolence; his name and his death (from a fever) are sufficient to characterize him as Anyone. And Billy Le Fever, who must have lived in his memory as Tristram's tutor, is never characterized at all.

Irony against the Reader

While Fielding began addressing the reader directly, over the heads of his characters, Sterne takes this intimacy to new heights. In Chapter 6 of Book I, Tristram playfully asks for the reader's sympathetic patience:

. . . .

> I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of my character, and of what kind of a mortal I am, by the one, would give you a better relish for the other: As you proceed farther with me, the slight acquaintance, which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship. – O diem praeclarum! – then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling. Therefore, my dear friend and companion, if you should think me somewhat sparing of my narrative on my first setting out – bear with me, – and let me go on, and tell my story my own way: – Or, if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road, – or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it, for a moment or two as we pass along, – don't fly off, – but rather courteously give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon my outside; – and as we jog on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short do any thing, – only keep your temper.

. . . .

Keeping our temper is important because Tristram can be provoking, even hostile. In chapter 20 of Book I, Tristram sends "Madam" back to reread the previous chapter because she cannot remember how it was that Tristram told her that "his mother was not a Papist." Actually, Tristram said no such thing, but since "it was necessary that I be born before I was christen'd," it follows that his parents must in fact be Protestants because of the Sorbonne decision allowing baptism by injection already referred to.

When Sterne is not directly assaulting the reader, he uses something I have called reverberatory irony, which can be seen most easily in the following self-contained episode from his second novel, *A Sentimental Journey*, the chapter about the dead ass which Yorick the narrator finds barring his way at Nampont on the Paris road. At the posthouse, Yorick finds the owner mourning the death of his beast, a faithful animal who had borne him on his pilgrimage from

Germany to the shrine of St. James of Compostela, and back again as far as Nampont. The ass "had been a patient partner of his journey, … had eat the same bread with him all the way, and was unto him as a friend." And the mourner goes on:

. . . .

> The ass, he said, he was assured loved him; and upon this told them a long story of a mischance upon their passage over the Pyrenean Mountains, which had separated them from each other three days; during which time the ass had sought him as much as he had sought the ass, and that they had neither scarce eat or drank till they met. Thou hast one comfort, friend, said I, at least, in the loss of thy poor beast; I'm sure thou hast been a merciful master to him. Alas! said the mourner, I thought so, when he was alive, but now that he is dead I think otherwise. I fear the weight of myself and my afflictions together have been too much for him – they have shortened the poor creature's days, and I fear I have them to answer for. Shame on the world! said I to myself; did we love each other, as this poor soul but loved his ass, 'twould be something.

. . . .

Now on the surface, this may be merely Sterne indulging in a mildly bawdy double entendre, but there is a conflict between the literal and ironic readings that this passage produces. The sequence of reader affect provoked by the passage is a fairly complex one. The start of the story, in which we hear of the mourner, of the death of his eldest sons from smallpox and the recovery of his youngest, and of his grateful pilgrimage to Compostela, prepares us for a pathetic tale that we should take seriously. But then certain stylistic effects (like the pseudo-biblical "was unto him as a friend") begin to move the tale toward the verge of parody, and we begin to read ironically, questioning whether Sterne can be quite serious in presenting the mourner's grief for his beast. And when we are told that the ass shared the pilgrim's food, loved him, and actively searched for him when they were separated in the mountains, it seems clear that the beast has become inappropriately anthropomorphized (the way some of our friends treat their pets as people), and the sense that we may be reading irony becomes more pronounced.

The final paragraph discharges the tension with a joke in which this anthropomorphosis is made explicit: the double entendre that links up the beast to the man's own buttocks. To make sure that the reader takes up this interpretation, Sterne includes the line, "I fear the weight of myself and my afflictions … have been too much for him," which implicitly intrudes the mourner's derrière into our consciousness just before the joke.

But while the joke discharges the tensions which our growing suspicions of irony have produced, it does not entirely cancel out the mourner's story itself and Yorick's heartfelt emotional reaction to it. Owing to the disproportion between the elaborate pathos of the narrative and the very small joke developed out of the ironic signals, a serious residue remains to which we continue to respond. And I suspect that, once we have laughed at Yorick's line, we may well reflect that it is true: that it would indeed be something if we humans felt the same kind of concern for one another that the mourner felt, however inappropriately, for his dead ass. Those of us who are made momentarily to recognize our failure of sympathy and charity toward our fellow man, we who stand accused of loving our own asses above all the world, have been betrayed by our laughter, and we are likely to be mildly and briefly ashamed of ourselves. It is with this reaction, not with the initial laughter, that the tale of the dead ass is fully discharged.

In a sense, two forms of irony are going on simultaneously, one at the expense of the mourner and Yorick, which culminates in our laughter, the other at the expense of the reader, which culminates in our shame. To create this unusual sequence of reactions, Sterne must put us into a double-bind. He must give us signals that license our laughter, then in effect accuse us of want of feeling for having laughed. It is this double-bind that keeps the reader continually off balance. We must never be allowed to rest secure or to take the author's stance for granted. But we, nevertheless, sense that Sterne knows his own mind, though he keeps us from ever entirely knowing it.

Notes

1. We are told explicitly by Tristram that this is the moment of his conception, but information we are given later in the novel insinuates to the contrary that Tristram's father may not have been Walter Shandy; see "'Big with Jest': The Bastardy of Tristram Shandy," in Ralph W. Rader, *Fact, Fiction and Form: Selected Essays* (Ohio State University Press, 2011), 258–67.
2. *A Sentimental Journey* in fact ends with an incomplete sentence: "So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's –"
3. Ignatius Sancho, the African slave who became central to the abolitionist movement in eighteenth-century England, wrote to Sterne in summer of 1766, asking him to "give one half hour's attention to slavery, as it is at this day practised in our West Indies." Sterne replied (July 27, 1766) that by a strange coincidence he "had been writing a tender tale of the sorrows of a friendless poor negro-girl, and my eyes had scarse done smarting with it, when your Letter of recommendation in behalf of so many of her brethren and sisters, came to me – but why *her brethren*? – or yours, Sancho! any more than mine?"

4. For the reader who cannot supply them, they are *cunt* and *arse*.
5. Spaced asterisks are not *always* bawdy: the final volume is dedicated to Lord *******; previous volumes had been dedicated to Mr. ***: the asterisks represent the former prime minister, William Pit[t] the Elder, who had just been raised to the dignity of Viscount Chatham. Tristram lets us know that "my opinion of Lord ******* is neither better nor worse, than it was of Mr. ***."

   And of course bawdy is sometimes presented without asterisks, when a double meaning is involved, as in Tristram's promise of "a chapter of chamber-maids, of green gowns, and of old hats," where "green gowns" signify, in addition to the literal, what maidens' white gowns become after rolling on the grass with men, and where "old hat" is archaic slang for the female genitalia.

Chapter 7

Evelina: The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World (1778)

Frances Burney published *Evelina* anonymously but to great acclaim at the age of 25. Born in 1752, she was the third child and second daughter of Charles Burney, a composer and scholar specializing in the history of music; Burney might in fact be called the world's first musicologist. The Burneys lived in London in artistic and intellectual circles overlapping those of Samuel Johnson; David Garrick the actor, Phillip Barry the painter, Joseph Nollekens the sculptor were part of Burney's acquaintance.

As the second girl, however, Frances Burney was literally self-educated: unlike older and younger siblings she was never sent to school except briefly after the death of her mother, which occurred when she was 9 years old. Five years later Charles Burney remarried, to a wealthy widow with three children of her own, creating a large blended family, outwardly happy but with massive tensions, particularly between Frances and her stepmother. Dyslexic as a child, Frances did not know the letters of the alphabet at 8, but at 10 she began writing "scribblings" to herself almost continuously; reading actually came later. Her serious writing began with a journal that she began in 1768, at 15, and kept until her death in 1840. The journal begins: "To whom dare I reveal my private opinion of my nearest relations? My secret thoughts of my dearest friends? My own hopes, fears, reflections, and dislikes! – Nobody. To NOBODY, then, will I write my journal, since to Nobody can I be wholly unreserved." Material from her journal was often turned into letters she sent to Samuel ("Daddy") Crisp, a wealthy friend of Charles Burney whose country house served as a frequent retreat for Burney, where she could write without interference from her elders. And material from the letters found its way into Burney's first novel – especially the early letters in which

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Evelina reports to her guardian Arthur Villars about the theatre, the opera, and other public entertainment venues in London.

Evelina was the product of at least three years of secret labor: it was written in secret because the second Mrs. Burney disapproved of women writers, and once written it was copied in a disguised hand. Frances was her father's amanuensis, his books went to the publishers in her handwriting, and she was afraid that the novel would be attributed to him. She attempted to sell the book when it was about half finished to John Murray, the most prestigious publisher in London, but he declined to bid on part of a novel, so the book came out anonymously with the firm of Thomas Lowndes. Burney's original preface was even designed to mislead the reader about the author's sex. It mentions as predecessor novelists "such names as Rousseau, Johnson, Marivaux, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollet," and continues: "no man need blush at starting from the same post, though many, nay, most men, may sigh at finding themselves distanced." All these exemplars are male and she uses the word "man" twice in referring obliquely to herself. These measures succeeded: her stepmother read the notice of the publication of *Evelina* to the Burneys at breakfast without any idea that one of the children was the author. The novel was an instant hit, praised by Samuel Johnson, and read addictively by Edmund Burke, who stayed up all night to finish it.

The Plot of *Evelina*

The somewhat clumsy machinery of *Evelina* depends, like *Tom Jones*, on a series of relationships only partly disclosed at the opening of the novel. At the outset we learn that the heroine, whom we know as Evelina Anville, has been raised and educated by the Reverend Arthur Villars at his estate in Dorsetshire. Her mother, Caroline Evelyn, had died giving birth to her, after being repudiated by her husband, Sir John Belmont. The rakish Sir John had married Caroline in a legal private ceremony, but for reasons never coherently explained,[1] disavowed the relationship and burned the marriage documents, leaving Evelina with no way of proving her kinship as his legitimate daughter. Caroline Evelyn's father is also dead; Mr. Evelyn left the guardianship of his grand-daughter with a small bequest to Villars. Evelina's grandmother, however, an English tavern-waitress whom Mr. Evelyn had imprudently married, is very much alive; after Mr. Evelyn's death, she married a Frenchman named Duval, and after his death she has taken up with a Monsieur Du Bois. As the story begins, Evelina is soon to turn 18, at which point Villars's guardianship is to lapse, and Madame Duval (as she calls herself) wants to assert her own rights over Evelina and to sue Sir John Belmont, who refuses to recognize Evelina as his natural heir.

What we do not learn until very late in the novel is that Evelina's wet nurse, Polly Green, had succeeded in palming off her daughter (born six weeks earlier than Evelina) to Sir John Belmont as his own child; Sir John's imperious resistance to the claims made on behalf of Evelina comes primarily from his reasonable supposition, under the circumstances, that he has already recognized his late wife's daughter and that Evelina must be an impostor. We also learn that Mr. Macartney – whom we meet as a poor lodger at the London house of Evelina's vulgar cousins, the Branghtons – is the illegitimate son of Sir John Belmont and thus Evelina's half-brother; the two are strangely drawn to each other as kindred spirits. Macartney is passionately in love with the false Miss Belmont, and in deep despair about his passion for her, which he mistakenly thinks incestuous. In the denouement Macartney discovers to his delight that he is able to marry the young woman, whom Sir John designates, at Evelina's insistence, as co-heir.

This "back story" to *Evelina* is thus quintessentially melodramatic, particularly the narrative line of Caroline Evelyn who, rather like Richardson's Clarissa, is in rebellion against a marriage planned by her mother and stepfather, who elopes with a rake, and then, suddenly repudiated by him, flees to her late father's mentor Villars, where she bears her child and dies. Frances Burney wrote that melodrama in her early teens but, on the urging of her stepmother, burned it on her fifteenth birthday together with most of the rest of her juvenilia. But *Evelina* itself, taken apart from the back story, is structured as a narrative comedy based on techniques that Burney learned from reading Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, a complex sequence of action combining a comedy of fulfillment and a comedy of embarrassment. This combination runs through the comic novels of Fielding and Smollett, in which a romantic plot leading to marriage is combined with episodes in which occasionally the protagonists, but more frequently secondary characters, are subjected to shame or embarrassment, including physical pratfalls that fall short of causing permanent injury or death.[2]

The comedy of fulfillment centers on Evelina's relationship with Lord Orville, an earl who typifies the Grandisonian ideal of masculinity: proud and firm with his fellow gentlemen, who dare not oppose him, but gentle and compassionate with ladies and inferiors. Lord Orville and Evelina meet early in the novel at a private ball, are instantly attracted to each other, and since there are no serious obstacles of fortune or social station, it is all but inevitable that they will marry in the denouement. This comedy of fulfillment is partially crippled by the perfection of both the heroine and the hero. Evelina makes a few eminently forgivable mistakes because she is inexperienced and ignorant of some of the conventions of London society, owing to her isolated upbringing in the country. In fact it is through such a mistake that she cements her relationship

with Lord Orville at a private ball. Having danced with him earlier in the evening, she misleadingly indicates Orville as her current partner in order to get out of dancing with Mr. Lovel, an irritating fop who has been pursuing her; the ever-gracious Orville indeed leads her to the dance to conceal her fib. Aside from her inexperience and the awkwardness this produces in her, which diminishes as our heroine gains familiarity with the ways of London society, Evelina is entirely perfect – perfectly beautiful and with a loving heart, but perfection, however admirable, is hard to make interesting.

The primary obstacle to her union with Lord Orville is Evelina's sense of her own unworthiness as an unacknowledged orphan to become his countess, which is removed once Sir John Belmont recognizes her as his legitimate daughter, and which Sir John does as soon as he lays eyes on her without needing any further proof or persuasion, since she is physically the image of her late mother. A secondary obstacle is a sexually suggestive letter that Evelina receives, ostensibly from Lord Orville, in response to a letter of apology from her. Evelina understands the innuendo in the letter quite well, but given his perfect character as she has known it since their first acquaintance, she assumes he must have written it while drunk or otherwise impaired. Evelina's guardian, Mr. Villars, takes the letter far more seriously than she does and insists that she avoid his society entirely in the future, but though she at first wants only to return to her seclusion in Dorsetshire, she decides to remain where she is and deal with Lord Orville as circumstances dictate. In the course of time it is revealed that the letter was in fact forged by Lord Orville's unscrupulous rival, Sir Clement Willoughby, a rakish baronet who is the novel's principal villain.

One should add that we recognize rather than feel Lord Orville's passion for Evelina, since the point of view stays almost exclusively with the heroine, and since a perfect gentleman such as Lord Orville can speak his love for her only when he is about to propose marriage. Sexual passion is an arena of life only tepidly rendered by Burney, although she makes a heroic attempt to dramatize Lord Orville's love through episodes in volume III where his jealousy and suspicion are provoked by Evelina's clandestine meetings with Macartney, meetings which she cannot honorably explain without giving away information about the latter's parentage and history that she is not licensed to tell. The novel primarily tests Orville's devotion by secondary obstacles: malicious or foolish gentlemen who attempt to captivate or take advantage of Evelina, against whom Lord Orville must defend her, or Evelina's own vulgar and pretentious relatives, whose antics Lord Orville must indulge.

The comedy of fulfillment is reinforced by a growth of sorts within Evelina herself. Although she is presented as perfect, she is inexperienced, and while her natural judgment and intelligence are constant throughout the novel, her lack of knowledge of the ways of the world makes her passive and timid in

resisting the claims of others. As she acquires experience, she becomes more confident in her own judgment. The growth is slow, but her movement toward independence is shown in volume III by the way she thinks through her resistance to her guardian's demand that she shun the society of Lord Orville. Insipid as it is most of the time, the comedy of fulfillment gives the basic structure to the novel, while the texture is filled in with episodes of the comedy of embarrassment.

The comedy of embarrassment in turn takes two forms: episodes in which Evelina is herself embarrassed, primarily owing to mistakes of inexperience or to the overweening behavior of her vulgar relatives, and episodes in which others – including some of those vulgar relatives – are embarrassed owing to the cruelty of some of the malicious characters who populate the novel. These are episodes in the strict sense that any one of them could be omitted without disturbing the flow of the novel. But there is a rhythm to the episodes that Burney has carefully modulated: minor episodes of embarrassment or danger to Evelina lead up to a climactic episode in each volume.

In the first volume, the climactic episode is the night at the opera, in letter XXI, opened by the vulgar behavior of the Branghtons (who pay for "nosebleed" seats in the gallery and then try to sneak into more expensive areas of the opera house). After the opera, a deluge of rain has begun and the party has difficulty getting a hackney coach to take them home. Evelina separates herself from her party, who are embarrassing her further by their incompetence and stinginess, only to run into Sir Clement Willoughby, and then into Lord Orville. Orville offers to take Evelina home in his coach, but Sir Clement maneuvers to get her into his own carriage and drives off with her. His flirtatious talk both annoys and distracts Evelina temporarily, but she soon realizes that they are not heading in the direction of her hostess Lady Howard's house in Queen Anne Street, and that (like Harriet Byron in the coach of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*) she is being abducted. She immediately makes an outcry, and Sir Clement – who is an opportunist more than a real villain – soon gets the coachman to turn around and take Evelina home, where she finds both Lady Howard and Lord Orville waiting expectantly for her.

Perhaps the most intricate of the episodes in which Evelina is herself the victim is the last one of volume 2 (letter XXI), which recounts her visit, together with her grandmother's vulgar party, to "Marybone" [Marylebone Gardens], where a fireworks display, with sparks landing near her group of ladies, sends the group scattering, with Evelina outdistancing her party. Isolated in the dark walkways of the park, she is accosted by an officer, who takes her for one of the prostitutes who ply their trade there, and who attempts to "enlist" her into his "service." Tearing herself away from him, she approaches two women for protection, who readily agree to let her walk between them, but Evelina soon

realizes that she is walking with a pair of whores, and, a moment later, recognizes Lord Orville himself walking in their direction and realizes she has been seen in their unspeakable company. She extricates herself when she finds her party, but the whores harass her group for what remains of the evening, and Evelina has the further mortification of a morning call by Lord Orville the following day, in which he asks "whether those ladies with whom I saw you last night" were ever "in your company before?" But of course just as her *faux pas* at the private ball led to her first acquaintance with Lord Orville, his admittedly officious attempt to warn her about the dangerous company she had blundered into leads to an apology on his part and to greater intimacy between them: Evelina feels "delight and gratitude" and Lord Orville kisses her hand as he takes his leave.

We would expect a proposal scene to quickly follow, but further delay is caused by a sexually suggestive letter sent to Evelina, a letter forged by Sir Clement Willoughby under Lord Orville's name. The letter is quite obviously out of character, even to Evelina, and all that should be required to expose it would be to show it to Lord Orville. Instead of doing so, Evelina becomes ill and returns to Berry Hill, after which the narrative shifts to a spa near Bristol, where Evelina has been sent to recuperate, and where, upon meeting Lord Orville again, she immediately forgives him as soon as she is exposed to his usual gracious manners. At Bristol Hot Wells, where volume III takes place, Evelina is no longer exposed to her vulgar relations or to the dangers of London pleasure resorts. Her somewhat attenuated embarrassments here are primarily caused by her complicated relationship with Mr. Macartney, who has pursued her to Bristol and confided in her. Honor requires her silence but she is highly uncomfortable hiding her relationships and activities from Lord Orville.

Evelina is by no means the only butt of the comedy of embarrassment, though. Burney moves into the brutal orbit of Smollett as she subjects her minor characters to malicious practical jokes.[3] Evelina's grandmother, Madame Duval, is the principal target of these pranks. In volume I the patriotic Captain Mirvan, who hates the French, arranges matters so that, when Monsieur Du Bois is carrying Madame Duval over a sodden stretch of pavement, Du Bois slips and falls so that both of them are covered in deep mud. In volume II, at Lady Howard's country estate of Howard Grove, Captain Mirvan, this time with the assistance of Sir Clement Willoughby, stages in disguise a robbery of Madame Duval's coach, leaving the elderly woman tied up in a ditch:

> The ditch, happily, was almost quite dry, or she must have suffered still more seriously; yet so forlorn, so miserable a figure, I never before saw her. Her head-dress had fallen off, her linen was torn, her *negligée* had not a pin left in it, her

petticoats she was obliged to hold on, and her shoes were perpetually slipping off. She was covered with dirt, weeds, and filth, and her face was really horrible; for the pomatum and powder from her head, and the dust from the road, were quite *pasted* on her skin by her tears, which, with her *rouge*, made so frightful a mixture, that she hardly looked human.

. . . .

In the third volume, the vulgar Branghtons and their middle-class acquaintances are absent, and their places as objects of satire are taken by young gentlemen and women of fashion, who in their own way behave as contemptibly as the middle-class characters in the earlier volumes. The forceful but ridiculous Madame Duval, who wants to aggressively pursue Evelina's parental rights, is replaced by the equally forceful but admirable Mrs. Selwyn, an unofficial guardian for Evelina who shames the fashionistas and succeeds in getting the audience with Sir John Belmont that leads to the denouement. The most vivid Smollett moment in this volume is a race staged by Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley; to settle a bet between them, two women over eighty years of age, sponsored by the two aristocrats, are to run a foot race, in a vivid scene today's reader may find hard to stomach:

. . . .

When we were summoned to the *course*, the two poor old women made their appearance. Though they seemed very healthy for their time of life, they yet looked so weak, so infirm, so feeble, that I could feel no sensation but that of pity at the sight … They were greeted with a laugh from every beholder. Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley were both so excessively gay and noisy, that I soon found they had been free in drinking to their success. They handed, with loud shouts, the old women to the race-ground, and encouraged them by liberal promises to exert themselves. When the signal was given for them to set off, the poor creatures, feeble and frightened, ran against each other: and, neither of them able to support the shock, they both fell on the ground …. Again therefore they set off, and hobbled along, nearly even with each other, for some time; yet frequently, to the inexpressible diversion of the company, they stumbled and tottered; and the confused hallooing of "*Now, Coverley!*" "*Now, Merton!*" run from side to side during the whole affair.

. . . .

The conclusion of the novel features a final practical joke by Captain Mirvan, who introduces a monkey, dressed to the nines, into the assembled genteel company: Mr. Lovel the fop takes it, correctly, as a satirical jab at him personally. Afraid to challenge Mirvan himself, Lovel deals a furious blow to the monkey, who grabs Lovel around the neck and "fastens his teeth to one of his ears."

The other gentlemen are too frightened or indolent to interfere, and it is Lord Orville who restores order by detaching the monkey from his prey and evicting it from the room.

Evelina and Gender

Burney is by most standards the most important female English novelist before Jane Austen, and her novels tell us a great deal about women's place in the late Enlightenment, and what a ferociously intelligent but by no means independent woman was able to think and say about it at that time. Obviously and most important, women at this time were dependent upon men: they legally belonged to their fathers until they were married and to their husbands afterwards. It was not until 1870 that married women could own property in their own names.[4] The few women in *Evelina* whom we see acting independently – Lady Howard, Madame Duval, and Mrs. Selwyn – are all widows. The goal of almost every daughter – and we see this most clearly in the brash Branghton girls – was to attract a man and become his wife, so that she could at least run her own household; remaining a daughter, being an old maid, was theoretically the worst of fates. But to become a wife was not necessarily to live in paradise. Burney portrays Lady Howard's daughter Mrs. Mirvan as endlessly striving, not always successfully, to appease her "surly, vulgar, and disagreeable" husband, to divert him out of an angry mood into good humor, and the reader has a sense that her life may be at its most pleasant when Captain Mirvan is on one of his voyages.

For her own part, Burney was not one to rush into marriage as soon as the opportunity arose: she received and rejected a proposal in the summer of 1775 from one Thomas Barlow. In her diaries she recorded that she was "too spoilt by such men as my father and Mr. Crisp to content myself with a character merely in-offensive. I should expire with fatigue of him." But though they eventually acceded to her decision, neither Daddy Crisp nor her father were happy about it: Charles Burney might die, he pointed out, leaving her unprotected and unprovided for. According to Judith Newton, marriage was not merely a market but a buyer's market, and men were the buyers: "Women outnumbered men. Men were marrying late, and when they did marry, men were likely to require a dowry. Add to this the legal subordination of wife to husband and it is clear that the fate of the middle-class woman was bound to a relationship that was at once necessary, risky, and difficult to achieve." According to Newton, it was the Barlow episode that crystalized Burney's awareness that marriage was a market, and generated her idea of focusing her first published narrative on "the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World."[5]

Burney sets up the market metaphor graphically at the beginning of *Evelina*. On Monday morning, Evelina goes with the female Mirvans "a *shopping*" (a new word at the time) to the retail stores of the mercers selling silks and the milliners creating the elaborate headdresses then worn in society, and she is made uncomfortable by the "bowing and smirking" of the shopkeepers displaying their wares to their customers (volume I, letter X). On the same evening, she attends a private ball and finds that it is now she who has become the goods on display:

> The gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they sauntered about, in a careless, indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in suspense. I don't speak of this in regard to Miss Mirvan and myself only, but to the ladies in general: and I thought it so provoking, that I determined in my own mind that, far from humouring such airs, I would rather not dance at all, than with any one who would seem to think me ready to accept the first partner who would condescend to take me. (Volume I, letter XI)

The private ball is where Evelina is goods on display, and it is not clear how very different the situation of every young lady is from that of the prostitutes that Evelina encounters in Marylebone Gardens, who are also goods on display in a somewhat different rental market.

And, in fact, being goods on display is only part of the problem. Young ladies are also in danger of being roughly handled by prospective buyers, the gentlemen who may court and ultimately marry them. *Evelina* presents an entire menagerie of deplorable gentlemen, whose chivalry hides imperfectly a brutality under the surface. Mr. Lovel exhibits a combination of impertinence and cringing, while Lord Merton simply cuts anyone he thinks is beneath him. And then there is the predatory Sir Clement Willoughby, who repeatedly comes to Evelina's rescue only as a way of getting her into his clutches. After the opera, he offers to take her home and instead drives in a different direction. In the next volume, he does something similar in the "dark walks" of Vauxhall Gardens, where the Branghton girls have taken Evelina. Breaking away from a large party of drunken men,

> I was met by another party of men, one of whom placed himself so directly in my way, calling out, "Whither so fast, my love?" – that I could only have proceeded by running into his arms. In a moment both my hands, by different persons, were caught hold of, and one of them, in a most familiar manner, desired, when I ran

> next, to accompany me in a race; while the rest of the party stood still and laughed. I was almost distracted with terror, and so breathless with running, that I could not speak; till another, advancing, said, I was as handsome as an angel, and desired to be of the party. I then just articulated, "For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, let me pass!" Another then rushing suddenly forward, exclaimed, "Heaven and earth! What voice is that? – "The voice of the prettiest little actress I have seen this age," answered one of my persecutors. "No, – no, – no –" I *panted* out, "I am no actress – pray let me go, – pray let me pass – "By all that's sacred," cried the same voice, which I then knew for Sir Clement Willoughby's, "'tis herself!" "Sir Clement Willoughby!" cried I. "O, Sir, assist – assist me – or I shall die with terror!" "Gentlemen," cried he, disengaging them all from me in an instant, "pray leave this lady to me."
>
> . . . .

But of course saving Evelina is for Sir Clement only an excuse for immediately taking her hand, pressing it passionately and making violent love to her. In "Getting Waylaid in Evelina," Susan Fraiman discusses Willoughby's behavior as a recurrent pattern in the novel: in "a satiric and sadistic rewriting of the fairy tale … the very man who saves the heroine from distress takes advantage of her trust and gratitude to assault her in turn. As prince turns into dragon, rescue into recapture, and relief into trepidation, Evelina begins to doubt not only the world but also her own ability to interpret it."[6] As Fraiman points out, this pattern also is seen in the tragedy of Evelina's mother, who turned to Sir John Belmont in order to avoid being married against her will to a man of Madame Duval's choice, only to be betrayed and abandoned by Sir John.

But although Frances Burney knew how ladies got waylaid, she concluded *Evelina* with a fairy-tale ending in which her heroine is acknowledged by her father, made his heir, and married to her Prince Charming. We can see in her earliest novel an ironic sense of how women are made into commodities within a commodity culture, but the voice of this novel is not one of feminist protest demanding social change, like that of her slightly younger contemporary Mary Wollstonecraft. Thirty-five years later Burney's last novel, *The Wanderer*, would indeed attempt to vindicate the rights of women but England was still unwilling to listen to this message.

Burney After *Evelina*

Evelina was not only the titular heroine's entrance into the world but its author's as well. Samuel Johnson and his hostess Hester Thrale immediately wanted to know her, as did the playwright and manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. It was undoubtedly for Sheridan that she began work in 1779

on a satirical drama, *The Witlings*, a comedy of repartee in which many of the characters often seem to be responding to their own thoughts and not to each other, creating something of a theatre-of-the-absurd atmosphere. *Evelina*, for all its success – it rapidly went through four editions – was a first novel by an unknown author and had gained her only twenty guineas (£21), but the production of a comedy might have made its author some real money. But when Daddy Crisp and her father Charles Burney understood that the play attacked the egotism of learned ladies, including a few of those who had been helpful to the Burneys, he firmly forbade her to allow it to be produced or circulated in any other way. Her father told her that "not only the plot, but the whole piece, had best be kept secret from everyone." Burney completed *The Witlings* but it remained among her papers (at the Berg Collection in New York) until it was given its world premiere two centuries later, in 1998, in Houston.

Burney next wrote *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), for which she received the decent sum of £250. Like *Evelina*, it is a courtship novel designed to end in the happy marriage of the eponymous heroine, but the often boisterous comedy of the first novel gives way to a far darker tone. Society in *Evelina* is bright with urban pleasures, and even though there are dangerous traps and embarrassing faux pas to negotiate, selfish motives are all too obvious. In *Cecilia*, it is not merely that the characters have dark and more deeply hidden motives, but society itself seems less stable, based on credit which, like our beliefs in the benevolence of others, may suddenly vanish. The apparently wealthy man of business may be under water with debt and willing to drag a naive heiress under with him; apparent friends may be luring one to destruction. Unlike the Cinderella-like heroine Evelina, Cecilia has both a name and means; she is an orphaned heiress who is soon to come into two separate fortunes. But her three guardians are all deeply flawed, and it is precisely because of her virtue and good intentions that they bring her to near-ruin and madness before the comic peripety.

Burney adopted a third-person narrator for *Cecilia*, using sentence rhythms lifted from Samuel Johnson, but the novel is primarily focalized through the heroine, and in a few places we begin to see one of the earliest uses of free indirect discourse in the novel. In the following passage Burney first summarizes the contents of Cecilia's mind – what Dorrit Cohn calls psychonarration – then makes a deeper dive into free indirect discourse, and, at the end of this passage, Burney moves into direct quotation in the first person of Cecilia's thoughts. (In Chapter 11, we see how this technique has advanced further in Jane Austen's *Emma*.)

> [Cecilia's] own mind was now in a state of the utmost confusion …. [S]he was suddenly in a conjuncture of all others the most delicate, that of accidentally discovering a rival in a favourite friend …. [T]he next day Miss Belfield was to tell

her every thing by a voluntary promise; but she doubted if she had any right to accept such a confidence. Miss Belfield, she was sure, knew not she was interested in the tale, since she had not even imagined that Delvile was known to her. She might hope, therefore, not only for advice but assistance, and fancy that while she reposed her secret in the bosom of a friend, she secured herself her best offices and best wishes for ever.

Would she obtain them? No; the most romantic generosity would revolt from such a demand, for however precarious was her own chance with young Delvile, Miss Belfield she was sure could not have any; neither her birth nor education fitted her for his rank in life, and even were both unexceptionable, the smallness of her fortune, as Mr Monckton had instructed her, would be an obstacle insurmountable.

Would it not be a kind of treachery to gather from her every thing, yet aid her in nothing? to take advantage of her unsuspicious openness in order to learn all that related to one whom she yet hoped would belong ultimately to herself, and gratify an interested curiosity at the expence of a candour not more simple than amiable? "No," cried Cecilia, "arts that I could never forgive, I never will practice; this sweet, but unhappy girl shall tell me nothing; betrayed already by the tenderness of her own heart, she shall at least suffer no further from any duplicity in mine …."

. . . .

Cecilia was as great a success as *Evelina*, but dark clouds were gathering. Daddy Crisp died in 1783; in the following year Hester Thrale married the musician Gabriel Piozzi and broke with both Burney and Samuel Johnson, who died in 1784. And the same year it became clear that her romantic interest in George Cambridge, a clergyman and art collector whom she found "elegant and sensible," would come to nothing. A visit to the royal court in 1785 led to Burney being offered the post of Mistress of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, which she accepted in 1786 and continued in for five years. Her biographer Margaret Doody views these years as a kind of imprisonment in the gilded bubble of Windsor Castle, working as a servant summoned by a bell. She was well compensated (at £200 per year) but miserable. Burney wrote tragic drama but no satirical novels during this period, including the only play (*Edwy and Elgiva*) to be enacted during her lifetime (a single performance in 1795). Queen Charlotte released her prisoner in 1791, with a life pension of £100.

Staying with her favorite sister Susanna in Mickleham, Burney became acquainted at nearby Juniper Hall with French emigrés who had fled the Revolution – then entering its radical phase – including Germaine de Staël, Charles de Talleyrand, and Alexandre d'Arblay. D'Arblay was a general who had commanded the artillery under the Marquis de Lafayette, and shared Lafayette's politics, which favored a constitutional monarchy. Burney and

d'Arblay began a correspondence, helped learn each other's languages, and sentimental friendship led to an engagement. Burney was 40, D'Arblay one year younger, and though her father disapproved of the romance, Burney had her pension, which allowed them to marry in 1793; her son Alexandre was born the following year. Burney returned to writing fiction, publishing *Camilla, or A Picture of Youth* in 1796; another success, the royalties of £1000 on the first edition and £1000 for the sale of the copyright allowed the d'Arblays to build what they called Camilla Cottage in Surrey, southwest of London.

In 1801, d'Arblay was offered a post in Napoleon's government, and Frances and their son relocated to Paris where, owing to the war between France and England, they were forced to remain for over ten years. In 1812, Burney and her son succeeded in returning to England, where in 1814 she completed and published her last novel (*The Wanderer, or Female Difficulties*), set twenty years earlier in 1794. The heroine of *The Wanderer* is an English lady who has fled home from the Terror in France, but who is treated with suspicion in her native land and exploited by the wealthy. Perhaps because of its political critique, *The Wanderer* was a failure compared with her earlier novels; it sold out its first edition, but subsequent printings had to be pulped.

At the abdication of Napoleon, Burney returned to France to be with her husband, and was in Brussels when Napoleon, returning from exile on Elba, met his final defeat at Waterloo. D'Arblay, who had recruited French soldiers to fight against Napoleon, was rewarded by the restored Bourbon king, Louis XVIII, with the title of count and the rank of lieutenant general. He retired with Frances to Bath, where he died in 1818. Burney also survived her son Alexandre, who died of influenza in 1837. Burney lived to see Victoria come to the throne, and died in London in 1840. Burney's letters and journals were published after her death – they include a scarifying first-person account of her radical mastectomy for suspected cancer, performed without an anaesthetic in Paris in 1811 – and they present a lively, courageous, even heroic personality, willing to court disapproval by parental figures who loved but attempted to smother her. Her place in the novel is a bridge between Richardson and Fielding at midcentury and Austen and Scott who followed: she developed techniques of free indirect discourse that allowed her third-person narrator to create both empathy and irony in relation to her heroines. *Evelina* and *Cecilia* survived and continued to be read throughout the nineteenth century in collected editions of English fiction, like that of Anna Lætitia Barbauld. *Camilla* and *The Wanderer* were not reprinted until the feminist wave of the 1980s brought Burney's reputation to its present position as one of the most important novelists of the late eighteenth century.

Notes

1. We are told only that he was disappointed in financial expectations owing to the "inexorable rancour of the Duvals," who had wanted Caroline to marry a nephew of Duval's.
2. We see similar combinations of fulfillment/embarrassment in the dramatic comedies such as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*.
3. Tobias Smollett (1721–71) was an important eighteenth-century novelist whose picaresque romances have fallen into disesteem in recent decades, primarily because we no longer find their misogyny and physical cruelty comic. Burney's portrait of Captain Mirvan seems to have been based on Tom Bowling, the irascible sailor – uncle to Roderick Random in Smollett's novel of that name (1748).
4. Charlotte Smith, a novelist of Burney's generation, was forced at times to get the payment for her work from her publishers' offices, so that the money would not fall into the hands of her violent and profligate husband, from whom she was separated but not divorced.
5. Judith Newton, "*Evelina*: Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the Marriage Market," *Modern Language Studies* 6.1 (1976): 48–56; quote on p. 48. Margaret Doody's Burney biography disagrees, arguing that Burney's early narrative *History of Caroline Evelyn*, burned on her stepmother's orders ten years earlier, must already have revealed the author's distaste for, and distrust of, the marriage market.
6. Susan Fraiman, "Getting Waylaid in *Evelina*," in the Norton Critical Edition of *Evelina*, ed. Stewart J. Cooke (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 454–74; quote on p. 455.

Chapter 8

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794)

"Mother Radcliffe"

We know the bare facts of Ann Radcliffe's life, but not much more, at least partly because she seems to have been a very private person, living her life within the small circle of her family until she married William Radcliffe at 23, and thereafter within the even smaller circle of an apparently happy, though childless, marriage. She certainly kept a journal, at least when she was travelling on vacations with her husband, because some pages from her travel journals were transcribed in Thomas Noon Talfourd's biographical preface to her posthumous novel, *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826). The journals themselves, the manuscripts of her novels, and any letters that she may have kept, written or received, seem to be irretrievably lost.[1]

Ann Ward was born in 1764, the only child of Ann Oates and William Ward, a haberdasher with a shop in the Holborn district of London. In 1772 her parents moved to Bath, where her father kept another shop selling inexpensive pottery, but Ann probably stayed in London, spending most of her time at the Chelsea and Turnham Green homes of her wealthy uncle, Thomas Bentley, who was the partner of the pottery and porcelain maker Josiah Wedgwood, and the proprietor of the London showroom for the more luxurious lines of Wedgwood porcelain. Her obituary states that it was there that she met the literary ladies of London, the bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu and Hester Thrale Piozzi. Talfourd's memoir asserts that she was "educated in the principles of the Church of England," but if her uncle Bentley and her other maternal relatives, like Dr. John Jebb, were the ones who formed her spiritual sense, she may as her most recent biographer Rictor Norton suggests

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have been brought up a Unitarian rather than an Anglican, and have imbibed the political liberalism that was connected with that rationalist creed.

Bentley died in 1780, and we do not know whether Ann stayed in London with other wealthy relatives or went to live with her shop-keeping parents in Bath. There is a legend that she attended a school in Bath run by Sophia Lee, who was soon to write one of the most striking historical romances, *The Recess* (1783–85); but Norton reminds us that when the school opened in 1781, Ann would have been 17, an age at which women of the day ended rather than began their education.

In 1787, at St. Michael's Church in Bath where her parents lived, she married William Radcliffe of London, a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford. According to Talfourd, Radcliffe had "kept several terms at one of the Inns of Court" as preparation for a career as a barrister, but had given this up for journalism. He worked as a parliamentary reporter and then from 1791 to 1793 as editor-in-chief of a weekly newspaper, the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*; and he supplemented his income from journalism by publishing translations of books from Latin and French. How Ann Ward and William Radcliffe met is unclear; in his contribution to her obituary, Radcliffe says only that he knew her "from about her twentieth year." They set up their household in London, but William's work life was not banker's hours, as he needed to attend the evening debates in Parliament on which he would report. Talfourd states that "on these occasions, Mrs. Radcliffe usually beguiled the else weary hours by her pen, and often astonished her husband, on his return, not only by the quality, but the extent of the matter she had produced, since he left her. The evening was always her favourite season for composition, when her spirits were in their happiest tone, and she was most secure from interruption."

Encouraged by her husband, Ann Radcliffe anonymously published her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, in 1789; it was a tale of passion and revenge set in the medieval period in the Scottish Highlands, a novel in one volume that was scarcely noticed. But she followed it up with *A Sicilian Romance* (1791), which received more reviews, and more favorable ones. Her first major success was *The Romance of the Forest* (1792), which went through four editions in three years and established Radcliffe as a major voice among novelists. She put her name to the second edition, and its success created demand for new editions of her first two novels. Her development as a novelist is difficult to describe, because all her works share the same ingredients: castles or abbeys with dungeons or secret rooms, brave heroes, brooding and gloomy or arrogant male and female villains, heroines in danger, helpful or hapless servants. But she builds more complex structures with these materials as she learns her craft. In *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* Radcliffe seems to be thinking one scene at a time, forgetting about her characters whenever they are offstage.

In *The Romance of the Forest*, however, she has learned to build lengthy sequences that simultaneously develop her heroine's perceptions, her growing sense of herself, her changing relationships to the powerful figures who seem to have her in their grasp, and to the mysteries that she feels destined to unravel and with which she feels her own fate entangled.

When Radcliffe published *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the world was waiting for it, and from the reviews in contemporary periodicals, they were not disappointed. In *Udolpho* she continued to immerse the reader in the developing psychology of the heroine, while presenting a spectacular mise-en-scène of chateaux and castles in Gascony and the Apennines, along with the mountains and valleys that linked them – places that Radcliffe knew only by report, since she had yet to travel beyond England. Radcliffe received £500 for the copyright to *Udolpho*, an almost unheard-of sum. Her next publication had a change of pace. In 1794 she and her husband traveled to Holland and through Germany, aiming to return via Switzerland and France; but a Swiss border guard refused them passage, and they had to return the way they had come, going in what remained of the summer to the Lake District. Radcliffe turned her notebooks kept on the tour into a travel book, which was published in 1795 to great acclaim.

The final novel published in Radcliffe's lifetime was *The Italian*, which came out in December 1796, for whose copyright she received £800. *The Italian* is shorter than *Udolpho* and more unified: where *Romance of the Forest* adds a new set of complications in the last volume, and where *Udolpho* moves its heroine from one haunted castle in Italy to another in France, *The Italian* focuses sharply on the monk Schedoni, his machinations in the present and his guilty past, ending with scenes of mysterious intensity within the prisons of the Inquisition. The reviews again were favorable, though not universally so. Radcliffe's novels involved apparently supernatural occurrences, ghostly doings that were eventually disclosed with commonplace explanations that many readers found disappointing, and by her fifth novel many readers were already anticipating her usual tricks.

Another factor was the literary scene: the success of Radcliffe's novels inspired many others to imitate her, using either her own methods or others. Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) brought supernatural events into his chronicle of the damnation of Ambrosio without rationalistically explaining them away: one of Lewis's characters is a fallen angel in the form of a human temptress, the Wandering Jew shows up in a subplot, and Satan himself appears at the denouement. Rape and murder are described rather than merely threatened, and horror rather than terror seems to be the keynote here. Some reviewers condemned Lewis's more erotic and more violent version of the Gothic, preferring the chaste suspense of Radcliffe, but as the periodical

reviewers complained, the literary scene was becoming crowded with novels set in castles and monasteries. But the appetite of readers for romance continued: Gothic novels continued to proliferate into the first and second decades of the nineteenth century.

For reasons that no one has satisfactorily explained, however, Radcliffe's own voice fell silent. She was only 33 years old, and apparently in good health then: she regularly took summer tours with her husband, sometimes twice in one year, usually to seaside destinations, but on one occasion to Kenilworth, Warwick, Oxford, and Woodstock; her last recorded tour was in 1811. Rictor Norton suggests that it was the blanket condemnations of the Gothic novel as a "terrorist" form of literature, the imaginative equivalent to the events taking place in revolutionary France, that persuaded Radcliffe to channel her creative impulse into travel journals and poetry – less controversial genres of writing. A more prosaic possibility is that in 1796 William Radcliffe took over the ownership and management of a new periodical, the *English Chronicle*, perhaps more profitable, and with more onerous duties, than his work on the *Gazetteer*, and that the death of her parents – her father in 1798 and her mother in 1800 – left property to her in trust that made it unnecessary for her to write. She could have become a public figure, but that was – from her shy and retiring temperament – the very last thing that she wanted for herself.

Around 1802, after the tour to the ruins of Kenilworth and Warwick castles, she began work on a sixth novel, *Gaston de Blondeville*, set in England during the reign of Henry III, and for the first time with a real ghost in it. According to Norton, this novel was written in partnership with her husband and some version of the manuscript was in a publisher's hands in 1803, but was withdrawn by the author. It was revised at some time between 1812 and 1815 with the addition of a frame for the medieval tale (a discussion of the supernatural in fiction between two travelers, Willoughton and Simpson), but no further moves toward publication were made at that time. She published a volume of her poems in 1816, but its contents had been published previously as lyrics supposedly written by the heroines of her first four novels. From close reading of what remains of her journals, Norton conjectures that Radcliffe suffered a nervous breakdown around her fortieth year from which she recovered, and that her general health seems to have deteriorated in her late 40s. For the last twelve years of her life she suffered from "spasmodic asthma," and in the winter of 1822–23, she came down with a severe bronchial infection leading to pneumonia which, combined with the asthma, was fatal; she died on February 7, 1823. *Gaston de Blondeville*, together with Talfourd's memoir of Radcliffe's life, was published in two volumes in 1826. By then the vogue of the Gothic had become a distant memory.

The Development of the Gothic Romance as a Genre

Ann Radcliffe was the single most popular writer of the Gothic romance but she did not invent it. Prose narrative romance originated in antiquity, long before the novel itself, long before English even became a language, as we discussed in Chapter 1. The French romances of the seventeenth century were successfully published in English translation, and considerably shorter English versions of romance were written during the Restoration and early eighteenth century. Aphra Behn's *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684–87) and Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719) were very popular; the latter was one of the best sellers of 1719, sharing that title with Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. But historians of the English novel are generally agreed that the romance was in eclipse during the half century that separated Haywood and Radcliffe, when Richardson, Fielding, and their successors were developing what they felt to be a new form of writing, more realistic and immediate, and capable of an enormous range of emotional affect from broad comedy to the heights of tragedy.

Just as the novel of represented action begins with *Pamela*, whose particular plot and characters shaped the novel going forward, the Gothic is shaped by an early forbear, *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (1764). Walpole (1717–97) was the youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole who entered Parliament near the end of his father's lengthy career as Prime Minister and continued to sit for various boroughs till 1767. His real interests, though, were art and aesthetics. He was devoted to the architecture of the Middle Ages and renovated his country house, Strawberry Hill at Twickenham, into something resembling a Gothic castle, basing its design on historic examples, and adding decorative features, stained glass, suits of plate armor, crenellated battlements, as he could afford them. The story Walpole told was that after awakening in Strawberry Hill from a nightmare about "a gigantic hand in armour," he began writing without any particular plan in mind. What he produced in two months and published at Christmas 1764 was a 35,000-word novella centering on Manfred, prince of Otranto, grandson to a usurper, whose melodramatic attempts to permanently establish his family line are foiled by a series of supernatural manifestations. At the beginning, a gigantic helmet crushes his son and heir to death; at the end, the spectral body of the last true prince destroys Manfred's castle. Walpole's first edition purports to be a translation by William Marshal of a sixteenth-century Italian manuscript based on events of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but in the second edition of 1765, newly subtitled "A Gothic Story," Walpole confessed to the authorship and defended at length in a preface his idea of grafting the conventions of the "ancient romance" onto the modern novel, in order to show

how realistically depicted characters might behave in a storyworld that includes supernatural interventions like Shakespeare's ghosts.

We normally look at *The Castle of Otranto* as the originating text for the Gothic genre, but it could be equally assessed as one of many forgeries of the 1760s that evoke the medieval period, including James Macpherson's *Ossian* poems at the beginning of the decade, and Thomas Chatterton's *Rowley* poems at its end. And in turn, this fashion in forgery of medieval texts is a sign of something more significant: a blossoming of interest at the end of the Augustan period in history – neither medieval history alone, nor English history alone. Both David Hume and Tobias Smollett wrote lucrative histories of England, and both William Robertson's *History of Scotland* and Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* became best sellers. One of the features of eighteenth-century modernity was the sense that, not only would the world of the future be the product of decisions in the present, but that the present moment was the product of the past, and that enlightened individuals could only understand their place in the world by understanding how that present had come about. So *The Castle of Otranto* has a place in the development of the historical novel (discussed in Chapter 10 on Scott) as well as the Gothic.

That said, Horace Walpole's antiquarianism was aesthetic rather than scientific, and his interest in the Middle Ages was a mile wide and an inch deep. His standards of accuracy were not high for his own time, and he even boasted of his ignorance: "I know nothing of barrows and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms and Phoenician characters – in short, I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing."[2] There was even a strain of Augustan contempt for the rude manners of earlier times, when those manners could not be elided by the imagination. After inspecting John Pinkerton's histories of medieval Scotland Walpole sneered that he himself had "seldom wasted time on the origins of nations; unless for an opportunity of smiling at the gravity of the author; for absurdity and knavery compose almost all the anecdotes we have of them."[3] Like the literary historian Thomas Warton, Walpole delighted in the Gothic taste, but unlike Warton, who insisted on keeping his medieval and modern cultural artifacts strictly separated, Walpole thought little of combining them. It was not surprising that in *Otranto* Walpole produced a farrago of Enlightenment motivation with medieval detail, fabricating peculiar rituals and customs out of his baroque imagination, just as he had begun his restoration of Strawberry Hill by grafting battlements made of papier-mâché onto a Palladian framework.

The Castle of Otranto was popular from the outset, going through four editions during the 1760s and many further editions two decades later, when the Gothic Novel had become an important genre. *The Castle of Otranto* establishes many of the conventions of the Gothic: such as its favorite locales in

castles, dungeons, monastic cells, and grottos; or its character types, including the demonic antagonist Manfred, driven like Shakespeare's Macbeth alternately by overweening arrogance and by remorse; the plain vanilla protagonist Theodore, the peasant boy who turns out to be the actual heir to Otranto, and who is almost uncharacterized except by bravery and loyalty; and the almost entirely passive virginal heroines, Isabella and Matilda. And there are specters and spirits haunting Otranto, ones that would be absorbed into the Gothic genre. But Walpole's use of the supernatural is often unintentionally droll. For Manfred's son and heir to die suddenly generates Manfred's quest for a new heir, but it is grotesque for him to be crushed to death by a gigantic helmet falling out of the sky; it is all very well for the marble statue of Alfonso the Good (the last rightful Prince of Otranto) to deliver a supernatural warning to Manfred, but it is outlandish for that warning to take the form of a nosebleed.

Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* explicitly presented itself as an attempt to rewrite *The Castle of Otranto* in a way that would mitigate the defects of its supernatural machinery and its lack of an appropriate moral. Like *Otranto*, it centers on the artfully prepared revelation that a noble and brave peasant, Edmund Twyford, is actually the secret son and heir to a murdered nobleman, Lord Lovel.[4] The world Reeve creates is one in which knights have toothaches and sup upon "new-laid eggs and rashers of bacon." The supernatural is allowed to be present but its effects are intentionally muted. Characters have dreams that reveal the secrets of the past or predict the future, but that is what dreams traditionally do. Edmund undergoes an ordeal of staying in a reputedly haunted wing of the Castle of Lovel, in the course of which he hears mysterious groans that test his courage; on the second night, the groans lead him to a locked room on a lower floor, where he discovers the bloody armor of the murdered Lord Lovel along with a portrait that convinces him of his true parentage. On the third night, Edmund initiates events that lead ultimately to the murderer's confession, his resignation of the title and property, and the establishment of Edmund as Lord Lovel in his father's place. The most vivid and explicit supernatural manifestation involves two rascals, Wenlock and Markham, who are punished for tale-bearing by having to spend a night in the haunted wing:

> As they stood with their fists clenched, on a sudden they were alarmed with a dismal groan from the room underneath. They stood like statues petrified by fear, yet listening with trembling expectation. A second groan increased their consternation; and, soon after, a third completed it. They staggered to a seat, and sunk down upon it, ready to faint. Presently, all the doors flew open, a pale glimmering light appeared at the door, from the staircase, and a man in complete armour entered the room. He stood, with one hand extended, pointing to the outward

door; they took the hint, and crawled away as fast as fear would let them; they staggered along the gallery, and from thence to the Baron's apartment, where Wenlock sunk down in a swoon, and Markham had just strength enough to knock at the door.

. . . .

Walpole read *The Old English Baron* but was unimpressed by Reeve's attempts to improve on his own creation. He wrote to William Mason: "Have you seen The Old Baron, a Gothic story, professedly written in imitation of Otranto, but reduced to probability? It is so probable, that any trial for murder at the Old Bailey would make a more interesting story."[5]

And in the next sentence of this letter, Walpole praises "Sir Bertrand: A Fragment," a brilliant 1773 text by the physician John Aikin,[6] which was frequently reprinted in periodicals throughout the late eighteenth century. Unlike the matter-of-fact world of *The Old English Baron*, "Sir Bertrand" has the surreal logic of a nightmare: a knight, wandering in darkness, comes upon a ruined castle, upon whose gate he knocks. No one replies, but a bell tolls ominously in the turret above. He enters, and a disembodied bluish flame draws him inward and up flights of stairs to a gallery. The light vanishes leaving him in total darkness. Suddenly, a cold hand grasps his own and pulls him onward, and he strikes at it with his sword and severs it. He then climbs further stairways toward the top of the castle:

. . . .

The stair-case grew narrower and narrower, and at length terminated in a low iron grate. Sir Bertrand pushed it open – it led to an intricate winding passage, just large enough to admit a person upon his hands and knees. A faint glimmering of light served to show the nature of the place. Sir Bertrand entered – A deep hollow groan resounded from a distance through the vault – He went forwards, and proceeding beyond the first turning, he discerned the same blue flame which had before conducted him. He followed it. The vault, at length, suddenly opened into a lofty gallery, in the midst of which a figure appeared, completely armed, thrusting forwards the bloody stump of an arm, with a terrible frown and menacing gesture, and brandishing a sword in his hand. Sir Bertrand undauntedly sprang forwards; and aiming a fierce blow at the figure, it instantly vanished, letting fall a massy iron key. The flame now rested upon a pair of ample folding doors at the end of the gallery. Sir Bertrand went up to it, and applied the key to a brazen lock – with difficulty he turned the bolt – instantly the doors flew open, and discovered a large apartment, at the end of which was a coffin rested upon a bier, with a taper burning on each side of it. Along the room on both sides were gigantic statues of black marble, attired in the Moorish habits, and holding enormous sabres in their right hands. Each of them reared his arm, and advanced

> one leg forwards, as the knight entered; at the same moment the lid of the coffin flew open, and the bell tolled. The flame still glided forwards, and Sir Bertrand resolutely followed, till he arrived within six paces of the coffin. Suddenly, a lady in a shroud and black veil rose up in it, and stretched out her arms towards him – at the same time the statues clashed their sabres and advanced. Sir Bertrand flew to the lady and clasped her in his arms – she threw up her veil and kissed his lips; and instantly the whole building shook as with an earthquake, and fell asunder with a horrible crash.
>
> . . . .

The prefatory essay by Aikin discusses texts of "mere natural horror," accounts of tortures, executions, and the like, including a sequence in Smollett's *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) in which the protagonist finds himself locked into a room with a freshly slaughtered corpse. Curiosity keeps one reading, he says, but such scenes produce pain and disgust rather than pleasure. And he contrasts this sort of text with what he calls "well-wrought scenes of artificial terror which are formed by a sublime and vigorous imagination." Here, he says, "a strange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the stretch; and where the agency of invisible beings is introduced, of 'forms unseen, and mightier far than we,' our imagination, darting forth, explores with rapture the new world which is laid open to its view, and rejoices in the expansion of its powers. Passion and fancy cooperating elevate the soul to its highest pitch; and the pain of terror is lost in amazement." This evocation of the sublime is clearly what the first writers of Gothic tales were aiming at, and their failures, either by overshooting the mark or by creating too prosaic a world, would be instructive to Ann Radcliffe.

Plotting *Udolpho*

It would be futile to attempt a detailed summary of the plot of *Udolpho* – there are dozens of characters and hundreds of events – but the protagonist is a heroine rather than a hero, and its shape is that of a voyage out and a return, with a bit of growing up in between. The novel begins with Emily St. Aubert living happily with her mother and father in their chateau of La Vallee in Gascony, and it ends with her return to the same chateau as a wife rather than a daughter. In the "launch" phase, she meets and falls in love with her future husband, Valancourt, but before that courtship can lead anywhere, the bases for Emily's initial domestic happiness are destroyed: first her mother dies, then the news arrives that the family's investments have been lost, so they are financially ruined, and soon thereafter her father dies. Emily's new guardian, her aunt Madame Cheron, seems to favor Valancourt's suit and allows them to become

engaged, but meanwhile her aunt has married the Gothic villain of the novel, Signor Montoni, who has his own plans for Emily.

The lengthy "development" section of the novel begins as Montoni puts an end to Emily's engagement and carries his wife and ward to Udolpho, his castle in the Apennines. In effect, Radcliffe has put Emily into a version of the "Pamela" situation where she is unprotected and threatened by terrifying dangers of various sorts. It is one of the features of Radcliffe's plotting that these hazards are vague, in the sense that while they are going on Emily does not know which of them are actually serious threats to her and which ones are not. And since the reader is tightly tied to Emily's consciousness, neither does the reader. Count Morano loves Emily, and Montoni encourages him: is she threatened with a forced marriage to Morano, or with being kidnapped by him? Once at Udolpho, Emily is separated from her aunt, who lies ill in one of the castle's turrets. Exploring the castle at night Emily finds weapons and bloody clothing: are they evidence that her aunt has been murdered?

While Udolpho is under siege, Montoni sends Emily away into Tuscany "protected" by intimidating servants who seem to be cut-throats: has she been taken away from the castle only to be murdered? After her aunt dies, of natural causes hastened by Montoni's mistreatment, her property has been left to Emily, or at least not firmly transferred to Montoni. Montoni wants Emily to sign it over to him, and threatens to allow two sinister servants to do whatever they want with her unless she does so. Beyond this family intrigue there also seem to be supernatural doings going on in Udolpho, including an apparition behind a black veil that Emily catches sight of, only for her to faint away from terror that robs her of her senses.

During this section, which takes up most of the second and third volumes, the global atmosphere of menace and peril is more important than anything that actually happens, because in fact nothing does happen. Violence is threatened but never performed, and neither the beloved Valancourt nor the loathed Morano attempts the sort of sexual aggression Richardson presented as the chief threat to his heroines. Time itself seems to stand still throughout the novel: the descriptions of castles and forests are elaborate but the seasons are entirely unmarked. Nor has Emily really learned anything to speak of: she emerges from Udolpho essentially the same as when she arrived.

Emily is typical of Gothic heroines in being a passive creature, but we need to be clear that this passivity does not take the form of immobility but of indecisiveness, and her choices, once reached, tend less to be decisions than abdications of the right to decide. In the first volume of *Udolpho*, Emily is entirely under the tutelage of her wise and kind father. Upon his death, her guardianship passes to Madame Montoni, who is vulgar and selfish. Emily recognizes this, yet feels as constrained by duty to obey her aunt as to obey her dying father's request to burn his private papers. Perhaps her one significant point of decision comes at

the end of volume 1, when she declines to elope with her lover, Valancourt, despite her aunt's decision to carry her away from him into Italy and despite her suspicions of Montoni. With eminent propriety, Emily decides that elopement would be precipitate and imprudent, while on the other side, her aunt is in loco parentis, and Montoni, however suspicious, has not yet been proved a villain.

Her decision, in short, is to accede, however reluctantly, to the course of action that has been provided her by her elders; in effect it is no decision at all. This is the pattern Emily continues to follow: When her chateau at La Vallee is rented out, she thinks of protesting, mentions "some prejudices … which still linger in my heart", but again accedes. To further Montoni's plans for Emily, she is removed to Venice, then to Udolpho. There indeed she, like Pamela, resists all attempts made against her person, her virtue, and her fortune. This resistance is overlaid, however, upon a sense of her own powerlessness that is almost total, and an equally exaggerated sense of the omnipotence of her captor, Montoni. After Emily escapes from Udolpho (discussed in greater length in the section 'The Content of the Form: Politics and the Gothic Novel'), her voyage back to France lands her at a second haunted castle, Chateau-le-Blanc, with a second heroine, Lady Blanche, and the vague threats and uncertainties continue, though in degree they are much attenuated.

Most of the final fourth volume is in effect the "arrival" section, where the character of Valancourt is cleared of accusations that had been made about him, where various mysteries that have been presented earlier in the novel are cleared up, and where properties greater than those that the St. Auberts lost are restored to Emily, so that the now wealthy heroine can marry Valancourt, return to her childhood home of La Vallee, and live happily ever after.

The Gothic Atmosphere

The power of Radcliffe's narrative lies primarily in its texture, its local effects, rather than its structure. Just as Emily is imprisoned in the castle of Udolpho, the reader is imprisoned in the consciousness of Emily, who is neither stupid nor timid, but is clearly unequal to the nocturnal quests she takes on. Here slightly abridged, from volume 2, chapter 10, is one of the many sequences in *Udolpho* in which Emily explores the castle and confronts her terror. It begins with a "launch" of its own, as Emily leaves her chamber toward midnight, seeking her aunt, whom she fears has been the victim of foul play.

. . . .

> Thus heavily moved the hours till midnight, when she counted the sullen notes of the great clock, as they rolled along the rampart, unmingled with any sound,

> except the distant foot-fall of a sentinel, who came to relieve guard. She now thought she might venture towards the turret, and, having gently opened the chamber door to examine the corridor, and to listen if any person was stirring in the castle, found all around in perfect stillness. Yet no sooner had she left the room, than she perceived a light flash on the walls of the corridor, and, without waiting to see by whom it was carried, she shrunk back, and closed her door. …
>
> When the chimes had tolled another half hour, she once more opened the door, and, perceiving that no person was in the corridor, hastily crossed into a passage, that led along the south side of the castle towards the stair-case, whence she believed she could easily find her way to the turret. Often pausing on her way, listening apprehensively to the murmurs of the wind, and looking fearfully onward into the gloom of the long passages, she, at length, reached the stair-case; but there her perplexity began. Two passages appeared, of which she knew not how to prefer one, and was compelled, at last, to decide by chance, rather than by circumstances. That she entered, opened first into a wide gallery, along which she passed lightly and swiftly; for the lonely aspect of the place awed her, and she started at the echo of her own steps.
>
> . . . .

As she picks her way through the maze that is Udolpho she hears a voice and goes to investigate. What immediately follows is comic anticlimax: the voice belongs to her own maid Annette, who has been locked into a chamber and is fretting about being locked in (Emily has no key to free her), and also about having had "nothing to eat since dinner." Then the quest for her aunt continues:

> . . . .
>
> Emily could scarcely forbear smiling at the heterogeneous distresses of Annette, though she sincerely pitied them, and said what she could to sooth her. At length, she obtained something like a direction to the east turret, and quitted the door, from whence, after many intricacies and perplexities, she reached the steep and winding stairs of the turret, at the foot of which she stopped to rest, and to re-animate her courage with a sense of her duty. As she surveyed this dismal place, she perceived a door on the opposite side of the stair-case, and, anxious to know whether it would lead her to Madame Montoni, she tried to undraw the bolts, which fastened it. A fresher air came to her face, as she unclosed the door, which opened upon the east rampart, and the sudden current had nearly extinguished her light, which she now removed to a distance; and again, looking out upon the obscure terrace, she perceived only the faint outline of the walls and of some towers, while, above, heavy clouds, borne along the wind, seemed to mingle with the stars, and wrap the night in thicker darkness. As she gazed, now willing to defer the moment of certainty, from which she expected only confirmation of evil, a distant footstep reminded her, that she might be observed by the men on watch, and, hastily closing the door, she took

her lamp, and passed up the stair-case. Trembling came upon her, as she ascended through the gloom. To her melancholy fancy this seemed to be a place of death, and the chilling silence, that reigned, confirmed its character. Her spirits faltered. 'Perhaps,' said she, 'I am come hither only to learn a dreadful truth, or to witness some horrible spectacle; I feel that my senses would not survive such an addition of horror.'

The image of her aunt murdered – murdered, perhaps, by the hand of Montoni, rose to her mind; she trembled, gasped for breath – repented that she had dared to venture hither, and checked her steps. But, after she had paused a few minutes, the consciousness of her duty returned, and she went on. Still all was silent. At length a track of blood, upon a stair, caught her eye; and instantly she perceived, that the wall and several other steps were stained. She paused, again struggled to support herself, and the lamp almost fell from her trembling hand. Still no sound was heard, no living being seemed to inhabit the turret; a thousand times she wished herself again in her chamber; dreaded to enquire farther – dreaded to encounter some horrible spectacle, and yet could not resolve, now that she was so near the termination of her efforts, to desist from them. Having again collected courage to proceed, after ascending about half way up the turret, she came to another door, but here again she stopped in hesitation; listened for sounds within, and then, summoning all her resolution, unclosed it, and entered a chamber, which, as her lamp shot its feeble rays through the darkness, seemed to exhibit only dew-stained and deserted walls. As she stood examining it, in fearful expectation of discovering the remains of her unfortunate aunt, she perceived something lying in an obscure corner of the room, and, struck with an horrible conviction, she became, for an instant, motionless and nearly insensible. Then, with a kind of desperate resolution, she hurried towards the object that excited her terror, when, perceiving the clothes of some person, on the floor, she caught hold of them, and found in her grasp the old uniform of a soldier, beneath which appeared a heap of pikes and other arms. Scarcely daring to trust her sight, she continued, for some moments, to gaze on the object of her late alarm, and then left the chamber, so much comforted and occupied by the conviction, that her aunt was not there, that she was going to descend the turret, without enquiring farther; when, on turning to do so, she observed upon some steps on the second flight an appearance of blood, and remembering, that there was yet another chamber to be explored, she again followed the windings of the ascent. Still, as she ascended, the track of blood glared upon the stairs.

It led her to the door of a landing-place, that terminated them, but she was unable to follow it farther. Now that she was so near the sought-for certainty, she dreaded to know it, even more than before, and had not fortitude sufficient to speak, or to attempt opening the door. Having listened, in vain, for some sound, that might confirm, or destroy her fears, she, at length, laid her hand on the lock, and, finding it fastened, called on Madame Montoni; but only a chilling silence ensued.

> 'She is dead!' she cried, – 'murdered! – her blood is on the stairs!'
>
> Emily grew very faint; could support herself no longer, and had scarcely presence of mind to set down the lamp, and place herself on a step. When her recollection returned, she spoke again at the door, and again attempted to open it, and, having lingered for some time, without receiving any answer, or hearing a sound, she descended the turret, and, with all the swiftness her feebleness would permit, sought her own apartment. …
>
> The grey of morning had long dawned through her casements, before Emily closed her eyes in sleep; when wearied nature, at length, yielded her a respite from suffering.

But of course the discoveries, the weapons and the blood, have nothing to do with Emily's aunt, who is alive if not exactly well in the eastern turret; they are from a battle between rival gangs of *banditti* that has been going on around the castle for some time. Coral Ann Howells has finely analyzed a similar passage from volume 3, chapter 6 of *Udolpho*, showing how the objective narrator, technically always present, disappears from view so that the reader is forced to accept, at face value, Emily's imaginings and suppositions about the murderous intentions of the servants whom Montoni has sent away with her when Udolpho is besieged. And Radcliffe's style contributes to the effect: "While the passage is cast in the form of reasoned argument, with one sentence depending on and balancing the other, it has really only the *appearance* of judiciousness; what we have in effect is the dramatisation of a process very close to obsession, going round and round the same point and finding no escape or release from the central anxiety."[7]

Because of Radcliffe's essential rationalism – whether the product of a Unitarian upbringing or not – the discoveries Emily makes always prove disappointing or bathetic, as the blood and armor do here. And the mysteries whose revelations are delayed the longest (the contents of the papers that St. Aubert makes Emily swear to burn unread, the vision of horror that lies behind the "black veil") are perhaps the most bathetic, partly because Radcliffe's narrator, usually eager to let us in on the slightest perturbations of the heroine's senses or speculations, here shuts us out. We don't get to see even vaguely what lies behind the black veil until the penultimate chapter of the final volume, and we never learn what dreadful words Emily inadvertently reads in her father's papers. Her fears suggest an anxiety about her own origins, about the devotion she has always understood between her beloved mother and father. But the papers refer to her father's sister, displaced and murdered by her rival Laurentini, and when she learns the story from Laurentini herself, instead of confirming her anxiety about her heritage, it leads only to the acquisition of a further legacy.

The Content and the Form: Politics and the Gothic Novel

The writing career of Ann Radcliffe, from 1789 to 1796, corresponds eerily with the French Revolution, although, as we have already seen, the Gothic novel begins much earlier and continues on into the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The Marquis de Sade had noted a connection at the time: the Gothic novel, he said, "became the necessary result of the revolutionary shocks which all Europe experienced," his point being that an audience that had almost universally experienced considerable suffering and anxiety demanded texts that would go far beyond the milk and water plots featured in the usual sentimental tales that had previously been popular. Now authors had to "call in Hell itself to assist in creating texts that would be interesting."[8] Sade is explaining why the terrors of Ann Radcliffe and the horrors of Matthew Lewis would appeal to readers of his day, but he isn't suggesting that Radcliffe or Lewis were in any sense writing about the Revolution. Ronald Paulson, in our own day, goes quite a bit further: the Gothic is actually a reflection of the French Revolution. "By the time *The Mysteries of Udolpho* appeared (1794), the castle, prison, tyrant and sensitive young girl could no longer be presented naively; they had all been familiarized and sophisticated by the events in France …. We are talking about a particular development in the 1790s, a specific plot that was either at hand for writers to use in the light of the French Revolution, or was in some sense projected by the Revolution and borrowed by writers who may or may not have wished to express anything about the troubles in France."[9]

The point, made somewhat more clearly by Marilyn Butler, is that Radcliffe's novels are revolutionary in spite of the politics of their creator: "Mrs. Radcliffe's symbolic 'meaning' is the progressive one: her innocent heroine, pure, passive, acutely sensitive, is acted upon by the evil, all-powerful tyrants who govern the world about her …. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* … might well have championed the individual oppressed by a corrupt society, to judge alone by their central situations and their emotive style. But Mrs. Radcliffe, although bent on exploiting her period's discovery of abnormal nervous conditions, remains resolutely orthodox in her religion and morals and conservative in her politics. Her evil society usually belongs to a past century, and to a country of Southern Europe; her typical tyrants are aristocrats of the Spanish type, narrow cold abbesses, or monks associated with the Inquisition."[10]

One feature of the Gothic novel that may clarify this oblique relationship to history is what I would call the episode of the unguarded door. We can ask: How do these novels function in the production of ideology? Specifically, how do they foreground the contradictions within current ideology? Consider the situation of Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, trapped by the mysterious,

domineering Montoni, within the walls of Udolpho, her lover Valancourt and any other help far away. The reader spends 300 pages participating anxiously in Emily's vacillations, observing her ricocheting around the castle, fearing rape and murder at every noise, always looking for a way out until finally, in chapter 9 of volume 3, she and her fellow prisoner Du Pont, together with assorted domestic servants, do little more than simply walk out into the Tuscan countryside. "Emily was so much astonished by this sudden departure," Radcliffe tells us, "that she scarcely dared to believe herself awake." It is exactly as though the castle had always been a dream prison.

Almost the same situation recurs twice in *Melmoth the Wanderer*, a late Gothic novel from 1820 by Charles Maturin, which takes some of the devices of Radcliffian suspense to their emotional endpoints, with Stanton immured as a sane man in a horrific madhouse, or of Monçada, a reluctant monk tortured in his monastery. The latter, especially, spends harrowing nights trapped in a tunnel in an attempted escape with another monk who ultimately betrays him to the Inquisition. Maturin makes the reader concentrate intensely on the way in which free men can be turned into caged animals, but ultimately both Stanton and Monçada are released: Stanton is set free without any rational explanation, while Monçada, in a moment of tumult, finds himself temporarily unguarded, and with a sense of ease that comes as a severe anticlimax, escapes his torment as though it had never been real.

The origin of this pattern, as of so many others, can be found in *The Castle of Otranto* – found twice here too in fact. In chapter 1, Isabella escapes from imprisonment by Manfred of Otranto through the comically described inattention of her guards. And in chapter 3, the hero Theodore, under sentence of death, escapes in almost exactly the same way, when Manfred sends everyone who can be spared in pursuit of Isabella, and Theodore's guards mistakenly assume that the order supersedes their previous duties. Matilda, Manfred's daughter, informs Theodore that she has saved him, but her feat consists primarily in supplying the information that there is no one at all left in the castle except the two of them. In an era that had produced the complex plot machinery of *Tom Jones*, the inattention to the means of these characters' escapes from their various imprisonments is striking. Surely, if they had wished, Walpole, Radcliffe, and Maturin could have invented machinery for delivering their respective victims of persecution. That they did not do so suggests that the prisons were unreal in the first place, prisons of the mind from which one finds oneself freed when one no longer considers oneself bound.

The Gothic novel seems to have been a production of ideology appropriate for the age of the French Revolution, an age in which the chains of feudal authority were snapped less by the violent fury of the people than by an equally sudden deflation of belief in the source of that authority. In a less violent

manner, and over a longer period than in France, England was experiencing the same crisis, in which the authority of a landed aristocracy gave way to the less centralized authority of the bourgeoisie, based on commerce and manufacturing. In both cases, however, the imagined hegemony of the ruling class proved to be a myth whose source of power was simply the temporary inability to see it as myth. Ideology in one of Louis Althusser's senses – the structure that life in society gives to thought – turns into ideology in the other sense – false consciousness, palpably false and arbitrary. The dungeon door that had been imagined so solid and impassible turns out, upon inspection, to be open and unguarded; the autocratic authority of the despot turns out to conceal a genuine power vacuum. From within the prison a Prince Manfred or Signor Montoni seems to be omnipotent; from outside, he seems an incompetent and petty tyrant. And the Theodores and the Emilies, once imprisoned within the walls, eventually succeed legitimately to their estates.

Reading the Dream

Finally, there is the question of how Radcliffe's readers read her novels. Q.D. Leavis proposed that there had been a shift from active to passive reading at the end of the eighteenth century, one that delayed the public acceptance of modernist texts. I would agree that Radcliffe, and the Gothic novel in general, sits astride a major shift in the response of the English reader to literature, a shift from reading for information, and for the sake of entry into a verisimilar world otherwise inaccessible to the reader, towards reading as an escape from the world one inhabits into an inner site of fantasy. We can see this exemplified in the contrast between two reviews of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, one by the anonymous critic for the *Monthly Review* for 1794, and the other by Thomas Noon Talfourd in the *New Monthly Review* for 1820. In the former, Radcliffe is praised for her "correctness of sentiment and elegance of style," for her "admirable ingenuity of contrivance to awaken [the reader's] curiosity, and to bind him in the chains of suspense," and for "a vigour of conception and a delicacy of feeling which are capable of producing the strongest sympathetic emotions, whether of pity or of terror." Talfourd talks about *Udolpho* in a very different way: "When we read, the world seems shut out, and we breathe only in an enchanted region where … the sad voices of the past echo through deep vaults and lonely galleries."

William Hazlitt, similarly in 1818 wrote that Radcliffe "makes her readers twice children, and from the dim and shadowy veil which she draws over the objects of her fancy, forces us to believe all that is strange and next to impossible … All the fascination that links the world of passion to the world unknown is

hers, and she plays with it at her pleasure; she has all the poetry of romance, all that is obscure, visionary and objectless in the imagination." It is not just the style of writing that is different here: the reviewer of 1794 is standing outside and evaluating a pretty fiction, while the later Talfourd and Hazlitt – as John Aikin argues – are describing an inward voyage to an imagined world. Anna Aikin Barbauld makes a similar point in her preface to *The British Novelists* (1810), about the novel as a locus for the imaginative play of the reader: "The humble novel is always ready to enliven the gloom of solitude … to take man from himself (at many seasons the worst company he can be in) and, while the moving picture of life passes before him, to make him forget the subject of his own complaints. It is pleasant to the mind to sport in the boundless regions of possibility; to find relief from the sameness of everyday occurrences by expatiating amidst brighter skies and fairer fields; to exhibit love that is always happy, valour that is always successful; to feed the appetite for wonder by a quick succession of marvellous events."[11]

This sense of the Gothic as demanding an inward projection, as carrying the reader towards states of transport and escape, appears not only in writers who approve the state but in those who do not. Novel-reading in the late eighteenth century was gendered female, and those attacking it shifted their focus during the vogue of the Gothic. In the 1760s and 1770s it was implied that indiscriminate reading was likely to erode women's moral principles by providing poor examples of conduct, but in the period after 1795 the anti-fiction editorial was more likely to attack reading as sapping strength of mind, wasting precious time, and calling the reader into a world whose attractions would lead her to neglect the duties and pleasures of her sublunary existence. Moralists like John Bennett warn as early as 1789 that the passion for literature "is dangerous to a woman. It … inspires such a romantic turn of mind, as is utterly inconsistent with the solid duties and proprieties of life." But at the height of the Gothic, "castle-building," the use of literature as material for fantasy, becomes the moralist's chief complaint. For example, T.H., in the *Lady's Monthly Museum* for March 1799, writes that her daughter "reads nothing in the world but novels. I am afraid she will read herself into a consumption … These time-killing companions monopolize every hour that is not devoted to dress or sleep … I am afraid," she concludes, "that the girl will never get a husband," and she asks the editor for the name of a man willing to wed a beautiful and well-off young lady with an addiction to romance.

On a more hysterical note, a letter in the *Sylph* for 6 October 1795 claims to have "actually seen mothers, in miserable garrets, *crying for the imaginary distress of an heroine*, while their children were *crying for bread*." And one "Rimelli," writing on "Novels and Romances" for the *Monthly Mirror* in 1802, insists that "Romances … serve only to estrange the minds of youth (specially

of females) from their own affairs and transmit them to those of which they read: so that, while totally absorbed with … the melancholy situation of … a Matilda, they neglect both their own interests and the several duties which they owe to parent, friend or brother."

The notion of seduction by fiction appears, naturally enough, in the fiction of the period as well. The most famous fictional victim of the Gothic novel is Catherine Morland, the heroine of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*),[12] who, after reading *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, mistakes a laundry list for a fragmentary manuscript and takes General Tilney for a wife-murderer, when he is in fact only a snobbish and mercenary man of the world. Other victims include Sophia Beauclerc, of Mary Charlton's novel *Rosella, or Modern Occurrences*, published in 1799 by the same Minerva Press that furnished such Sophias and Catherines with their favorite reading. Still other Gothic parodies include *Self-Control* (1810), by Mary Brunton and *The Heroine, or the Adventures of Cherubina*, by Eaton Stannard Barrett (1813).

To conclude, there were in the 1790s two very different implied readers: the first, whom the clergymen and journalists of the age personified as older and male, read primarily for factual information, for the reinforcement of ethical values, and for the pleasure of recognizing the persons and things of his world; the second was personified as younger and female, receptive rather than critical, and eager to indulge in the pleasures of imagination. So the Gothic vogue was partly self-reinforcing, in that its popularity began to draw in new classes of readers who had not formerly been a significant part of the market for literature. One major result was to pave the way for the reception of Romanticism in poetry as well as fiction, with the result that its bards – Wordsworth, Byron, and Scott, at least – despite a bit of rough handling from reviewers, were able to stir without conspicuous resistance a public that already looked to literature for the play of fantasy, dream, and desire. But the genre of romance at which Radcliffe excelled – terror Gothic – was superseded, ironically, by the historical romances of that romantic poet, Walter Scott.

Notes

1. Thomas Noon Talfourd was selected to write the biographical memoir because he had previously, in 1820, published a tribute to Radcliffe as a great romantic writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*. Rictor Norton suggests that the disappearance of Radcliffe's letters and journals may have been caused by the remarriage of her husband and his removal to France and death at Versailles, and he speculates that they "may survive in an archive in France, provenance unknown" (Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1999: 249).

2. Walpole to John Cole, 27 April 1773.
3. Quoted in Thomas Preston Peardon, *The Transition in English Historical Writing, 1760–1830* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), 144.
4. The first edition (1777) published as *The Champion of Virtue*, opens with a chatty address to the reader presenting her ideas about the uses of romantic fiction, including the need to keep the supernatural within the bounds of decorum and probability, and she introduces the text as the transcription of "a manuscript in the old English language" owned by a friend. The second edition (1778) was retitled and revised with the help of Martha Budgen, Samuel Richardson's daughter, and it drops the pretense – as Walpole did in the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* – that we are reading an old manuscript, though Reeve occasionally ends chapters and bridges gaps with a note about omissions due to the moist or moldy state of the original.
5. Yale edition of the *Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, 28:381–2 (April 8, 1778).
6. Originally published in *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (1773) by John and Anna Lætitia Aikin, "Sir Bertrand" was presented as an exemplary supplement to a brief critical essay, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror" ; the complete text (only 1400 words) is easily available online from many websites that give the preceding essay as well, including www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/barbauldessays.html#pleasure.

   Most historical studies of the Gothic ascribe the piece to Anna, the more famous of the two Aikins, who became a well-known author as Mrs. Barbauld, and so does Walpole. But in her 1824 memoir of her father John Aikin, Lucy Aikin says that, while almost all the *Miscellaneous Pieces* were by her aunt, "the fragment of Sir Bertram [*sic*] exhibited inventive powers that he had not before displayed" (p. 21). Lucy Aikin omits the fragment from her 1825 collected edition of Barbauld's complete works, and says in her prefatory biography of her aunt that "the authors [of *Miscellaneous Pieces*] did not think proper to distinguish their respective contributions, and several of the pieces have in consequence been generally misappropriated. The fragment of Sir Bertrand in particular, though alien from the character of that brilliant and airy imagination that was never conversant with terror, and rarely with pity, has been repeatedly ascribed to Mrs. Barbauld, even in print" (pp. xiii–xiv).
7. Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), 54–5.
8. Sade, *Oeuvres Completes* 10:71 (translation mine); the sentence quoted is from 1800.
9. Paulson, *Representations of Revolution* (Yale University Press 1983), 221, 224.
10. Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford University Press, 1975), 30.
11. "On the Origin and Progress of Novel-Writing," from *The British Novelists* (London, 1810), 58.
12. Probably written in some form around 1795 though revised later and not published until 1817, after Austen's death.

Chapter 9

Things As They Are, or The Adventures of Caleb Williams (1794)

The Author of *Caleb Williams*

William Godwin was born in 1756 in Wisbech, a market town in Cambridgeshire, one of a dozen children of a Nonconformist minister. As the most promising of his siblings, he was sent to study to become a Dissenting preacher in Norwich, then to the excellent Hoxton Academy in London from which he graduated with the equivalent of a degree in divinity in 1778. Over the next five years Godwin attempted, without success, to become a clergyman supported by an enthusiastic parish: his congregations at Ware, Stowmarket, and Beaconsfield were repulsed by his narrow Calvinistic theology and the intellectual rigor of his sermons. Meanwhile, Godwin's religious and political beliefs were themselves being assaulted by the currents of political thought from the French Enlightenment, to which he was introduced by William Fawcett, one of his acquaintances at Ware. After reading Holbach, Helvetius, and Rousseau, Godwin came to believe, as he wrote in *The Herald of Literature*, that "human depravity originates" not in Original Sin but "in the vices of political constitutions." By 1783 he had become an atheist and a radical. He moved back to London and successfully pursued the life of a novelist and journalistic writer. His historical sketches and his biography of William Pitt the Elder led Godwin to be employed as a political journalist by members of the liberal faction of the Whig party led by Charles James Fox. Through these connections Godwin met the republican radicals with whom he would later be associated, including his lifelong friend, the anarchist playwright Thomas Holcroft.

When the French Revolution broke out in July of 1789, Godwin was elated by the thought that the Enlightenment principles of Rousseau might be put into practice across the channel, and by the hope that such a revolution might spread

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to England. That opinion was in the mind of Richard Price, another Dissenting minister, when in November he gave a special sermon, "A Discourse on the Love of Our Country," in which he cheered on the French radicals and his own countrymen on the hundredth anniversary of the Glorious Revolution and the Declaration of Rights that had limited the power of the English crown. The most important conservative response to Price came from what might have seemed an unlikely source, the parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who had written sympathetically of the American colonists during their war of liberation. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) argued that the Glorious Revolution had only restored rights that James II had usurped, that the revolution in France had overturned all the laws and customs of the country, and that to imitate France was to invite total anarchy. Burke's attack in turn generated a pamphlet war between those who admired and those who abhorred the French Revolution. The most important ripostes to Burke were Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791).

Political Justice

Godwin met with those on the radical side, including Paine and Wollstonecraft, but he himself did not participate in the pamphlet war. Instead he worked slowly on a manuscript arguing his political principles commissioned by his publisher George Robinson, which became the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793). Godwin begins with the Rousseauist principles of human equality and natural goodness, viewing society as a blessing, because of the equally natural human desire to commune with one's fellow creatures, but government as a powerful corrupting force and at best a necessary evil.

Despite the evil results of bad laws, Godwin argued that revolutionary change was problematic because its methods were violent and its results uncertain; it might end up reinstituting equally abusive laws under the new regime. Ideally, changes in government ought to be the result of rational dialogue and argumentation. But when an abusive governmental system is entrenched, violent revolution may be necessary to extirpate it and create a new government.

Godwin argued that property rights – the usual reason for the constitution of governments – were also problematic. The world and its goods constituted for Godwin a common stock to which all had equal rights. The only genuine rationale for inequality would be the civic benefit and public pleasure that might arise from private wealth, such as the ability of rich men to build bridges and improve roads for all to use, to fund an art museum or orchestra for all to enjoy, and to subsidize scientific experimentation in order to improve our understanding of the natural world. Godwin argued, along property lines, that

marriage – which he defined as the ownership of a woman by a man – was intrinsically unjust; he called it "a monopoly, and the worst of monopolies":

> So long as I seek by despotic and artificial means, to maintain my possession of a woman, I am guilty of the most odious selfishness. Marriage …is a salutary and respectable institution, but not that form of marriage in which there is no room for repentance, and to which liberty and hope are equally strangers. No ties ought to be imposed on either party quitting the attachment whenever their judgment directs them to quit it. With respect to such infidelities as are compatible with an intention to adhere to it, the point of principal importance is a determination to have recourse to no species of disguise.

Most important, in relation to *Caleb Williams*, were Godwin's theories about crime and punishment. Godwin felt that capital punishment, as legislated in England, was supremely irrational; since both theft and murder were hanging offenses, a rational thief would proceed to murder any witnesses to the crime. Godwin admitted that prisons must exist, because society must be protected from those who have become habitual criminals. But the purpose of prisons should not be punishment – which would be both cruel and useless. Rather the criminal should be guided into a rational understanding of what we owe to our fellow creatures, without the use of force, physical or spiritual. Indeed, since human beings are naturally good, criminals must have been made what they are by society and its government: it is not their fault:

> A man of certain intellectual habits is fitted to be an assassin; a dagger of certain form, is fitted to be his instrument. The man is propelled to act by necessary causes and irresistible motives, which, having once occurred, are likely to occur again. The dagger has no quality adapted to the contraction of habits and though it have committed a thousand murders, is not more likely – unless so far as those murders, being known, may operate as a slight associated motive with the possessor – to commit murder again. Except in the articles here specified, the two cases are exactly parallel. The assassin cannot help the murder he commits, any more than the dagger.

Godwin ended *Political Justice* with a utopian vision of the future after the era of repressive governments has been brought to an end. He predicted a world in which

> [T]here will be no war, no crimes, no administration of justice, as it is called, and government. Beside this, there will be neither disease, anguish, melancholy nor

> resentment. Every man will seek, with ineffable ardor the good of all. Mind will be active and eager, yet never disappointed. Men will see the progressive advancement of virtue and good, and feel that, if things happen occasionally contrary to their hopes, the miscarriage itself was a necessary part of that progress.

. . . .

Political Justice was published in mid-February 1793, and it was an immediate popular and critical success, a formative influence on the ideas of both Wordsworth and Coleridge in their radical phase. But it had arrived at a critical moment in the political scene. Louis XVI had been guillotined in January, and on February 1 England declared war against revolutionary France – a war that would continue with a few brief interruptions through the various gyrations of French governments until the battle of Waterloo in 1815. The Pitt government of 1793 was already deeply afraid of those sympathetic to the French Revolution, like the Corresponding Societies that had formed the previous year to spread democratic ideas among the working men of England. Thomas Paine was indicted for seditious libel, a capital offense, and escaped trial by fleeing to France.

In 1794, Pitt's government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, prohibited public meetings of any political nature, and indicted ten advocates of radical reform for high treason, including Godwin's friend Holcroft. Godwin's views were equally subversive, but Pitt refrained from prosecuting him, primarily because he felt that *Political Justice*, costing nearly £2 at London bookstores, was beyond the reach of the working classes. (In fact groups of laborers pooled their pennies to buy copies, and cheap pirated editions were also available.) Chief Justice Eyre had argued that, despite the absence of any overt action against the government, which the law of treason normally required, the English Jacobins' opinions could be construed as subversive of the war effort and therefore treasonous. Godwin dashed off an anonymous pamphlet ridiculing this novel theory of "constructive" high treason. In November 1794, the first three radicals to be indicted for treason were brought to trial in London, but the London juries so quickly acquitted all three defendants that Pitt gave up on the idea of show trials and released the rest of those indicted.

Nevertheless, the crackdown on political meetings and journalism continued in London and Edinburgh, and the conviction and transportation to Australia of several publishers and political organizers meant that radical politics had to go underground for the duration. The war of ideas between radical reformers and conservatives continued, but the venue changed from public meetings and political tracts to novels, which could represent in fiction what could not be safely said. *Caleb Williams* is one of the first texts to come out of this literary war of ideas. Its first title, *Things as They Are*, suggests that it represents the obverse

of the utopian vision of *Political Justice*; in fact it strikes one from the first as a Gothic novel of surveillance, pursuit, and flight, but unlike the usual Gothic fiction in that it is set in England and in the present day. Published in 1794, it was an immediate success, going through several editions in England, and was quickly translated into French and German.

Mary and Shelley

Godwin had been a celibate bachelor until the age of 40, but with greater ease in his circumstances from two popular books, he cultivated social life among the English Jacobins, attracting many of the women who were an important part of this circle – Amelia Opie, Mary Hays, Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Robinson. Godwin had met Mary Wollstonecraft six years earlier, around the time of her 1790 riposte to Burke, but they had clashed. In the six years since then she had published the first modern feminist tract, the *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), had seen the French Revolution at first hand, and had fallen in love with, and been betrayed by, the American adventurer Gilbert Imlay, by whom she had had an illegitimate child. On her return to England, Wollstonecraft moved into lodgings in Godwin's neighborhood of Somers Town in 1796, and late that year they became lovers.

Wollstonecraft was as philosophically opposed to marriage as Godwin was; indeed, she was hard at work on a feminist novel, *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*, which delineates in scarifying detail the failure of English law and social practice to protect married women from violence, fraud, and patriarchal power. But she had become pregnant once again, and as she and Godwin considered the legal and social stigmas which their child would have to bear, they swallowed their philosophical objections, and were wed at St. Pancras Church in March 1797. At the end of August, Wollstonecraft delivered a healthy child whom they named Mary, but the placenta was retained, childbed fever developed and she died ten days later. Godwin was deeply affected by her loss, and immediately set to work to honor her memory with a posthumous edition of her previously unpublished works, including *Maria*. But he misgauged the reading public's tolerance for Wollstonecraft's unrestrained passionate nature. Readers were appalled that she had had sexual affairs outside marriage with Henry Fuseli, Gilbert Imlay, and Godwin himself, and that she had contemplated suicide when abandoned by her lover. Wollstonecraft's reputation would not recover until late in the twentieth century.

By 1798, the radicalism of British intellectual circles had given way to reaction, partly because the ideals of the French Revolution had already been

tainted by the Terror of 1794, and partly because the war with France had entered a new and more dangerous phase. As the eighteenth century ended, Godwin became the butt of anti-Jacobin writers, like George Walker, whose 1798 novel *The Vagabond* contains a Panglossian philosopher identifiable as Godwin. Although he continued to publish interesting philosophical novels (*St. Leon* in 1799, *Fleetwood* in 1805, *Mandeville* in 1817) none of these ever became a runaway best seller like *Caleb Williams*. Although Godwin took on commercial projects after the turn of the century – such as a set of educational books for children – neither his writing nor the gifts of wealthy admirers enabled him to support fully the blended family that resulted from his marriage, in 1802, to Mary Jane Clairmont, a widow with two children of her own.

By 1812 Godwin was deep in debt and pretty much forgotten by the public when he received a letter from the 20-year-old Percy Bysshe Shelley, who introduced himself as the heir to a baronetcy and a fortune of £6000 per year. A radical for whom *Political Justice* was his Bible, the handsome idealistic Shelley captivated the entire household. Godwin borrowed from Shelley to pay his urgent debts, while his daughter and two stepdaughters fell in love with him. Already married to Harriet Westbrook, Shelley eloped in 1814 with Mary Godwin, and Godwin's philosophical ideas about marriage did not prevent him from feeling outraged and betrayed. Godwin became reconciled with his disciple and his daughter, particularly after Harriet's suicide enabled the pair to marry late in 1816. The Shelleys published Mary's first and greatest novel, *Frankenstein*, dedicated to Godwin, in 1818, then moved to Italy, where they lived and wrote till Shelley's death, in a boating accident, in 1822. Mary returned to England the following year, staying with her father together with her surviving son by Shelley until she was able to arrange an independent household.

Godwin's major work of the 1820s was a four-volume history of England from the Civil War to the Restoration, the first major history to look at these years from the perspective of the parliamentary republicans. Its heroes are the leaders of the Long Parliament who administered England as a commonwealth during the brief period from 1649 to 1653, between the execution of Charles I and the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. In 1833, after the passage of the first Reform Bill and the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, literary friends persuaded Prime Minister Charles Grey to offer Godwin a post in the Exchequer that included a house along with a salary of £200 per year, and the anarchist philosopher, who had ridiculed pensions in *Political Justice*, ended his life as a pensioner. William Godwin survived into his eightieth year, dying in 1836.

The Genre of *Caleb Williams*

Godwin's rapid and vivid narrative is compulsively readable: the critic William Hazlitt said that no one could begin the novel without finishing it, and that no one who finished it could forget it. Its plot comes pre-sold to twenty-first-century audiences, who are familiar with movie thrillers – the ones about people who inadvertently learn a secret, either a personal secret or a secret of state, and who then are pursued by homicidal villains to within an inch of their lives until the showdown a few minutes before the end of the last reel. The plots of *Rear Window*, *The Three Days of the Condor*, and *The Bourne Identity*, all find their roots here.

In his preface to *Fleetwood*, when it was republished in 1832 in Bentley's Standard Novel series, Godwin claims that he engineered the thriller plot of *Caleb Williams* by starting with the last volume and working backwards. He began with an idea for a tale of "flight and pursuit, the fugitive in perpetual apprehension of being overwhelmed with the worst calamities, and the pursuer, by his ingenuity and resources, keeping his victim in a state of the most fearful alarm." The second volume, as he saw, would then have to present the rationale for this flight and pursuit, the discovery by the protagonist of a secret weighty enough to be dangerous, and the revelation to the pursuer that he had made that dangerous discovery. Finally, Godwin says, he thought through what would have to occur in the first volume: there the man with the secret, eminently virtuous if imperfect, and both wealthy and intelligent enough to pursue the hero endlessly, would have to be "driven to his first act of murder," an act we would see as arising from his virtues, and therefore not entirely culpable.

But the preface Godwin wrote for *Caleb Williams* when it was first published in 1794[1] suggested that the novel was not intended as an adventure story but rather as a political novel, an apologue that addressed the divide between the party of "reformation and change" and the one upholding "the existing constitution of society." The original title of *Caleb Williams* was *Things as They Are*, and Godwin insists that his novel is not a fantasy but a picture of the contemporary "moral world," a "general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man." In other words, the novel would be an exposition of his radical social philosophy published in *Political Justice* the year before, without the messianic forecast of the perfectible future, but rather with an exposé of the defective state of society, particularly in regard to criminal justice.

While a number of critics (including Marilyn Butler) posit that the novel Godwin wanted to write was *Things as They Are*, and while others (like Robert

Kiely) posit that the novel Godwin wanted to write was *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, the fact is that he wanted to write an adventure story that would *also* be a political novel. Many of the episodes work equally well in carrying out both intentions, and many of the ideas and opinions expressed seem taken directly from Godwin's arguments in *Political Justice*. But as commentators on the novel since Eric Rothstein in the 1960s have pointed out, once he let go of it in a novel, Godwin's imagination started to run away with him, producing a complex vision and a critique of intentions and motives that transcends the issues he raised in his philosophical tome. More on this later.

The Back Story and the Back Stories of that Back Story

The first volume of *Caleb Williams* loads the pistol that the second and third volumes will fire off; it is a back story that harks back to a narrative past before Caleb Williams has joined Ferdinando Falkland's household as his secretary. Caleb has noted that Falkland is strange, in a way we might call bimodal: depressed and despondent most of the time, his temper occasionally awakens to paroxysms of rage, most vividly when Caleb approaches an iron trunk and is accused by Falkland of being a spy. The master has secrets and Caleb wants to know what is at the heart of his mystery. Mr. Collins, Falkland's steward, whose favor got Caleb his employment, is the source, or so we are told, of the narrative that occupies the rest of the volume.

The first brief segment of this back story is thematically rather than causally related to the rest. The Pisani-Malvesi episode, contained in volume I, chapter 2, presents Falkland as a knight-gallant who has read and imitated the heroes of romance and, on his Grand Tour of Italy, is highly admired by all the inhabitants. He attracts, in particular, Lady Lucretia Pisani, and thus becomes an object of the jealous envy of Count Malvesi, who loves and hopes to marry the Lady Lucretia. Falkland, sensitive to Malvesi's feelings, and realizing he lacks "the feelings of a lover" toward Lucretia, makes himself clear to her and courts her successfully for Malvesi. But Malvesi is convinced that Falkland has toyed with his feelings as well as Lucretia's and makes overtures to Falkland suggesting that he is about to call him out to a duel. Falkland's diplomatic response is that he is always ready to defend his honor if necessary, but the Count may be acting in haste. Violence is avoided, and both Malvesi and Lucretia are grateful to Falkland. The point of the episode is to paint Falkland as a Christian gentleman-hero in the mold of Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison. In fact, the chapter is a somewhat briefer replica of an episode within *Sir Charles Grandison* (volume V, letter 23), where in Richardson the part of Lucretia is taken by Clementina della

Porretta, and where Count Malvesi is called Count Belvedere. (Even the name Mal-vesi seems an inversion of Bel-vedere.)

The rest of the book is taken up with the rivalry of the gracious Falkland and the coarse and vulgar bully, Barnabas Tyrrel. This begins as soon as Falkland moves into the neighborhood, and is admired by the rest of the gentry in ways that inspire Tyrrel's loathing and hatred. Tyrrel reacts by attempting to destroy those in his power who admire Falkland, particularly his ward, Emily Melvile, who has fallen in love with Falkland after he saves her life by gallantly rescuing her from a fire. In his resentment, Tyrrel contrives to marry her off to an illiterate and vulgar tenant aptly named Grimes, whose courtship of Emily reveals his lascivious anticipation of dominating her. Emily's resistance causes Tyrrel to imprison her; Grimes pretends to be willing to help her escape, but in fact he betrays her. Falkland providentially is able to come to her rescue, but Tyrrel has her arrested for debt, she is taken to a gaol, where she catches a fever and dies.

In the midst of this melodrama, Godwin inserts a chapter about a tenant farmer of Tyrrel's named Hawkins who becomes another object of Tyrrel's domination: Tyrrel wants Hawkins's son for a servant, Hawkins refuses, and Tyrrel exacts revenge in a variety of ways. He obstructs a path from the Hawkins farm to the main road and when Hawkins's son clears the obstructions at night has him taken to gaol as a felon; meanwhile Hawkins's farm animals suddenly begin to die off. Again, Falkland attempts to intercede for Tyrrel's victims and is told to mind his own business. The episode ends with Hawkins absconding from the neighborhood the same night that his son escapes from the gaol. The climax of the volume is in chapter I.11, where Falkland publicly shames Tyrrel for his treatment of both the Hawkinses and Emily, and Tyrrel responds by first knocking Falkland to the floor with his fists and kicking him when he is down.

At the end of the chapter we are told: "Mr. Tyrrel was found by some of the company dead in the street, having been murdered at the distance of a few yards from the assembly house." Falkland is immediately suspected of the murder, but he denies having murdered him, indeed argues successfully that, having intended to challenge Tyrrel to a duel, he is the man most deeply damaged by the murder of Tyrrel, since it has prevented his being able to get satisfaction for his insulted honor. A few weeks later the Hawkinses are arrested for the murder of Tyrrel; aside from Falkland, they were the people most recently at odds with Tyrell, and an incriminating knife is found in their dwelling that corresponds to the one that slew Tyrell; both are tried, condemned and hanged for the crime. Collins's narrative concludes by relating that after the execution, Falkland became the psychologically damaged creature who has so engaged Caleb's curiosity. But of course Caleb's curiosity is rather heightened than assuaged by

Collins's narrative. Most of what is told here is in effect public knowledge, the history of the neighborhood; some of the judgments are explicitly those of Collins. But Falkland's behavior to Caleb, at a time that is by now "several years" after the incidents involving Tyrrel, indicates to Caleb that Falkland has unrevealed secrets at the heart of his mysterious turn of mind.

It is clear that Caleb becomes a suspicious reader of Collins's narrative, but the entire narrative in the first volume of the novel would itself seem to invite suspicious readings, because so much of it parallels important episodes in earlier fiction, primarily the novels of Richardson.[2] As mentioned, the Pisani/Malvesi story summarizes a very similar episode in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). The deathbed scene of Mr. Clare in chapter 5, warning Falkland about his "impetuosity" and his rash reactions to "imagined dishonour" suggests the similar deathbed scene of Allworthy giving advice to Tom Jones in book V of Fielding's novel. Falkland saving Emily from the fire in chapter 6, exiting the flames "with his lovely half-naked burthen in his arms," suggests the fire scene in the second installment of Richardson's *Clarissa*. The following chapter presents Emily again in a *Clarissa* situation, Tyrrel planning to marry her off to the grossly illiterate Grimes, who relishes the idea of ravishing her, which echoes Clarissa and Solmes. In chapter 8, the sequence in which Grimes pretends to help Emily escape from her imprisonment in Tyrrel Place, suggests the elopement of Clarissa from Harlowe Place in the first volume, while Falkland's coincidentally timely interference with Grimes's plan to carry Emily off suggests the rescue by Sir Charles Grandison of Harriet Byron from abduction by Sir Hargreaves Pollexfen. Finally, Emily's arrest for debt, and her illness and death following that arrest again seems drawn from the final volume of Richardson's *Clarissa*.

In a sense the fact that texts echo earlier texts should not be surprising. It can be a mere coincidence, like the fact that Sophia, in *Tom Jones*, finds herself in a similar position to Clarissa, at odds with her father, who locks her up in the hope of getting her to agree to marry a man she loathes. (The first part of *Clarissa* was published in 1747, but Fielding had been working on *Tom Jones* since 1745, and had undoubtedly conceived from the beginning the Tom–Sophia–Blifil triangle that generates the plot.) Or it could derive from the fact that Godwin, particularly when he was casting about for incidents to populate the back story of Falkland's depression, rage, and fear, used the first ideas that came to his mind, including ones that were ripped from the century's best sellers. As Godwin admits in his Introduction to *Fleetwood*, "it was ever my method to get about me any productions of former authors that seemed to bear on my subject. I never entertained the fear, that in this way of proceeding I should be in danger of servilely copying my predecessors." In either case, it would be polite to ignore the echoes.

Sexuality and Surveillance: The Psychology of the Stalker

For most of the novel, we will become familiar with the psychology of Caleb as a prisoner and as a fugitive. But at the beginning of Volume II, Caleb is the cat rather than the mouse. He becomes fascinated by Falkland, and observes him closely, while Falkland, for his part, becomes highly aware of Caleb's gaze. Caleb spies on Falkland less as a duty than as a pleasure, indeed a forbidden pleasure:

> I determined to place myself as a watch upon my patron. The moment I had chosen this employment for myself, I found a strange sort of pleasure in it. To do what is forbidden always has its charms, because we have an indistinct apprehension of something arbitrary and tyrannical in the prohibition .... That there was danger in the employment served to give an alluring pungency to the choice. (II. 1)

But of course, Caleb does not merely watch Falkland; he provokes him in order to create something to watch. In the same chapter, Caleb and Falkland converse about Alexander the Great, with Falkland apparently identifying with Alexander's desire to be seen as divine in order to rule his followers. At one point, seemingly at random, Caleb asks, "Clitus … was a man of very coarse and provoking manners, was he not?" Cleitus was a Macedonian general, originally an adherent of Alexander's father Philip, who provoked Alexander into a rage in the course of a drunken banquet in Samarkand, whereupon Alexander "seized a spear from one of the guards and ran him through." Plutarch tells us that Cleitus "was naturally of a harsh temper and willful" (Life of Alexander, 50.9). Caleb's general point, given the discussion, is an illustration of his argument that whatever Alexander's lofty virtues, it is hard to defend a man "whom a momentary provocation can hurry into the commission of murders," but his quip about Cleitus seems to be a backhanded way of bringing to mind another man of "very coarse and provoking manners" – Barnabas Tyrrel, whom Falkland stabbed to death in a rage. Instantly, Caleb realizes he has created something worth looking at; today we call them micro-expressions, the momentary, instantly repressed visible evidence of an emotion. Falkland "gave me a penetrating look as if he would see my very soul. His eyes were then in an instant withdrawn. I could perceive him seized with a convulsive shuddering, which, though strongly counteracted, and therefore scarcely visible, had I know not what of terrible in it."

Caleb enjoys provoking Falkland: indeed the pleasure is such that he discovers he cannot stop himself. Finding a letter from the elder Hawkins in an

old chest of drawers, he lets it fall where Falkland will pick it up, read, and remember. When Falkland explodes in a fit of rage at him, Caleb cowers, offers to leave his service, even offers to allow Falkland to kill him. All this emotion puts Caleb into a "rapture" to think that he is of such importance to Falkland. As he cowers, at the end of II.3, Caleb swears to himself, "that I would never prove unworthy of so generous a protector." But in the very next paragraph (II.4), "the old question that had excited my conjectures recurred to my mind, Was he the murderer?" Caleb reverberates for some time between being overawed by Falkland and needing to provoke him, while Falkland, on his side, oscillates between explosions of rage and deep and withdrawn depression. The penultimate episode concerns a peasant accused of murder, for whom Falkland is serving as Justice of the Peace to decide whether to commit him for trial at the assizes. Caleb decides to attend the hearing and watch, not the accused, but Falkland.

But Falkland is also watching Caleb watching: "We exchanged a silent look, by which we told volumes to each other. Mr. Falkland's complexion turned from red to pale, and from pale to red. I … would willingly have withdrawn myself. But it was impossible; my passions were too deeply engaged; I was rooted to the spot; though my own life, that of my master, or almost of a whole nation had been at stake, I had no power to change my position." The examination proceeds, and the accused's story, at a lower social level, is parallel to that of Falkland and Tyrell, about a sensitive young man who, driven past endurance, kills a bully who threatens both him and a helpless woman. And, like Claudius in *Hamlet*, Falkland hears the tale until he can bear no more:

> I could see, while his muscles preserved an inflexible steadiness, tears of anguish roll down his cheeks. Falkland … suddenly rose, and with every mark of horror and despair rushed out of the room …. This affair was no sooner concluded, than I hastened into the garden, and plunged into the deepest of its thickets. My mind was full, almost to bursting. I no sooner conceived myself sufficiently removed from all observation, than my thoughts forced their way spontaneously to my tongue, and I exclaimed, in a fit of uncontrollable enthusiasm, "This is the murderer; the Hawkinses were innocent! I am sure of it! I will pledge my life for it! It is out! It is discovered! Guilty, upon my soul!" … I felt as if my animal system had undergone a total revolution. My blood boiled within me. I was conscious to a kind of rapture for which I could not account. I was solemn, yet full of rapid emotion, burning with indignation and energy. In the very tempest and hurricane of the passions, I seemed to enjoy the most soul-ravishing calm. I cannot better express the then state of my mind than by saying, I was never so perfectly alive as at that moment.

Caleb's response, in these days since Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men*, can strike today's readers as sexual, even orgastic: he seems to have probed and penetrated his master Falkland. George Haggerty calls this "a vivid portrayal of male–male desire" and argues that "spying itself is an act of sexual violence."[3]

This, of course, is not the final act of spying; Caleb follows this up by taking the occasion of a chimney fire to break open the iron trunk that had attracted curiosity in the very first chapter of the novel, a trunk that Caleb has long been sure contains the answer to the mystery that he sees in the heart of Falkland. But as he lifts the lid, Falkland is suddenly present, and the power/knowledge relationship between Caleb and Falkland suddenly is reversed. This overt criminal act puts Caleb deep in Falkland's power, and for the rest of the novel Falkland attempts either to imprison Caleb or to keep him under surveillance.

Much of the rest of the novel can be understood as an attempt to dramatize the problems with the legal systems of Britain, of what is wrong – almost beyond repair – with Things as They Are, but it is interesting perhaps to note that the key motivating factors of volume I and the first third of volume II of *Caleb Williams* are not really addressed by Godwin in his philosophical treatise. The envy inspired in Tyrrel by the admiration of the neighborhood gentry for Ferdinando Falkland, the jealousy he feels about his ward Emily's sexual attraction for Falkland, and the quasi-sexual desire Caleb feels in relation to Falkland and his secrets – these all too human traits are not addressed in *Political Justice*. What his ideology is blind to Godwin the man understands, and his novel reflects that understanding.

Imprisonment and Surveillance

Godwin's argument in *Political Justice*, following Beccaria, was that capital punishment is always wrong, more horrifying than murder itself because it is carried out in cold blood; and it is not merely wrong in itself: its prevalence leads to further crimes as criminals eliminate any witnesses who can testify against them. The pursuit of Caleb Williams by Ferdinando Falkland exemplifies this. Crimes were themselves primarily the result of the social choices forced upon people, who are not guilty of what they cannot help, any more than a dagger is guilty when it is used as an instrument of murder. People, unlike daggers, form habits, however, and must be restrained so that they do not repeat the harm they do to others, and if possible they must be reformed. Restraint and reformation are what call prisons into being, but Godwin opposed both the prisons that existed in Great Britain, which he called seminaries of

vice, and the improvements suggested by contemporary prison expert John Howard, who had advocated solitary confinement to encourage meditation and self-scrutiny.

The horrors of imprisonment in actual British gaols of the period are explored in a rather mechanical way in II.11, but Godwin almost immediately poses the more interesting question about whether stone walls do a prison make. The last volume of the novel explores a different sort of imprisonment – one that may seem familiar today, but was only an imaginary exercise in the 1790s: becoming an object of surveillance, observed and controlled by powers that, almost supernaturally, are always aware of where one is and what one is doing. Having escaped from gaol, Caleb finds that England is his prison, just as Hamlet called Denmark one, and for the same reason, because it contains nothing but the sour remains of an obsession he cannot evade. And once the novel is over, if not before, the reader may become aware that Godwin has been exploring a kind of imprisonment that might almost be called existential, in the sense that Caleb ultimately finds himself imprisoned within his own narrative. The thrashings Godwin experienced as he tried out different endings to his novel bear witness to the unresolvable inconsistencies between his social and political ideology and the all too human psychology of his central character.

The central prison sequence (volume II, chapters 11–14) begins with Caleb's incarceration and ends with his escape, and the opening chapter takes up the standard litany of complaints about the prison system: the gloomy passages, the dirty cells, the company of the dregs of society, the harsh and inhumane turnkeys. Initially, Godwin seems unclear whether he is writing a separable essay or whether Caleb is writing his memoirs. The description of "cells 7.5 feet by 6.5, below the surface of the ground, damp, without window, light, or air, except from a few holes worked for that purpose in the door, [in which] three persons are put to sleep together", is footnoted to John Howard's treatise on prisons. Caleb asks the reader to "forgive this digression", which consists of "general remarks", while at the same time insisting that these remarks are the fruit of personal experience, dearly bought. Godwin aim is to arouse the reader's outrage that such pestholes exist in a supposedly free nation, that Englishmen may be thrown into them to rot for months merely on suspicion of having committed a crime, or to die of endemic disease.[4]

In what might be called Godwin's "Harry and Louise" moment, spelling out the political issues for the witless, Caleb is visited by his fellow-servant Thomas the footman, who assumes that Caleb is guilty of the crime for which he has been framed. But once Thomas has fully taken in Caleb's situation – shackled, bound, sleeping on the damp stones, eating moldy bread and drinking filthy water – he exclaims that

> "You have been very wicked to be sure, and I thought it would have done me good to see you hanged .... But, damn it, when I talked of your being hanged, I did not think of your suffering all this into the bargain .... A parcel of fellows with grave faces swear to us that such things never happen but in France and other countries the like of that."

Nevertheless, and despite the way it works against his ideological motive, Godwin cannot let the matter rest with the material conditions of incarceration. In the chapter following that of his imprisonment, Caleb works himself into an ecstasy meditating upon the ways in which a mind strong by nature and well furnished with memories and learning can keep active and engaged despite the physical privations and lack of external stimuli. He can, for example, work his way through Euclid from memory, or write novels in his imagination, remember his entire past or envision the process of his future death. Being hanged holds no terrors for Caleb, once he considers that all men must die, and that dying while in good mental and physical health has certain advantages over dying while sick and enfeebled by age. Falkland, his persecutor, is essentially impotent to destroy him: "You may cut off my existence," Caleb exults, "but you cannot disturb my serenity". Exactly how convincing this passage is supposed to be is not clear, but Godwin certainly does not mark Caleb's new fortitude as mere self-deception. Considered as a mood it seems to last for most of our hero's imprisonment, although his mind seems more intensely and effectively employed when Caleb stops imagining the propositions of Euclid and applies his faculties instead to imagining a means of escape from his dungeon.

Caleb's adventures after his escape from his gaol are what make Godwin's novel the precursor to the popular thriller, a wildly various sequence of episodes set in vivid locations in the countryside, in cozy market towns, busy seaports, and the metropolis of London itself. But as Godwin proleptically announces with Caleb's opening sentence with its simple summary – "My life has for several years been a theatre of calamity" – Caleb's freedom is an illusion. Caleb, who has spent months in a complex process of escaping from his gaol, now spends several years on the run, through a series of scenes, each of which is merely an instantiation of the original escape, endlessly repeated like a recurring nightmare. The claustrophobia of the gaol gives way to the agoraphobia of Godwin's Hobbesian scene, where any man's hand may turn against Caleb at any time. He can move, and motion may be preferable to confinement. But eventually it dawns upon us as it dawns upon Caleb that the relief he felt on escaping from gaol was like the relief he felt when he discovered in his dungeon

that he could use a discarded nail to release himself from his manacles and fetters. Caleb could wander at will around his cell, true, but he was still in gaol. Escaped, Caleb's cell is England, around which he can wander, but he wanders like Cain, not at will but forced to change his perch and his outer shape each time he recognizes he has become an object of suspicion and surveillance.

Bentham imagined the Panopticon in 1791, and only a few years later Godwin imagined something greater: a system of surveillance that, fed by wealth and power, could turn an entire country into a gaol for a dangerous individual. As Falkland's creature Gines sums it up for us and for Caleb, "You are a prisoner at present and I believe all your life will remain so … within the rules, and the rules with which the softhearted squire indulges you are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of these climates. The squire is determined you shall never pass the reach of his disposal" (III. 15). Godwin may be courting what Fielding termed the "marvelous," but not the supernatural, in representing how one man, Gines, could penetrate Caleb's various disguises and assumed accents, discover his intermediaries, and track him through the anonymous inns and lodgings of London.[5] But Gines has help: the broadside offering a substantial reward for Caleb's capture incites the thief-takers, private precursors of police detectives, to seek him out, while Falkland's widespread publication of the criminal biography, *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Caleb Williams*, destroys Caleb's reputation with the respectable. Even friends who have known his character from their own experience, like Laura Denison, join what Jane Austen was later to call the "neighborhood of voluntary spies" that regulates each community, to hound Caleb out of his Welsh market-town.

Today surveillance is a commonplace – we have computers, listening devices, cell phones that transmit our location at each moment, ankle bracelets that allow us to put people under "house arrest" in their own homes. If advances in cybernetic culture make it possible for the US National Security Agency to monitor billions of telephone transmissions, effectively wiretapping whole neighborhoods, the technical change that made Godwin's version of surveillance possible was the print culture itself. Print culture cuts both ways: it allows Caleb the means of life by writing, using agents to avoid exposing himself to public scrutiny, but also makes it possible to spread throughout an entire nation the poison that destroys Caleb's ability to live in society.[6]

The third and most modern-sounding mode of imprisonment explored in *Caleb Williams* is the sense we are given of Caleb's being imprisoned inside himself in a hell of his own making. It is easiest to see what sort of hell this is if we first take a look at Falkland's fate, because Caleb and Falkland are unwilling partners locked into a death-spiral. Falkland's first impulse, once he realizes that Caleb has discovered his secret, is to bind Caleb close to him, to imprison

him within his hall and, when Caleb manages to escape from domestic surveillance, to frame Caleb with a trumped-up burglary. But however willing he is to wound Caleb, Falkland is yet afraid to strike. Since his guilty secret is that he committed a murder and connived at the execution of two innocent men, the last thing he is capable of doing is perpetrating another judicial murder – in fact it is his half-brother Forester who commits Caleb to stand trial for the burglary, over Falkland's impassioned protests. Caleb himself realizes his position when he confronts Falkland in III.12: "What is the mysterious vengeance that you can yet execute against me? You menaced me before; you can menace no worse now. You are wearing out the springs of terror." And the obsession with controlling Caleb has its cost: the effort, as we see whenever Falkland appears in volume III, is visibly and progressively destroying him.

Parallel to this, Caleb after the reversal in II.6 is the passive partner of the death-spiral, suffering physical abuse and ordeals that Falkland does not. The adventure narrative is so absorbing that it is only when we stand back from it that we recognize that Caleb is as possessed by Falkland as Falkland is by Caleb, since he can shape no interests, no goals, no motivations, no life to speak of, apart from his efforts to evade his surveillance. After the collapse of the Laura Denison idyll, Caleb like his master throws himself ever more fervently into an obsessive quest for self-justification, and the narrative circles back to its beginning in a vain search for a point of origin from which a new start can be made: "My life for several years has been a vast theatre of calamity," Caleb began, and he concludes in III.14 by telling us that "the writing of this memoir served as an avocation for the last several years." But writing itself, beginning in "melancholy satisfaction" is now "changed into a burthen." Once entrapped in Falkland's web, Caleb is now entrapped in his own web, his scene of writing.

The Two Denouements

And Godwin may have been entrapped as well, because, once the narrative had come full circle to explain its origins, he had to find a denouement consistent with its vision. The manuscript ending discovered by Gilbert Dumas is accepted by many readers as the better conclusion to the story, since it accords with the bleak vision of truth being effectively unable to speak to political power, of the unequal rights of the working classes before the law. In effect, Falkland gets away with murder not once but twice. It may indeed be more consistent with the Godwin of *Political Justice*, but what it tells us about the result of Caleb's speaking – that Caleb has been incarcerated again, either in a private asylum or a prison – is a mere return to the "springs of terror" that Caleb had declared were already worn out. The final paragraphs of this ending, coming directly

after Caleb notices that he has been drugged, designed as an indication of the imminent dissolution of Caleb's mind, are in obvious imitation of Richardson, specifically the "scraps and fragments" that Clarissa Harlowe writes immediately after she is drugged and raped by Lovelace.[7]

The published ending, preferred by Gerard Barker and others, presents a double *peripeteia*, in which Caleb hales Falkland into court. Falkland, moved by Caleb's speech, admits his own guilt and dies soon after, while Caleb turns from justifying himself to accusing himself, of Falkland's murder. But to make this double reversal work, Godwin is forced to create a speech in the court for Caleb that recasts, sometimes subtly, sometimes grossly, the narrative we have experienced up to III.14. For example, Caleb claims that he "would have died a thousand deaths" rather than betray Falkland's secret, even though he had accused Falkland of the murder of Tyrrel before a London magistrate as recently as chapter 11 of volume III. Both endings provide effective closure to the plot of flight and pursuit, but neither can be a fully satisfying completion of the philosophical narrative.

"A Half-Told and Mangled Tale"

That this was not the original plan, Godwin noted in his 1832 introduction to *Fleetwood*: "I began my narrative, as is the more usual way, in the third person. But I speedily became dissatisfied. I then assumed the first person, making the hero of my tale his own historian." Though Godwin doesn't explain the reason for his dissatisfaction, one suspects that Caleb's experiences seemed more vivid in the first person. But the problem with the use of the first person, as we have seen with *Oroonoko* and with *Moll Flanders*, is that it makes possible suspicious readings that the author may not have intended: *qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

And there are occasions when Caleb's narrative ties itself into logical knots that Godwin almost certainly did not intend. At the outset as Caleb introduces himself, he tells us (appropriately, given his role as the Man Who Knew Too Much) that "the spring of action, which, perhaps more than any other, characterized the whole train of my life, was curiosity." But he goes on: "I was desirous of tracing the variety of effects which might be produced from given causes. It was this that made me a sort of natural philosopher; I could not rest till I had acquainted myself with the solutions that had been invented for the phenomena of the universe." We might now expect to find Caleb describing his attachment to books expounding the physical sciences, but instead he describes his "invincible attachment to books of narrative and romance …. I read, I devoured compositions of this sort. They took possession of my soul." And Caleb is not only a consumer of novels, he becomes a producer of them as

well. In III.8, while hiding from Falkland's persecutions in London, masquerading as "a deserted, solitary lad of Jewish extraction," Caleb tries to meet expenses by writing poetry for the literary magazines, and finds that he can make money most quickly and reliably by writing narratives about crime, "histories of celebrated robbers …, anecdotes of Cartouche, Gusman de Alfarache and other memorable worthies, whose carreer [*sic*] was terminated upon the gallows." (And, turnabout being fair play, Caleb becomes the subject of exactly such a crime novel: in III.10, he hears a street peddler bawling out that he has for sale "the most wonderful and surprising history, and miraculous adventures of Caleb Williams.")

The problem with learning, in volume III, that Caleb becomes not just a reader but an author of crime novels, is that it reflects back on the first volume of *Caleb Williams*, the back story about how Falkland becomes a murderer. Caleb presents this narrative as primarily the product of his questioning Collins, Falkland's steward, but except for chapter 12, which Caleb strategically presents entirely in Collins's voice,[8] the narrative shifts its focalization wildly from one center of consciousness to another: Caleb presents here, without any indication of how he can know them, the thoughts and private conversations of Tyrrel, of Emily Melvile, of the Hawkinses, even of minor characters like Grimes and Mrs. Jakeman. Given the likeness of the events of the first volume to some of the "books of narrative and romance" Caleb and his readers grew up reading, we can only conclude that these events have the air of familiar fiction. And everything we have read about the oppression of Caleb by Falkland, via the "memoir" that Caleb says he composed "over several years," is self-justifying rhetoric, a brief for Caleb Williams. And we are entrapped in that narrative because there is no counter-narrative. If this is not the truth about Things as They Are, we are in deep trouble, since we have no access to any higher truth. So Godwin's decision "to make the hero of my tale his own historian," adopted to enhance the pathos of the narrative and its political punch, may have had the paradoxical effect of calling attention to the synthetic aspect of the novel at the expense of its mimetic and thematic aspects. As a novel made up of bits and pieces of other novels, *Caleb Williams* concludes as a "half-told and mangled tale."

Notes

1. The preface was withdrawn by the publisher from the 1794 edition of *Caleb Williams*, but printed in late 1795, after the London treason trials had concluded and Pitt's suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act had expired.
2. The names of the principal characters are significant as well. Falkland's name and split personality seems to come from history rather than literature; it is compounded

from two generals on opposite sides of the English Civil War: "Ferdinando" suggests Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax of Cameron, who fought for the Parliamentarians, while "Falkland" suggests Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, who fought for the Royalist cause until his death at the battle of Newbury. Barnabas Tyrrel is the name of a minor character in chapter XV of volume I of Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1765), one who stabs his brother-in-law in a fit of rage; Brooke's novel, nowadays almost forgotten, was a best seller in the late eighteenth century in an abridgement by John Wesley. Caleb Williams, accused by Falkland of spying upon him, shares the given name of one of the spies Moses sends to scout the Promised Land.

3. George E. Haggerty, "'The End of History': Identity and Dissolution in Apocalyptic Gothic," *The Eighteenth Century* 41.3 (2000): 225–46; quote from p. 229. Haggerty argues further that the rivalry between the hypermasculine Tyrrel and the small, delicate Falkland has similar male–male overtones, as does Falkland's violent act, stabbing Tyrrel from behind.
4. Godwin presents, as though Caleb had witnessed it himself, the 1724 case of Francis Brightwell, who was accused of a highway robbery actually committed by the noted highwayman Jack Sheppard, who died after his acquittal from a fever contracted in Newgate. Godwin's narrative is taken directly from the *Newgate Calendar*.
5. Certainly the coincidence that Caleb's publisher happens to be Gines's half-brother goes a bit over the top. But Caleb has undeserved good luck, as well as bad, to redress the balance.
6. Caleb's extralegal sentence – to live in the British Isles in a spacious solitary confinement until he dies – has echoes for us today in the perhaps unintended consequences of "Megan's Law," which requires pedophiles released from prison to register locally. This ostensibly protects local children, but creates the equivalent of a life sentence for the pedophile – including any who, like Godwin's Caleb, may have been wrongfully accused.
7. For example, the *Caleb Williams* manuscript ending (Postscript II) begins: "Dear Mr. Collins, I have a thousand things to tell you – I do not know what is the matter with me, but I am very ill." Clarissa's "Paper I" written after the drugging and rape begins: "My dearest Miss Howe! Oh! What dreadful, dreadful things have I to tell you! … Whatever they have done to me, I cannot tell; but I am no longer what I was in any one thing." Caleb tells of a "poor traveler" who "met with a wild beast" which "cried out most piteously" but its cries were "an imposition" – an allegory on him and his antagonist Falkland – just as Clarissa creates a fable of herself and Lovelace about "a young lady who took a fancy to a young lion" which "on a sudden fell on her and tore her to pieces."
8. The main reason for relating the investigation into the murder of Tyrrel in Collins's voice is to leave uncontroverted for the moment Collins's statement of Falkland's innocence and the guilt of the Hawkinses.

Chapter 10

Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since (1814)

The Author of *Waverley*

Like Henry Fielding, Walter Scott came to the novel relatively late in life, at the age of 42, after two other careers, one in the law, to which Scott was brought up, and the other in a different genre of literature. He was born in 1771 to a middle-class family in Edinburgh; his father, Walter Scott Sr., though descended from Lowland lairds, had become a respected solicitor. The first son to survive infancy, Scott was lamed for life by poliomyelitis at the age of 2, though he was otherwise a healthy and vigorous youngster. He was sent by his parents to live at his grandfather's country house in the Border country just north of the Tweed, and it was there that absorbed the lore of Scottish nationality, songs and stories about his own distant ancestors, and met men who could tell him from their own experience about the Rebellion of 1745 or the retribution exacted after the battle of Culloden. He received a liberal education at the High School of Edinburgh and at Edinburgh University, where he moved in the circles of the luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment; he attended the evening parties of the philosopher and historian Adam Ferguson, at which he met the poet Robert Burns.

Apprenticed to his father at the age of 15, Scott worked at copying writs and contracts, while keeping novels and poetry at his desk to dip into when business was not pressing. He took an active intellectual role at both the Literary Society and the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, where he read original papers on literature and universal history. Despite distractions like these, Scott took his examinations in civil and criminal law and was called to the bar in 1792. The practice of law never absorbed his full energies, but his father's legal

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connections and his own friends in Edinburgh society provided enough work for him to have a decent living and to marry, though he did not begin to earn real wealth until he became a poet and a novelist. And even when he has succeeded beyond his wildest dreams as a creative writer, he never gave up the law, although he did stop arguing cases when he became one of the six Clerks of the Court of Session in 1805, an office that came with a salary of £1300. The two sides of Scott, the romantic dreamer and the practical man of affairs, coexisted within him for the rest of his life. In terms of the politics of the day, the unrest caused in Great Britain by the French Revolution, Scott was a Tory, taking the side of established power against the radicals like William Godwin who emerged in Edinburgh, as they did in London.

Scott made his reputation as a poet long before he attempted to write a novel. His earliest literary works were translations from the German of romantic works by Bürger and Goethe, along with literary ballads of his own composition ("Glenfinlas, or Lord Robert's Coronach" set in the Highlands near Loch Katrine, and "St. John's Eve", set near his grandfather's house on the border) that were first published in M.G. Lewis's anthology *Tales of Wonder* (1800). Scott followed this up with *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802; second edition 1803), an annotated anthology of traditional ballads which he had collected on his travels around the Scottish countryside – a revision, from the north side of the border, of Bishop Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). This might be called a work of scholarship, except that Scott, contrary to today's practices, felt free to smooth out the rough folk poetry that he had found by mending rhymes and adding stanzas. *Minstrelsy* sold out its first edition quickly, and Scott added a third volume of modern ballads to the second edition, including several more of his own original compositions based on history or folktales. One composition too lengthy to fit into *Minstrelsy* became *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), a poetic narrative of a border feud, with a sublime description of Melrose Abbey by moonlight that caused tourists to flock to the area to experience the sight for themselves. This went through six editions in three years and made Scott one of the most admired of British poets.

For the next nine years, Scott produced narrative poetry in the same vein, often based on episodes of Scottish history: *Marmion* (1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) were even more successful, the latter selling 25,000 copies in the first eight months. That was the high-water mark as the public subsequently began to tire of the genre; the later *Rokeby* (1813) sold only 10,000 copies – though that would certainly be considered a tremendous success by most poets' standards.[1] With the income, Scott bought a farmhouse overlooking the Tweed, along with the surrounding land, and named it Abbotsford, for the nearby Melrose Abbey. His earnings from writing were primarily devoted

to making additions to the grounds and the house, which eventually grew into a magnificent baronial castle in the sixteenth-century style.

Scott's first novel, *Waverley, or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, was published in 1814. Exactly when it was begun is unclear, partly because Scott's own account of it, in the 1829 preface to a uniform edition of his novels, confuses the chronology. The novel's action is set in 1745, the year of the Jacobite Rebellion in Scotland, which the narrator in chapter 1 tells us is "sixty years before this present 1st of November 1805." Scott's 1829 preface agrees that it was "about the year 1805" that he "threw together" what became the first volume of *Waverley*, but he also says that it was the favorable reception of *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810, with its "Highland scenery and customs," that led him to think of doing "something of the same kind in prose." Contemporary scholarship has converged on the years from 1808–10, when Scott took a trip to the Highlands and the Western Isles of Scotland, as the period when *Waverley* was conceived and the first volume written,[2] though it was shelved for several years until the spring of 1814, when he rapidly wrote the last two volumes. It was published in July of that year, and was a tremendous popular and critical success: the first edition of a thousand copies sold out in two days, and new editions followed rapidly. Although Scott published a few more narrative poems, his literary output for the rest of his life was primarily devoted to writing historical romances, and the sales of his work were generally brisk.

Waverley was published anonymously, possibly because in the ordering of the arts novels were thought less respectable, less canonical, than the narrative poetry Scott had signed his name to and become known for. And most of Scott's subsequent novels were published as "by the author of *Waverley, &c.*". Scott also created a second alter ego, "Jedediah Cleishbotham," as the author/editor of a separate group of seven novels (including *Old Mortality*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*) that he called "Tales of My Landlord." But it was hardly a deeply held secret that Scott was the author of *Waverley*: Jane Austen, living far from Edinburgh and London at Chawton Cottage in Hampshire, wrote to her niece Anna in September 1814 that "Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. – It is not fair. – He has Fame and Profit enough as a Poet, and should not be taking the bread out of other people's mouths. – I do not like him, & do not mean to like *Waverley* if I can help it – but fear I must."

Waverley marked an event in the history of the novel comparable to *Pamela* because its subject-matter, and its approach to its subject-matter, changed the gender of the audience for the novelistic romance. The highly influential reviews of *Waverley* by T.H. Lister and Francis Jeffrey stressed the manliness of Scott, his historical accuracy and truth to life, thus connecting his novel to the genre of history, which was gendered as male reading, and therefore legitimized

for men the play of fancy in reading fiction that had previously been a feminine preserve. As Ina Ferris has put it in *The Achievement of Literary Authority*:

> For [its] first male readers, *Waverley* reading offered a compelling alternative both to female reading and to feminine writing. In particular, in this period of conservative reaction, evangelical revival, and the domestic–didactic novel, *Waverley* and its successors licensed a nostalgic male-inflected romance of history that offered the satisfaction of emancipation from the necessary restraints of civil society even as it effectually absorbed male subjectivity into those restraints …. With their outdoor adventures, their battles and their political intrigues, the *Waverley Novels* swerve outside the "flat realities" of genteel daily life. At the same time, they work within those realities, and the masculinity that these narratives helped to construct absorbs the purity that marked femininity. (91–2)

In the dozen years after *Waverley*, the "Fame and Profit" of Walter Scott that Jane Austen had envied increased enormously. He became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, in 1818, after leading a group of antiquarians who uncovered, hidden in the deep recesses of Edinburgh Castle, the lost Scottish Regalia – the crown, scepter and sword of state of Scotland. And he became very wealthy at this time, partly because he bought shares in Constable and became a partner in Ballantyne, his London and his Edinburgh publishers, so that he collected dividends as well as royalties on the 22 novels he wrote during those years, plowing his profits into additions to his baronial castle of Abbotsford and nearby parcels of land. But in 1825–26 a general credit crunch occurred in the United Kingdom, a financial panic that took down both of Scott's publishers. Scott was brought to the edge of bankruptcy himself. From a sense of honor, however, he refused to repudiate either his personal debts or his debts as a partner in Ballantyne, and he set up a trust, with his copyrights as the assets, in order to pay off the creditors. He continued to write novels at a furious pace, along with a massive biography of Napoleon, published in nine volumes in 1827, and he launched a special annotated edition of his complete novels (the "Magnum Opus") which was issued, in forty volumes, starting in 1829. But Scott had the first of several strokes in 1830, and though he continued to work against his physicians' advice, his health eventually broke and he died in 1832. The trust he established for his copyrights eventually paid his creditors off in full in 1849.

Waverley and History

Studies of the historical novel usually begin with Walter Scott, who is made to seem the inventor of a genre without any predecessors. It is true that he shifted the course of literary history, and that the nineteenth-century novel would have

been very different without him. But the ground for Scott's achievement had in one sense been long prepared. Elizabethan novellas like Thomas Deloney's *Thomas of Reading* (1599?) had been set deep in the English past, here in the twelfth-century reign of Henry I. Much more recently, Gothic extravaganzas like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) were set during the crusades, in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, while Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), discussed in chapter 9, begins with a time-stamp set two centuries in the past and in the southwest of France: "On the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the chateau of Monsieur St. Aubert." But it is true that Gothic novels, generally, even when they are set in a specific past and a specific place, were really set in a romantic elsewhere and elsewhen that would lack any real contact with historical events their readers might have read about. Sometimes it is precisely this lack of contact that is specifically noted: Radcliffe tells us that the military expedition against Montoni's castle at Udolpho was so rapid and so successful that it failed to find "a place in any of the published records of that time."

There were historical romances written in the half century before *Waverley* that might be thought its predecessors. The antiquary Thomas Leland published in 1762 a novel set in the Middle Ages titled *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury*, based on the *Flores Historiarum* by Roger of Wendover and the chronicle history of Matthew of Paris. Following the restrictions on literary probability in fiction proclaimed by Fielding, Leland stuck to probabilities, suppressing his historical sources' reliance on the impossible and the miraculous. Leland's novel is shaped not only by his antiquarian's conception of history but also by the rationalistic historiography of Enlightenment historians Gibbon, Hume, and Robertson. Its reliance for plot materials and character types on the conventionalized sentimental melodrama of its own day unreflectively reproduces the dominant vision of history, in which progress is inscribed in changing manners and institutions, but in which the constant pattern is set by an unvarying human nature. Like Enlightenment history itself, Leland's historical romance can "teach private virtue and correct public policy" based on exempla that cannot grow stale because they are based on a pattern that is everywhere and always the same.

Romantic historiography, to the contrary, presumes that human nature has evolved, as well as dress and manners, and this vision is what we find in Sophia Lee's *The Recess: A Tale of Other Times* (1783). To a contemporary reader, a summary of *The Recess* would suggest the pastiche of history that appears in television costume mini-series. The protagonists are twin sisters who discover that they are illegitimate daughters of Mary, Queen of Scots, by the Duke of Norfolk. Matilda secretly marries the earl of Leicester; her sister Ellinor becomes the lover of the Earl of Essex. Matilda's daughter gets involved with her

cousin Prince Henry (the more intelligent and promising of James I's two sons) until she is poisoned by the mother of her rival in love. *The Recess* carries the burden of a romantic version of history in one obvious sense: history is turned into soap opera, but it is also a premature parody of Hegel's idea of the world-historical individual whose will shapes the world. In *The Recess*, it is sexual desire that reshapes the world. For Lee, history is 100 percent personal: it is made in the bedroom, the nursery, the court banquet, rather than in the study, or on the battlefield, or in the counting-house. It may be too easy to patronize this way of understanding history. While educated readers may think today in terms of inexorable forces, most people, when they think of history at all, think about personalities. Lee's contemporaries were not as sure as we might be that her version of history lacked verisimilitude. One reviewer opined that Lee's "near approaches to romance" occurred "without trespassing on probability" and "gratify the imagination without insult to the judgment."

One of Scott's crucial innovations in the historical romance is the oblique relationship of his narrative to the factual narrative that readers might already know from contemporary historical writings. Leland and Lee had centered their fictions on important figures like William Longsword or the Earl of Leicester whose decisions and actions made history. If Scott had done the same thing, he would have shown us the Rebellion of 1745 as experienced by its leader, the Chevalier, Prince Charles Edward Stuart.[3] Instead, *Waverley* shows us the Rebellion through the eyes of a romantic and sentimental young Englishman who had been raised by his Jacobite uncle and aunt to believe in the legitimacy of the Stuart line descended directly from James II, and who becomes involved, partly by accident but partly through intrigues beyond his ken, in some of the early battles of the Highland clans with the armies of Hanoverian England. It is a novel of education – and what could be more Romantic than that? – in that it presents how Edward Waverley becomes progressively disenchanted with the Jacobite cause and his role in it even as he comes to understand how the public misunderstanding of the circumstances of his involvement may well cost him his life. The Chevalier himself appears briefly in several of the central chapters, we meet him when Edward Waverley does, but his character does not determine the fate of the Rebellion, and his personal fate after its failure, his romantic escape through the Highlands to France, is nowhere described in the text of the novel. In using this oblique strategy for his historical novels – a plot set within and affected by major historical events, viewed through one or more fictional characters of middling significance, and with a mere glance at the principal actors on the historic stage – Scott established a pattern that was picked up by most of his successors through the nineteenth century: Fenimore Cooper in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Honoré de Balzac in *Les Chouans* (1829), William Makepeace Thackeray

in *Henry Esmond* (1852), Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1860), and Leo Tolstoy in *War and Peace* (1869).[4]

If Scott's approach to history in *Waverley* might be seen to be embodying Romantic historiography in its insistence on the spiritual and worldly education of the protagonist, what underlies his narrator's vision of the political world of the Rebellion is something quite different. It is the stadial history of William Robertson and David Hume, which Scott had learned at Edinburgh University: this viewed human history as a progress from tribal hunter-gatherer societies through the pastoral and the feudal-agricultural to the commercial modes of economic and social structure. Scott envisions the failure of the 1745 Rebellion as determined not by the greatness of world-historical qualities of the individuals at the center of the struggle but rather by the very different organizational capacities of the feudal society of the Highlands, preserved into the middle of the eighteenth century, and the commercial society that had developed not only in Hanoverian England, but also in the areas of the Scottish Lowlands around the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Owing to the integration of England and Scotland since the 1745 rebellion, Scott's readers may not appreciate the distance of that day from their own: his task, as he presents it in his final chapter, the "Postscript, which should have been a Preface" was to make that distance visible.[5]

And Scott takes in the specific contradictions that have emerged within the feudal society that the Chevalier hopes to lead to victory. Some of those contradictions emerge from the length of time – almost another "sixty years since" between James II's abdication and "the Forty-Five" – during which James's direct male heirs have been absent from the British Isles, living in exile first in France, and later in Avignon and Rome as guests of the papacy. When Scott portrays Flora and Fergus MacIvor, he lets us see their Scottish patriotism and their Jacobite ideology, but we also see the elaborate continental education that has made them as much French as Scottish, particularly in the apologetic tone they take with Edward Waverley about the primitive art of the Scottish bard or the primitive quality of Highland hospitality. Similarly in chapter 39, when Waverley arrives at Holyrood House, where the Chevalier is holding court, Scott suggests that there may be something equally artificial about the appeal to the ancient ancestry and pedigree of the Chevalier:

> A long gallery, hung with pictures, pretended to be the portraits of kings, who, if they ever flourished at all, lived several hundred years before the invention of painting in oil colours, served as a sort of guard-chamber or vestibule, to the apartments which the adventurous Charles Edward now occupied in the palace of his ancestors.

Scott presents within the novel other contradictions that arise from within the feudal social system itself that prevent it from really working effectively. In chapter 19, Scott explains that Fergus's prestige and power as a Highland chieftain depends on the number of broadswords he can put into the field under his command, and therefore "he crowded his estate with a tenantry, hardy indeed, and fit for the purposes of war, but greatly outnumbering what the soil was calculated to maintain." To keep up his number of soldiers Fergus practices economies within his own castle, but that alone will not balance the books. He therefore demands "black-mail" (in its original meaning: protection money) to be paid by the Lowland farmers within reach of his forces, like the Bradwardines of Tully-Veolan. He also in effect licenses bandit gangs working under independent brigands like Donald Bean Lean, who is introduced as the leader of the cattle-theft at Tully-Veolan in chapter 15. Fergus makes sure that British militiamen attempting to enforce the Hanoverian king's law never find the thieves they are looking for; meanwhile on the other hand, any independent cattle-reivers who do not give an appropriate share to Fergus are turned over to royal justice. The problem with the black-mail system is that dividing the country into Highland predators and Lowland prey ensures that the Chevalier will not find a politically united Scotland he can command in his campaign. While the Baron of Bradwardine, with his Jacobite family traditions, is personally just as eager for the return of the direct Stuart line as Fergus MacIvor is, even he balks at paying black-mail, and the romantic Edward Waverley, raised in a commercial society of laws, is astonished at the practice.

For various reasons a large part of the Scottish population that is not a part of the clans' feudal system is by and large out of sympathy with the chiefs of the clans and their political overlord, the Chevalier. One issue is religion: Presbyterian believers in Scotland are fiercely anti-Jacobite, just as the Catholic clans flock to the banner of the Chevalier. Scott shows this in the sequence beginning in chapter 29, at Cairnvreckan, a town bitterly divided by pro- and anti-Jacobite sentiment, where Waverley is physically attacked by, and kills in self-defense, the local blacksmith, for which he is imprisoned by the local Justice of the Peace.

In terms of class, the bourgeoisie were the most likely to be loyal to the government in London and the least likely to come out with the Chevalier. An exception that proves this rule is Jamie Jinker, an elderly lowland horse-dealer whom Waverley meets briefly at Doune Castle in chapter 39. From his class, Jinker seems an unlikely person to be serving as an officer, master of the horse, for the Laird of Balmawhapple's highland regiment. He explains that the reason he has taken arms is that the Laird had bought all his horses on credit, based on landed wealth which the Laird will lose if the Rebellion fails, and so the only

way Jinker is likely to be paid in coin for his horses is to join up with, and help to lead, the regiment, despite the mortal risks that entails:

> [E]very why has its wherefore. Ye maun ken, the laird there bought a' thir beasts frae me to munt his troop, and agreed to pay for them according to the necessities and prices of the time. But then he hadna the ready penny, and I hae been advised his bond will not be worth a boddle against the estate, and then I had a' my dealers to settle wi' at Martinmas; and so, as he very kindly offered me this commission, and as the auld Fifteen wad never help me to my siller for sending out naigs against the government, why, conscience! sir, I thought my best chance for payment was e'en to gae out mysell; and ye may judge, sir, as I hae dealt a' my life in halters, I think na mickle o' putting my craig in peril of a Saint John-stone's tippet.

When Waverley arrives with Balmawhapple's regiment in Edinburgh, it is clear that, though the army of the Highland clans has invested the city itself without a struggle, it has been unable to take its fortress, Edinburgh Castle, which holds out for the Hanoverians with cannons the Highlanders do not possess. Balmawhapple's troops prudently give the castle a wide berth as they take Waverley to Holyrood House, where the Chevalier holds court. It is into the castle, however, that the Royal Bank of Scotland – the key institution of the commercial Hanoverian society – has transferred all the gold in its possession, so that the Chevalier may be able to recruit volunteers in Edinburgh, but cannot replenish his dwindling treasury.

After the Jacobite army turns south and marches through the northwest English countryside, even volunteers are in short supply. The north of England was where many of the recusant Catholic families lived who might be expected to support the Jacobite cause. But nearly sixty years after James II's abdication, religious differences within England are tolerated, and so the Tory support that the Rebellion needs to succeed is simply no longer there – a fact which comes as a surprise to the Chevalier who was born and bred in Rome. Waverley sees

> that in those towns in which they proclaimed James the Third, "no man cried, God bless him" …. The Jacobites had been taught to believe that the north-western counties abounded with wealthy squires and hardy yeomen, devoted to the cause of the White Rose. But of the wealthier Tories they saw little. Some fled from their houses, some feigned themselves sick, some surrendered themselves to the government as suspected persons. Of such as remained, the ignorant gazed

> with astonishment, mixed with horror and aversion, at the wild appearance, unknown language, and singular garb of the Scottish clans. And to the more prudent their scanty numbers, apparent deficiency in discipline, and poverty of equipment seemed certain tokens of the calamitous termination of their rash undertaking. Thus the few who joined them were such as bigotry of political principle blinded to consequences, or whose broken fortunes induced them to hazard all on a risk so desperate.

. . . .

Without a Tory rising in the northwest of England, and without the support of a French army with artillery, the Rebellion cannot succeed. Scott's narrative leaves the Chevalier's army just after the decision is made to begin a long retreat from Derby back into the Highlands, pursued as they go by the Duke of Cumberland. And Scott does not dramatize the brief but bloody battle of Culloden – the last ever fought on British soil, in April of 1746 – which constituted the final disaster of the Chevalier's campaign. In effect the causes of that defeat are already all too clear.

As Scott tells us in the final chapter of *Waverley*, "A Postscript, which should have been a Preface," the Rebellion signified in history precisely because of its defeat. It had been dangerous enough to make the Hanoverian government in London tremble, and its aftermath was "the destruction of the patriarchal power of the Highland chiefs, – the abolition of the jurisdictions of the Lowland nobility, – the total destruction of the Jacobite party." But construction followed in the wake of destruction: Roads built into the highlands, at first to facilitate military patrols, helped to integrate the economies of Scotland and England. Their political differences quickly subsided leaving only the nostalgic memories of the Rebellion preserved in the songs and stories Scott had learned in his youth, and which may be still told and sung today.[6] In the penultimate chapter of his novel, Scott creates a symbol of this nostalgia, which could stand as an emblem for the novel as a whole:

. . . .

> There was one addition to this fine old apartment, however, which drew tears into the Baron's eyes. It was a large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress, the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan were descending in the background. It was taken from a spirited sketch, drawn while they were in Edinburgh by a young man of high genius, and had been painted on a full-length scale by an eminent London artist. Raeburn himself (whose 'Highland Chiefs' do all but walk out of the canvas) could not have done more justice to the subject; and the ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate Chief of Glennaquoich was finely contrasted with the contemplative, fanciful, and

> enthusiastic expression of his happier friend. Beside this painting hung the arms which Waverley had borne in the unfortunate civil war. The whole piece was generally admired.

. . . .

Like the integrated Scottish and English economies, the sketch was made in Edinburgh and the painting in London. And like the paintings of the Scottish kings in Holyrood House, it records legend rather than fact. The "genius" would have had to make his sketch of Edward and Fergus just after Edward had received his MacIvor tartan in Edinburgh, and before the battle of Prestonpans, whose swampy topography does not feature "a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass."

Reading *Waverley*: The Long, Slow Launch and the "Mediocre," Passive Hero

Today's reader may have difficulty becoming as captivated by *Waverley* as its first readers were. This is partly because, although the plot generates a great deal of momentum in volumes II and III (chapters 24–72), like a snowball rolling down a hill, it takes quite a long while to get itself going. Scott hints from the very beginning that it will have to do with the Rebellion of 1745, but he does not in obvious ways telegraph the direction of the plot.

Like Fielding, Scott begins with an introductory chapter in an authorial voice, jocosely contrasting the novel the reader is about to encounter with four other genres that were popular at the time Scott began his novel in the first decade of the nineteenth century: the Gothic tale of terror, the Germanic horror story, the sentimental novel, and the romantic comedy of fashionable life.

. . . .

> Had I, for example, announced in my frontispiece, 'Waverley, a Tale of other Days,' must not every novel-reader have anticipated a castle scarce less than that of Udolpho, of which the eastern wing had long been uninhabited, and the keys either lost, or consigned to the care of some aged butler or housekeeper, whose trembling steps, about the middle of the second volume, were doomed to guide the hero, or heroine, to the ruinous precincts? Would not the owl have shrieked and the cricket cried in my very title-page? and could it have been possible for me, with a moderate attention to decorum, to introduce any scene more lively than might be produced by the jocularity of a clownish but faithful valet, or the garrulous narrative of the heroine's fille-de-chambre, when rehearsing the stories of blood and horror which she had heard in the servants' hall? Again, had my title borne, 'Waverley, a Romance from the German,' what head so obtuse as not to

> image forth a profligate abbot, an oppressive duke, a secret and mysterious association of Rosycrucians and Illuminati, with all their properties of black cowls, caverns, daggers, electrical machines, trap-doors, and dark-lanterns? Or if I had rather chosen to call my work a 'Sentimental Tale,' would it not have been a sufficient presage of a heroine with a profusion of auburn hair, and a harp, the soft solace of her solitary hours, which she fortunately finds always the means of transporting from castle to cottage, although she herself be sometimes obliged to jump out of a two-pair-of-stairs window, and is more than once bewildered on her journey, alone and on foot, without any guide but a blowzy peasant girl, whose jargon she hardly can understand? Or, again, if my Waverley had been entitled 'A Tale of the Times,' wouldst thou not, gentle reader, have demanded from me a dashing sketch of the fashionable world, a few anecdotes of private scandal thinly veiled, and if lusciously painted, so much the better? a heroine from Grosvenor Square, and a hero from the Barouche Club or the Four-in-Hand, with a set of subordinate characters from the elegantes of Queen Anne Street East, or the dashing heroes of the Bow-Street Office?
>
> . . . .

Although Scott denies *Waverley* is any of these things, it is in fact a bit of all of them. It is of course an original historical romance in the form of a *Bildungsroman* – but Scott's descriptions of the four rejected popular genres, at least on a second reading, can strike us as apt, if oblique, descriptions of many of the elements of this compendious novel.

Edward Waverley is never imprisoned in a castle like Udolpho, but in chapter 31 he is imprisoned by Major Melville in Cairnvreckan as a homicide, a rebel and a traitor, and sent for trial to Stirling Castle. And Baron Bradwardine's manor house, when Waverley returns to it in chapter 63, is a "ruinous precinct," having been sacked and partially burned by the invading Hanoverian army. Similarly, while there are no "Rosycrucians" in *Waverley*, there is certainly plenty of enigmatic intentions and of stealthy plotting, including Fergus MacIvor's "secret and mysterious" plans for involving the hero in the Rebellion in ways that will further his political ambitions. *Waverley* is also a "Sentimental Tale": much of the action in chapters 33–8 and 60–7 includes Waverley's hazardous journeys, often guided by peasants speaking an incomprehensible dialect. The harp and the beautiful songs, however, are not our hero's creations but those of Flora MacIvor. And while *Waverley* is not a story of contemporary life in 1814, its conclusion, with the happy marriage of Rose Bradwardine to Edward Waverley, after questionable choices by the hero, and hardships and dangers to both hero and heroine, is that of a romantic comedy like *Tom Jones*. It is certainly a part of Scott's strategy for the romantic comedy to join hands with the history: the marriage of Rose and Edward becomes a figure for the union between Scotland and England which,

however they were legally joined by the Act of Union of 1707, could not be truly united until after the last of the Jacobite rebellions.

Like Fielding in *Joseph Andrews*, Scott insists in his preface that, despite setting his story in 1745, he wants to paint "a description of men rather than manners, … the passions common to men in all stages of society." And Scott wants his novel to be seen in what he already viewed as a literary tradition of the comic realism that we found in *Tom Jones*. For example, Scott's Baron of Bradwardine bears comparison with Fielding's Squire Western as a comic creation: both have eccentric personality traits that are funny and annoying at once. And unlike the Squire, whose west-country dialect is only passingly strange, the Baron speaks the king's English so interlarded with Latin learning and frivolous jokes in French that the reader requires either careful footnotes or a simultaneous translator to comprehend a mere invitation to dinner:

> "We cannot rival the luxuries of your English table, Captain Waverley, or give you the *epulae lautiores* of Waverley-Honour. I say *epulae* rather than *prandium*, because the latter phrase is popular: *epulae ad senatum, prandium vero ad populum attinet*, says Suetonius Tranquillus. But I trust ye will applaud my Bourdeaux; *c'est des deux oreilles*, as Captain Vinsauf used to say; *vinum primae notae*, the principal of Saint Andrews denominated it. And, once more, Captain Waverley, right glad am I that ye are here to drink the best my cellar can make forthcoming."[7]

Five further chapters are devoted to introducing Edward Waverley's education and his family history, which in fact are closely allied. The young man is far more moved by tales of romance, and specifically by his aunt Rachael's stories about the family's loyalty to the doomed Lancastrian side during the Wars of the Roses, and their loyalty to the doomed Charles I during the English Civil War, than by any reading that might lead him to a professional career. In part, this seems to be a projection by Scott of his fascination with literature and history during his own youth and young manhood, but he is also slowly and carefully preparing the reader for what is to come: the moments of decision in volume II when Captain Waverley, who has become an officer in the British dragoons, first resigns his commission and, then, following in his family's footsteps, joins – first casually and later by formal warrant – as a volunteer in the Chevalier's Highland army in the doomed 1745 Rebellion. These chapters may seem inert on a first reading, their significance only becomes clear on a second reading, when we have a sense of where all this is leading.

Even on subsequent readings, however, these chapters are the first sign of a problem that has kept *Waverley* from being a favorite with students: the mediocrity (as Lukacs called it) of the hero. For Scott, this was not a defect but a feature of his novel; Scott not only recognized Edward Waverley's mediocrity, he has Flora MacIvor dismissively explain his character to us, in conversation with Rose Bradwardine:

> [H]igh and perilous enterprise is not Waverley's forte. He would never have been his celebrated ancestor Sir Nigel, but only Sir Nigel's eulogist and poet. I will tell you where he will be at home, my dear, and in his place – in the quiet circle of domestic happiness, lettered indolence, and elegant enjoyments of Waverley-Honour. And he will refit the old library in the most exquisite Gothic taste, and garnish its shelves with the rarest and most valuable volumes; and he will draw plans and landscapes, and write verses, and rear temples, and dig grottoes; and he will stand in a clear summer night in the colonnade before the hall, and gaze on the deer as they stray in the moonlight, or lie shadowed by the boughs of the huge old fantastic oaks; and he will repeat verses to his beautiful wife, who will hang upon his arm; – and he will be a happy man.

All this is what will make Waverley, in the denouement, the fortunate husband of Rose Bradwardine, and she his devoted wife, as they all live happily ever after, not at Waverley-Honour but at Tully-Veolan. This description of Edward Waverley to Rose Bradwardine is anachronistic, in that the sensibility pictured here is that of a late eighteenth-century Man of Feeling, as it was portrayed in a novel of that name written by Scott's friend and mentor Henry Mackenzie, to whom Scott dedicated *Waverley*.

But just as it explains why Flora MacIvor is indifferent to her English suitor, and why Scott's contemporaries might have identified with the hero, it also explains why today's reader endures rather than enjoys his presence at the center of Scott's tale. Unlike Fielding's Tom Jones, who generates sympathy because of the opposition he faces from ill-natured hypocrites from his very birth, Waverley has had a coddled childhood and drifts into a captaincy in the English cavalry because he is bookish and dreamy, with no interests in or talent for anything more demanding. He later also drifts into his situation within the Chevalier's army, the unwitting victim of the strategies of Fergus MacIvor, who has caused the letters from his colonel summoning him back to his post to go astray, and so put Waverley into a position where he will be reckoned a traitor whether he joins the Chevalier's army or not. Even Waverley's role among the Highlanders is to be a mere figurehead, a renowned name which the Chevalier can use in the hope – ultimately disappointed – of tempting other Tory English

squires to join him. And after the Chevalier's cause is lost, Edward's rescue and rehabilitation are not of his own doing but that of family friends like Colonel Talbot, so that he is as passive in his journey from peril to security as he was in his journey from security into peril. In this Scott again departs from Fielding's practice in *Tom Jones*, whose scapegrace hero often blunders into danger, but almost always seems in active control of his own situation, even in the London scenes, when Tom is temporarily the victim of plots by others.[8]

The long, slow journey into danger begins in chapter 8, when he leaves his billet to pay a visit to his uncle's friend, Cosmo Bradwardine at Tully-Veolan, and the rest of the volume is a travelogue of sorts detailing Edward Waverley's movements through Scotland from the Lowland manor house of the Bradwardines to the hold of the brigand Donald Bean Lean and up to the Highland castle of Fergus MacIvor. Just as people's desire to read right through the Bible often bogs down fatally in the book of Leviticus, the reading of *Waverley* often runs into trouble in chapters 9–14. There is a linguistic component here, partly from the introduction for the first time of difficult Scottish dialect, partly from the incessant learned quotations from the Latin that choke the conversation of Baron Bradwardine. But there is also what seems an intentional avoidance of incident. There is a banquet, with a quarrel, and a duel, but Waverley sleeps through the duel.

And although Rose Bradwardine, Waverley's future bride, is introduced in these chapters, any expectation of this generating an instability is destroyed by the narrator's coy comment that Rose, "beautiful and amiable as we have described her, had not precisely the sort of beauty or merit which captivates a romantic imagination in early youth. She was too frank, too confiding, too kind; amiable qualities, undoubtedly, but destructive of the marvellous, with which a youth of imagination delights to dress the empress of his affections." This passage ends with an intimation that "poor Rose" is more taken with Waverley than he is with her, but since Waverley's blindness to Rose as an object of desire is qualified by the narrator's statement that this is a function of "a romantic imagination in early youth," it seems predictable at this point that another more romantically attractive woman – Flora MacIvor – will in fact kindle Waverley's desire, and equally predictable that, once Waverley has grown up and has focused on real life rather than on romantic dreams, he will be able to see what a prize Rose is.

In volume I, during the launch, we become aware of Waverley's areas of blindness; it will be the matter of volume II to entrap Waverley in increasingly desperate and entangled situations on account of that blindness, and of volume III to develop Waverley's *éclaircissement* with growing insight and maturity as a prelude to a denouement in which he finds a way, with the help of others who understand his essential innocence, to avoid shameful disgrace and death.

Texture: Voice in *Waverley*

Scott tells his novel in the third person through a narrator not only temporally later but emotionally and morally more mature than his protagonist and chief focalizing character. During the launch, Waverley is naïve about what life is like in Scotland, but then again so are we: his introduction to it becomes ours. But as we read along, we need to pay attention to whose voice we are hearing, that of Waverley himself or that of Scott's older and wiser narrator:

> It was about noon when Captain Waverley entered the straggling village, or rather hamlet, of Tully-Veolan …. The houses seemed miserable in the extreme, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages …. Three or four village girls, returning from the well or brook with pitchers and pails upon their heads, formed more pleasing objects, and, with their thin short-gowns and single petticoats, bare arms, legs, and feet, uncovered heads and braided hair, somewhat resembled Italian forms of landscape. Nor could a lover of the picturesque have challenged either the elegance of their costume or the symmetry of their shape; although, to say the truth, a mere Englishman in search of the *comfortable*, a word peculiar to his native tongue, might have wished the clothes less scanty, the feet and legs somewhat protected from the weather, the head and complexion shrouded from the sun, or perhaps might even have thought the whole person and dress considerably improved by a plentiful application of spring water, with a quantum sufficit of soap. The whole scene was depressing.

The description so far seems to operate on two levels, both of them arising from Waverley's consciousness: on the one hand the young Scottish maidens in the landscape remind him of the Italian *contadine* of his romantic dreams; on the other hand the enlightened English lover of the neat and the cleanly registers the miserable hovels and their unwashed occupants. But the description concludes in what seems to be quite a different voice:

> Yet the physiognomy of the people, when more closely examined, was far from exhibiting the indifference of stupidity; their features were rough, but remarkably intelligent; grave, but the very reverse of stupid; and from among the young women an artist might have chosen more than one model whose features and form resembled those of Minerva …. It seemed, upon the whole, as if poverty,

> and indolence, its too frequent companion, were combining to depress the natural genius and acquired information of a hardy, intelligent, and reflecting peasantry.
>
> . . . .

The judgments here expressed sound more like those of the narrator, a native of Scotland who will have had the opportunity for a closer examination of the "natural genius" and "acquired information" of the "hardy, intelligent, and reflecting" lowland peasantry.

Or so a careful reader might think – except that the opening of the very next sentence ("Some such thoughts crossed Waverley's mind") would seem to ascribe that very different conclusion to Waverley himself at the moment he encounters the village and its inhabitants. And here I think we need to trust the tale rather than the teller, the voice rather than the focalizer, to let us know which level of discourse we are reading. Here Scott is not channeling his fictional Waverley, rather Waverley is channeling Scott.

Notes

1. The first edition of Lord Byron's *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* sold only 500 copies.
2. Scott's publisher John Ballantyne listed *Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* as one of the "New Works and Publications for 1809–1810."
3. In *Waverley* Scott generally refers to this grandson of James II, popularly known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, as the "Chevalier," a turn of phrase that would be equally acceptable to his partisans in Scotland and his opponent Whigs in England; in this chapter I follow Scott's usage.
4. Although the oblique approach became standard for historical fiction, some aesthetically significant twentieth- and twenty-first-century historical novels have focalized history through the major figures themselves. Interesting examples might include Robert Graves's *I, Claudius* (1934) and Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* (2009). Other fictional texts have presented alternative histories, like Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004), which is set in a "possible world" in which Charles Lindbergh successfully runs for president in 1940, signs non-aggression pacts with Nazi Germany and Japan, and turns the USA into a Fascist state.
5. This is in line with Mark Salber Phillips's views on the treatment of distance in Romantic historiography. See "Distance and Historical Representation," *History Workshop Journal* 57 (Spring 2004): 123–41.
6. As a child I learned to sing "Charlie Is My Darling" and the "Skye Boat Song" in elementary school without being given any idea that they had a historical reference, much less that they were about the Chevalier's escape after the Forty-Five.
7. The joke is about the wine being "des deux oreilles": the Baron is playing with a phrase in Rabelais, in chapter 5 of *Gargantua*, where a drinker praises a bottle of

Lacryma Christi as being "d'une Oreille, well wrought." To praise his Chateau Margaux, the Baron says that it is of two ears rather than merely one. But the joke may be on the Baron because for Rabelais when something is "of two ears" it means that one shakes one's head at it, to refuse it.

8. This may be one function of the Nightingale episodes: seeing Tom's active benevolence operating toward minor characters gives us the impression of Tom being in control even while the denouement is preparing, as it were, behind his back.

Chapter 11

Emma (1815)

The Author of *Emma*

Jane Austen was born in December 1775 in Steventon, a country village in Hampshire about 75 miles west of London, the seventh of eight children of the Reverend George Austen and the former Cassandra Leigh. George Austen was an Oxford scholar without any money of his own, but with an uncle who helped him become rector of the parishes of Steventon and Deane. Austen's mother was also a clergyman's daughter, without a dowry, though she was descended from a Duke of Chandos and a Baron Leigh of Stoneleigh. Because the Austen family was large it was always strapped for cash: five sons had to be educated for some profession,[1] and George Austen was forced to supplement his income from the church by tutoring, in his home, young men studying for the university entrance exams. Jane's eldest brother James, a precocious scholar, followed his father into the clergy. The next-oldest brother Edward charmed his father's cousins, Thomas and Catherine Knight, who owned extensive landed property at Godmersham in Kent and Chawton in Hampshire; they were childless and the Austens agreed to let the Knights adopt him. Jane's favorite brother Henry went through several professions: he first became an officer in the Oxfordshire militia, then a banker in London, and finally took orders as a clergyman after the failure of his bank. There was no money for Frank and Charles, Jane's youngest brothers, so they enrolled in the free Naval Academy in Portsmouth; both of them became captains of warships during the Napoleonic Wars, made fortunes in prize money, and rose to the rank of Admiral, Frank ultimately becoming Sir Francis Austen, Admiral of the Fleet.

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Except for two brief stays at boarding schools in Southampton and in Reading, Jane Austen and her older sister Cassandra lived their entire lives within their close-knit family, a circle that narrowed as her brothers acquired their own households and moved away, and as their father aged, retired from the ministry to the city of Bath in 1801, and died there in January of 1805. Neither of them ever married, since for marriage, among the gentry, a couple needed a gentleman's income, either from inherited wealth or from some genteel occupation. In 1794 Cassandra became engaged to Thomas Fowle, a clergyman who had been one of her father's pupils, and who expected to inherit a family living in Shropshire. It was in the hope of acquiring wealth enough to marry sooner that in 1796 Fowle accepted a position as military chaplain in the West Indies, where he caught yellow fever and died the following year, leaving Cassandra his entire fortune of £1000.[2]

We know from Jane Austen's own letters that she attracted and flirted with a number of men, most of whom she knew could not afford to court a woman with nothing to bring to the marriage.[3] She did have one serious proposal when she was 27, in December 1802, from Harris Bigg-Wither, the younger brother of two of her close friends. Austen accepted his proposal and then, the next morning, sent a letter withdrawing from the engagement. We can understand why she might have been tempted to accept: Bigg-Wither was the heir to Manydown Park, an estate of 5000 acres in Hampshire, where she could have provided a home not only for herself but for her mother and sister after her father's death. We do not know for certain why she changed her mind, but Austen biographers suggest that the man himself was six years younger and by various accounts clumsy, inarticulate and unintelligent. More cannot be said, as Austen's letters from this period in her life do not survive. Had Austen become Mrs. Bigg-Wither, as another woman did two years later, she might well have been far too occupied with children and household management to write and publish six novels.

After George Austen's death his pension ceased, and the two sisters and their mother moved from expensive Bath to cheaper lodgings in other towns for several years until, in 1809, Edward Austen Knight offered them Chawton Cottage, part of the Knight estate, on the edge of the South Downs. It was fifteen miles southeast of Steventon, where her brother James Austen was rector. There the Austen women resided for the rest of their lives. For Jane that was not to be long: beginning in 1816, she had symptoms of abdominal pain, night fevers and debilitating weakness that progressed to make walking and even writing impossible.[4] In May of 1817, she made her will and moved to a rented room in Winchester to be near to a doctor whom she trusted; in July she died there and was buried in Winchester Cathedral, under a stone that makes no reference to the fact that she wrote six of the best-loved novels in English.

Austen's writing may have begun as early as 1787, at the age of 11, after she had returned from boarding school in Reading to the crowded house at Steventon, which was filled with novels and brothers proposing that Jane act in amateur theatricals. Most of Austen's adolescent works are short satirical skits on the fiction popular in that period, and even the earliest pieces are crammed with sentences that take a witty or surprising turn: "[Frederic and Elfrida] were exceedingly handsome and so much alike that it was not every one who knew them apart. Nay even their most intimate friends had nothing to distinguish them by, but the shape of the face, the colour of the Eye, the length of the Nose and the difference of the complexion." In *Love and Freindship* (1790), a wicked parody of the sentimental novel in letters, Sophia dies from fainting too often, uttering these last words: "My fate will teach you this. I die a Martyr to my greif for the loss of Augustus. One fatal swoon has cost me my Life. Beware of swoons Dear Laura …. A frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious; it is an exercise to the Body and if not too violent, is I dare say conducive to Health in its consequences – Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint." The longest of these youthful productions is *Catherine, or The Bower* (1792), which runs to novella length, some 17,000 words. All of them were written for the pleasure of her family, to whom Austen read them aloud, and by good fortune a fair copy of all of them survives, in three notebooks, which she made at her father's request to preserve her juvenilia.[5]

Between 1795 and 1798 Austen began drafting her first three novels, "Elinor and Marianne," which eventually became *Sense and Sensibility*, "First Impressions," an early epistolary version of *Pride and Prejudice*, and "Susan," an early version of *Northanger Abbey*. Nothing came of these efforts at the time: in 1797 George Austen offered "First Impressions" to the publisher Thomas Cadell, who declined it sight unseen. The copyright to "Susan" was sold in 1803 to Crosby & Co., for £10, but the publisher failed to issue the novel; to reclaim her manuscript Austen had to buy the copyright back for the same price in 1809.

It was only after the move to Chawton that year that Austen began the process of seriously revising her early novels for publication. With her banker brother Henry doing the negotiation for her, she issued *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 through publisher Thomas Egerton "on commission" – meaning that the Austens put up the money for the expenses of printing and advertising the work, and paying Egerton in addition a percentage of the income from the sale of the book. The first edition sold out, netting Austen £140. She sold the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* to Egerton outright for £110 – which turned out to be a financial mistake, since the novel became popular; Egerton issued two editions in 1813 and probably made four times what he had paid for the copyright. Austen invested her profits in "Navy Fives," bonds yielding

5 percent interest, and boasted in a letter to her sailor brother Frank, of having "written myself into £250."[6] Like most writers, Austen was delighted by the money she made from the sale of her books, the first independent income she had ever had. For *Mansfield Park*, Austen went back to the "commission" system, making perhaps £350 on Egerton's first edition (1814). When she switched publishers to John Murray in 1815, she turned down his offer of £450 for all her available copyrights. But there were risks to the commission system as well: *Emma* (1815), the last novel published in her lifetime, was slow to sell out its large first edition, and the second edition of *Mansfield Park* cost more to print than it made back in sales. But even in the last year of Austen's life she continued to work, despite declining health, on completing *Persuasion*, and she drafted eleven chapters of a new novel to be titled *Sanditon*.

Jane Austen's posthumous reputation has been an almost unprecedented success story. During her lifetime, she was unknown – her books were all issued anonymously – and only *Emma* was seriously reviewed (notably by Walter Scott in the *Quarterly Review*). After the initial editions her novels went out of print. But in 1833 publisher Richard Bentley began a "Standard Novels" series, including all six of Austen's, with a brief biographical preface by her brother Henry. This edition brought Austen's name before the reading public for the first time. Bentley's editions were reissued throughout the nineteenth century, with nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh's more detailed "Memoir of Jane Austen" replacing Henry's biography in 1869.

Appreciated by Scott and by critic Richard Whately in the Romantic period, she came into her own in the Victorian era, when George Eliot's partner George Henry Lewes compared Austen's realistic skill and dramatic economy to that of Homer and Shakespeare; she was praised as well by Anthony Trollope and Henry James. Fancy illustrated editions and cheap paperbacks of her novels proliferated, and she became a popular favorite, not only with the wealthy and secure, but with soldiers in the trenches of World War I, as is suggested in Rudyard Kipling's story "Janeites." These reprintings culminated in the R.W. Chapman critical edition for Oxford University Press (1923), the first of any British novelist, which testified to the seriousness with which Austen's novels were being taken. In 1948 critic F.R. Leavis viewed her as the founder of a "great tradition" of social realism, and in the decades since then literary critics of every theoretical bent have penned several hundred books analyzing Austen's novels. Meanwhile, since the 1990s literally dozens of film and video adaptations of her work have come out, both testifying to and increasing her popularity, which is rivaled among English novelists only by Charles Dickens.

The Structure of *Emma*

All of Jane Austen's novels are, in a sense, variations on the "marriage plot" or courtship novel that began with Richardson's *Pamela* and was developed by Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth, among others. For Austen as well as her predecessors, most of these have "Cinderella" plots in which a poor (or at least not wealthy or self-sufficient) young woman finds a "prince" who falls in love with her and, after many complications, asks successfully for her hand in marriage. Richardson's Pamela is a servant-girl, Burney's Evelina a young lady whose legitimacy is in question, and Edgeworth's Belinda (from the 1801 novel of that name) a young lady of London without money or fashionable connections. Other than Emma Woodhouse, all of Austen's heroines are Cinderellas: Fanny Price of *Mansfield Park* is almost literally a Cinderella, since she is a poor relation taken into Sir Thomas Bertram's household as a favor to her family. She lives in an unheated attic room, and is used as a kind of servant by her aunts at Mansfield. Most of the others are merely gentlewomen without dowries worth speaking of: Elinor and Marianne Dashwood of *Sense and Sensibility* are children of a second marriage displaced into near-abject poverty on their father's decease – a state of affairs that Jane Austen understood quite well from her own experience. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet's father is alive, but his country house and lands are entailed and will go to a foolish distant cousin upon his death. Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey* is one of ten children of a beneficed clergyman – another situation Austen understood from experience. Anne Elliot of *Persuasion* may be the daughter of a proud baronet, but her father's extravagance has nearly bankrupted them, to the point where he must rent out his already mortgaged estate. And finally, there *is* a Cinderella in *Emma*, but it is Jane Fairfax, a secondary character, not the eponymous heroine.

We learn in the first sentence of the novel that Emma Woodhouse is "handsome, clever, and rich": indeed, in chapter 16 we learn that at her elderly father's death she will have £30,000 – enough to support a genteel household in luxury all by itself. She needs no husband to support her, and she fantasizes that she will never marry at all. Indeed, with her mother dead, her elder sister married and living in London, and her father in no danger of marrying again, she is already the mistress of the household, the female who runs her home and orders the work of the many servants.

> Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, **seemed** to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her. …

> The real evils, indeed, of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was **at present** so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her. [Emphasis mine]

The opening sentences of the novel suggest a very different sort of marriage plot, a plot that is typical of a *Bildungsroman* rather than a courtship novel. The chief instability of the plot, the threat to this heroine, is not outside but inside her: it is her character rather than her situation that is the problem, her narcissism, her arrogance and conceit. Emma needs to get wise to herself. The word "seemed" in the first sentence telegraphs to the audience that while beauty, wealth and intelligence may seem to the best blessings of existence, they can be without value if they meet in a person who acts selfishly and without regard for the worth of others. The words "distress" and "vex" let us know that this will be a punitive comedy, but that the punishment of Emma Woodhouse will be limited to feelings of distress and vexation, the uneasy pains that teach us to look into the mirror and worry about who we have become. And the phrase "at present" in the last quoted sentence promises that the plot will be about her coming to know how much her happiness depends on her making changes in herself. In fact Austen said before writing *Emma* – according to Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* – "I am going to take a heroine whom nobody but myself will much like" and indeed she kept her promise. Emma Woodhouse can be difficult to like, indeed she can at times appear a monster of self-regard, much like some of Austen's comic villains (e.g. John Dashwood or Lady Catherine de Bourgh).

To make such a flawed character into the heroine of a comedy was a tour de force on Austen's part. Austen had experimented with flawed heroines before: Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey* imagines General Tilney a uxoricidal monster like the villains of her favorite novelist Anne Radcliffe until his son Henry encourages her to engage in some critical thinking; and Elizabeth Bennet is mortified by discovering what distorted notions she has swallowed, thanks to her prejudices, about Fitzwilliam Darcy and George Wickham. But whereas Catherine and Elizabeth endanger only their own happiness by their intellectual and moral flaws, Emma is a serious danger to others as well. Because this is a comedy, Emma will actually cause no serious or permanent damage; the particular quality of moral seriousness in this comedy requires more than that, though: it requires a change of heart on her part that will permanently socialize Emma's narcissism into leadership of the small society of Highbury.

The plot of *Emma* comes the closest to Austen's suggestion to her niece that a novel could be written about "two or three families in a country village." In all her other novels characters travel about, to Bath or Lyme Regis or Pemberley in

Derbyshire and we follow along with them, but *Emma* has strict unity of place: it never strays from the location of Highbury, a village in the county of Surrey sixteen miles from London, and almost all the major characters belong to four families, named Woodhouse, Knightley, Weston, and Bates. Its plot divides naturally into two parts of unequal length and complexity. But they are parallel in that, in each part, Emma Woodhouse operates according to her flawed assessment of herself and others in ways that not only "distress and vex" her, but threaten permanently the happiness of other characters whom we are made to view favorably.

The first shorter and simpler segment, complete in the first sixteen chapters of the novel, focuses on Emma's relationship to Harriet Smith, a pretty young woman of unknown parentage who becomes for Emma a substitute for her friend and former governess. Emma manipulates Harriet into refusing the proposal of Robert Martin, a young tenant farmer on the estate of Emma's bachelor brother-in-law, George Knightley, whom Harriet cares for, believing that the rector of the parish, an unmarried gentleman named Elton, would be a better match for Harriet – better for Harriet but also for Emma since by marrying into the gentry Harriet could remain in Emma's intimate social circle. It soon becomes obvious that Elton is setting his cap, not for Harriet, "the natural daughter of somebody," but for Emma the heiress herself, a fact she discovers only when, on their way home from a party on a snowy night, Elton seizes her hand and begins "making violent love to her," and protesting that, far from courting Harriet, "I never thought of Miss Smith in the whole course of my existence."

The disappointment Elton suffers is of no great concern to Emma or to us, but of course Emma has persuaded Harriet that Elton was in love with her, so there will have to be uncomfortable explanations and heartbreak for Harriet. But as we are made aware, it is not merely that Emma has tempted Harriet to expect a proposal from Elton, she has also persuaded her to reject one from Robert Martin, a hardworking and increasingly prosperous farmer who genuinely loves her. Harriet's fate hangs over the comic plot: there must be a happy ending for her as well as for Emma. Emma's happy ending will require a change of consciousness, but Harriet's will only require that Robert Martin not forget her and devote his attentions to someone else.

Texture: Watching Emma Get Everything Wrong

The Martin/Harriet/Elton/Emma debacle achieves high comedy through our pleasure at watching Emma and Elton misread each other's intentions and character. In chapter 6 Emma and Elton speak at cross-purposes, first about Harriet's character and temperament and then, with Emma raising the issue, the proposed portrait of Harriet. When Elton tells Emma that Harriet "was a

beautiful creature when she came to you, but, in my opinion, the attractions you have added are infinitely superior to what she received from nature," he means this as flattery to Emma, and given his intentions – to marry a fortune of £30,000 – the implication, on his side, is that he trusts her to form the character of their children with skill equal to that which she has exercised with her friend Harriet. Meanwhile Emma, for her part, takes all his compliments to Harriet's beauty and amiability only as signs of growing affection for Harriet.

These failures to understand reach a high point when Emma decides to do a water-color drawing of Harriet:

> She was not less pleased another day with the manner in which [Mr. Elton] seconded a sudden wish of hers, to have Harriet's picture …. Emma exclaimed, "What an exquisite possession a good picture of her would be! I would give any money for it. I almost long to attempt her likeness myself. You do not know it I dare say, but two or three years ago I had a great passion for taking likenesses, and attempted several of my friends, and was thought to have a tolerable eye in general. But from one cause or another, I gave it up in disgust. But really, I could almost venture, if Harriet would sit to me. It would be such a delight to have her picture!"
>
> "Let me entreat you," cried Mr. Elton; "it would indeed be a delight! Let me entreat you, Miss Woodhouse, to exercise so charming a talent in favour of your friend. I know what your drawings are. How could you suppose me ignorant? Is not this room rich in specimens of your landscapes and flowers; and has not Mrs. Weston some inimitable figure-pieces in her drawing-room, at Randalls?"
>
> Yes, good man! – thought Emma – but what has all that to do with taking likenesses? You know nothing of drawing. Don't pretend to be in raptures about mine. Keep your raptures for Harriet's face. "Well, if you give me such kind encouragement, Mr. Elton, I believe I shall try what I can do. Harriet's features are very delicate, which makes a likeness difficult; and yet there is a peculiarity in the shape of the eye and the lines about the mouth which one ought to catch."
>
> "Exactly so – The shape of the eye and the lines about the mouth – I have not a doubt of your success. Pray, pray attempt it. As you will do it, it will indeed, to use your own words, be an exquisite possession."

And when Emma shows Elton her drawings, she concludes with what she considers her best effort, of her sister Isabella's husband, John Knightley, which she thought very accurate but refused to finish because her sister thought it did not do him justice:

> "I did then forswear ever drawing any body again. But for Harriet's sake, or rather for my own, and as there are no husbands and wives in the case *at present*, I will break my resolution now."

> Mr. Elton seemed very properly struck and delighted by the idea, and was repeating, "No husbands and wives in the case at present indeed, as you observe. Exactly so. No husbands and wives," with so interesting a consciousness, that Emma began to consider whether she had not better leave them together at once. But as she wanted to be drawing, the declaration must wait a little longer.

. . . .

Emma is shilly-shallying about whether she should or should not return to painting portraits of family and friends partly to make the matter a subject of conversation between her and Elton and partly because of her inveterate self-concern: she thought her portraits successful and was wounded by her sister's criticism; she also wants to defuse any possible criticism by Elton, who has praised her water-colors of people he may not have seen. Her mention of "husbands and wives" triggers a repetition by Elton that suggests he knows exactly what she means. Elton's fawning responses are dictated partly by his usual cloying manners, but partly by his mistaken idea that Emma is doing what, in his past experience, young ladies do for men they are interested in: they preen by demonstrating their talents and accomplishments, like dancing and music, or in this case painting. "It will indeed … be an exquisite possession," Elton says, denoting the painting as a figure for Emma Woodhouse and her fortune; for him the subject of the painting is immaterial: it will be a Woodhouse as a Rembrandt is a Rembrandt, and the original is quite valuable.

The self-deception is mutual: each imputes an intention to the other agreeable to their plan for the other. If there is anything to choose between the two actors in this mutual self-deception, it is Elton, in his egoistical assumption that Emma is preening for him, who may seem the more repulsive. But it is Emma who seems the more oblivious to the intentions of the other: Elton does not after all say, "Let me entreat you to exercise your talent in favour of your charming friend"; it is Emma's talent that is described as "charming," not her friend. This is a novel whose language is never slapdash, one that repays careful attention not only to what is said but to how it is said.

Structure: *Emma* as a Detective Novel: Mystery and Irony

In the second part, the cast of characters expands as Augusta Elton, Jane Fairfax, and Frank Churchill join the characters whom we already know. Mrs. Elton, the Bristol-bred bride with a dowry of "so many thousands as would always be called ten,"[7] whom Elton brings back to Highbury after his failure with Emma, is primarily a textural figure, one of the three characters who exist to make us laugh. (The other two are Miss Bates, "a great talker upon little matters" whose

chatter suggests synapses firing at random with a direct link to her mouth, and Mr. Woodhouse, Emma's father, a hypochondriac who is incessantly worrying about his own health and everyone else's in ways that threaten everyone else's pleasure.) Mrs. Elton is awful, and awfully funny, because she highhandedly manages to say and do all the wrong things. She affectedly calls Elton her "caro sposo," she expresses surprise that Mrs. Weston, Emma's former governess, is "really quite the gentlewoman." Worst of all, she challenges Emma's title to be reigning queen of Highbury. Aside from the comedy of vulgarity within this genteel society, that is Augusta Elton's primary function: by displaying all of Emma's faults and none of her virtues, she saves us from disliking Emma quite as much as we otherwise would.

Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill are connected by blood to characters we have met in the first part of the story. Jane is an orphan, Miss Bates's niece; she has been well educated through the charity of Colonel Campbell, a friend of her late father, and is apparently destined to become a governess. Frank is Mr. Weston's son by his first marriage, who has been adopted by the wealthy Churchills, his uncle and aunt on his late mother's side. At a time before the novel begins, Frank and Jane have met at Weymouth – a seaside resort – have fallen in love, and become secretly engaged. They cannot marry at present, though, because Frank anticipates that if he declares his love for a penniless gentlewoman of no particular social rank he will be disinherited by his adoptive parents.

Like a mystery writer of the "cozy" school, Austen keeps the engagement a secret from us until it is revealed to the rest of the characters, although like a good mystery writer she scatters many clues about their relationship throughout the novel, clues that we would need to be quite clever to understand on a first reading of the novel. For example, in II.16, we learn that Jane Fairfax, though less than robust, walks to the post office every morning, even in wet weather. Well-wishers attempt to dissuade, even forbid her from walking there, and offer to get her letters for her – advice and help she resolutely declines, insisting that she needs the morning walk for her health. On a first reading, we may notice only the tactlessness of John Knightley and the officiousness of the awful Mrs. Elton, and so on, but on a second reading, it will be obvious that Jane is engaged in a secret correspondence with Frank and is desperately fending off all neighborly attempts at interference with her freedom with every reason she can think of, including a wildly irrelevant paean to the incomparable accuracy of the post office.[8] Similarly, we learn in II.9 that Frank has volunteered to fix the rivet that holds together Mrs. Bates's spectacles, and we see him engaged in that job at the beginning of the next chapter with Mrs. Bates asleep and Jane "intent on her pianoforte." On a first reading, this may seem to signify nothing at all, but on a second reading we realize that, with Miss Bates out

shopping and with Mrs. Bates in a state of sensory deprivation – she is quite deaf and, without her glasses, blind – Jane and Frank are, for a short while, without an effective chaperone and can communicate with each other without reserve. Miss Bates's comment on how long the repair job has taken Frank makes clear that fixing the rivet was not the only thing Frank had in mind.

One important reason why the actual relationship between Jane and Frank may not occur to us on a first reading is that the novel is largely focalized through Emma, who has a very different idea about Jane's secret love life. Jane's return home to Highbury is occasioned by the marriage of her friend, Colonel Campbell's daughter, to a Mr. Dixon, a man who saved Jane's life at Weymouth. Emma has imagined a triangular romance, in which Dixon, though engaged to Miss Campbell, is actually in love with the beautiful and talented Jane, who reciprocally falls in love with the man who saved her from drowning. On this view, Jane's return to Highbury is not what it seems, as a base to seek a post as a governess, but rather a way to getting some distance from her triangulated relationship with the Dixons. Emma is so in love with this plot that, when Jane at the Bateses is the recipient of a piano bought in London from an unknown benefactor, she suggests to Frank Churchill that it must be a gift of love from Dixon.

One reason why Emma does not immediately guess that the piano is a gift from Frank Churchill – who has just returned from a quick excursion to London, ostensibly to have his hair cut – is that Emma has another imaginary plot going at the same time, one in which Frank Churchill falls in love with Emma. This plot is certainly less inventive than the other: for one thing, both Weston, Frank's father, and Anne Taylor Weston, Emma's former governess, already have hopes that something like this will happen. And for another, Frank plays along with these hopes because he has a plot of his own: his paying attention to Emma, flirting with and courting her, will give him further cover for coming often to Highbury to see Jane. But while Emma imagines that Frank is in love with her, she doesn't imagine herself to be in love with him: she foresees a proposal of marriage, but one that she will decline.[9] Nevertheless, she flirts publicly and outrageously with handsome Frank on all social occasions, entirely oblivious to the pain she is causing Jane. And she even more outrageously gossips with everyone hinting at Jane's supposed relationship to Mr. Dixon, which is not merely harmless fun at another's expense. If Jane is about to become a governess, as Emma supposes, nothing would destroy her employability faster than the circulation of rumors about an improper clandestine relationship with a man in the family with whom she was residing.

Meanwhile, the other unmarried residents of Highbury become involved in these complications in ways that also become clearer on a second reading. Harriet Smith tells Emma that she has become attracted to a gentleman who is

"far above Mr. Elton" and to whom she feels a huge debt of gratitude. Emma assumes this must be Frank Churchill, who recently saved Harriet from a band of marauding gypsies who are camping nearby. In fact, George Knightley is the gentleman to whom Harriet is attracted: after seeing Harriet brutally snubbed by the Eltons at a local ball, Knightley restores her self-respect by asking her to dance. Emma is unable to think of Knightley as a possible mate for Harriet, and in fact becomes deeply upset at the idea, suggested by Mrs. Weston, that he might marry Jane Fairfax – or indeed, anyone at all. Even on a first reading we may suspect from Emma's intense adverse reaction to the idea, that it is not caused by what she mentions – her fear that her little nephew Henry will not become the heir to Knightley's house and lands.

But it is not until Harriet puts an end to Emma's confusion by telling her that it is Knightley for whom she cares that Emma realizes that "Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself." Emma backs into this realization, and in a way, so does Knightley: Knightley has loved Emma for so long that he takes her for granted, and it is only when he sees that his intensely hostile feelings about Frank Churchill are embittered by jealousy that he realizes that his feelings about Emma are not those for a mere sister-in-law. Even on a first reading, we may see this coming long before the characters do, and indeed part of our sense that Emma and Knightley will make a good married couple is that they already fit together like one, as we when watch them collaboratively calming their fretful or argumentative relatives, like her father and his brother.

The Coincidental Denouement

It is the resolution of the first mystery – the secret engagement of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax – that allows all the other romantic plot lines to fall into place. Frank's imperious aunt suddenly dies, his more malleable uncle has no objection to Frank's attachment to Jane, and the revelation of Frank's masquerade is one thing that helps Knightley and Emma understand themselves and each other. (And we meanwhile discover why Knightley has been paying attention to Harriet: Robert Martin has not moved on after her rejection of him, and Knightley is preparing the ground for a renewal of his proposal.) So the novel that started with one offstage wedding (Anna Taylor and Mr. Weston) and began its long second act with another (Augusta Hawkins and Mr. Elton), concludes with three marriages: Frank and Jane, Harriet and Robert Martin, and Knightley and Emma.

But it is unusual for Jane Austen to have the resolution of a novel depend on a single chance event like the sudden death of Mrs. Churchill, and Leland Monk has suggested,[10] with tongue firmly in cheek, that there's a case to be

made that Frank must have poisoned his aunt, about whose death we are told that, thirty-six hours after Frank's return to their home, "a sudden seizure of a different nature from anything foreboded by her general state had carried her off after a short struggle." We accept coincidences like this easily enough in Defoe and Fielding, and Monk's essay testifies that we expect less dependence on chance events in Austen's version of realistic plotting. In Austen we expect things to happen because of the way people behave, not because of chance events.

Not that Austen actually avoids coincidences in her plotting, but she does tend to *hide* them by embedding them deep in the fabric of her novels. For example, the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* depends for its smooth operation on Lizzie and Darcy getting together three times at three different locations, at Meryton (where the original "first impressions" are formed), at Rosings (where the disastrous first proposal takes place), and at Pemberley (where it becomes clear that Darcy has changed, has conquered his pride). The first meeting is a given of the story, but the other two require "small world" coincidences. The meeting at Rosings depends on the fact that Lizzie's clergyman cousin, who marries her best friend Charlotte, is rector in the parish of Darcy's aunt. The meeting at Pemberley depends on the coincidence that Mrs. Gardiner, Lizzie's aunt by marriage, grew up in Lambton, a town in Derbyshire five miles from Pemberley, and Lambton becomes the destination to which she and Lizzie travel on their summer holiday. Austen defuses the surprise of the coincidences by embedding the key "small world" facts early in the novel and outside the relationship of Lizzie and Darcy: for example, Aunt Gardiner's Derbyshire origin is first mentioned in connection with Lizzie's brief flirtation with Wickham, whose late father had been estate manager at Pemberley. In this sense Austen generally hides her coincidences, so that her happy endings do not appear to depend on chance plot mechanisms.

The equivalent coincidence in *Emma* is the fact that Frank Churchill's father and Jane Fairfax's aunt and grandmother all reside in Highbury. (As mentioned in Chapter 5, Fielding exploits coincidences in exactly the opposite way: he flaunts coincidence in order to make his happy endings seem less probable and more providential.) The coincidental death of Mrs. Churchill is unique in the Austen canon in coming out of the blue at precisely the right time, right after Jane breaks her engagement to Frank but before she leaves to take up a post as governess in Bristol. We may or may not want to speculate, like Leland Monk, on whether her death was a matter of malice aforethought, but there is another sense in which Austen lets Frank get away with murder: he behaves with enormous irresponsibility throughout the novel, but is rewarded with a beautiful, talented, intelligent, and entirely worthy wife. In that sense Emma too gets away with murder.

Texture: Free Indirect Discourse

We can get into the minds of fictional characters in a variety of ways. The mind of a character may be represented in *psychonarration* – a kind of summary of the character's thoughts, but in the exterior narrator's voice rather than the character's; for example: "Then he rejoiced in his liberty." Or the story may use *quoted interior monologue* (where the words are the character's thoughts, in the first person): "Now I'm free!!" Or the story may use *free indirect discourse*, where we read the character's own words but with the first-person pronouns shifted into the third person and the present tense verbs shifted to the past tense, but with deictics remaining what they would be in interior monologue: "Now he was free!!"[11]

Free indirect discourse can be found occasionally in some very early texts – linguists have found versions of it in Chaucer and even in the Hebrew Bible – but its substantial use in literary fiction begins with Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796), and we see it all over the novels of Jane Austen. Austen in fact uses all three ways of representing consciousness in *Emma* and in her other novels, and she moves quickly and without warning from one to another as the demands of character development require. In the following passage from chapter 16, I have used three different type styles to represent the three ways in which the reader is allowed to read Emma's mind:

. . . .

The hair was curled, and the maid sent away, and Emma sat down to think and be miserable. – It was a wretched business indeed! – Such an overthrow of every thing she had been wishing for! – Such a development of every thing most unwelcome! – Such a blow for Harriet! – that was the worst of all. Every part of it brought pain and humiliation, of some sort or other; but, compared with the evil to Harriet, all was light; and she would gladly have submitted to feel yet more mistaken – more in error – more disgraced by mis-judgment, than she actually was, could the effects of her blunders have been confined to herself.

"If I had not persuaded Harriet into liking the man, I could have borne any thing. He might have doubled his presumption to me – but poor Harriet!"

How she could have been so deceived! – He protested that he had never thought seriously of Harriet – never! She looked back as well as she could; but it was all confusion. She had taken up the idea, she supposed, and made every thing bend to it. His manners, however, must have been unmarked, wavering, dubious, or she could not have been so misled. …

But he had fancied her in love with him; that evidently must have been his dependence; **and after raving a little about the seeming incongruity of gentle manners and a conceited head, Emma was obliged in common honesty to stop and admit** that her own behaviour to him had been so complaisant and obliging, so full of courtesy and attention, as (supposing her real motive unperceived)

might warrant a man of ordinary observation and delicacy, like Mr. Elton, in fancying himself a very decided favourite. If *she* had so misinterpreted his feelings, she had little right to wonder that *he*, with self-interest to blind him, should have mistaken hers.

The first error and the worst lay at her door. It was foolish, it was wrong, to take so active a part in bringing any two people together. It was adventuring too far, assuming too much, making light of what ought to be serious, a trick of what ought to be simple. **She was quite concerned and ashamed, and resolved to do such things no more.**

"Here have I," **said she**, *"actually talked poor Harriet into being very much attached to this man. She might never have thought of him but for me; and certainly never would have thought of him with hope, if I had not assured her of his attachment, for she is as modest and humble as I used to think him. Oh! that I had been satisfied with persuading her not to accept young Martin. There I was quite right. That was well done of me; but there I should have stopped, and left the rest to time and chance. I was introducing her into good company, and giving her the opportunity of pleasing some one worth having; I ought not to have attempted more. But now, poor girl, her peace is cut up for some time. I have been but half a friend to her; and if she were* not *to feel this disappointment so very much, I am sure I have not an idea of any body else who would be at all desirable for her; – William Coxe – Oh! no, I could not endure William Coxe – a pert young lawyer."*

. . . .

This complex passage illustrates the two aspects of Emma's character that combine to make her such a perfect heroine of a punitive comedy. On the one hand she recognizes how she misread Elton, and repents of the results of her matchmaking – she knows that Harriet will be hurt deeply when she finds out what Elton's intentions were. But on the other hand she continues to insist that she was "quite right" to persuade Harriet to reject Robert Martin, and while she resolves, generally, to matchmake no more, she immediately falls back into the habit she has renounced, and resumes thinking about possible husbands for Harriet, like William Coxe (from a family that Emma elsewhere mentions as "very vulgar". Emma's snobbery about those not working in a gentlemanly milieu is still very much in evidence.)

The combination of sympathy and judgment with which we read the passage varies with the method of mind-reading. In this passage, at least, Austen seems to use quoted interior monologue for the passages where she means us to be least sympathetic with and most judgmental of her heroine – the passages where Emma seems to return to her old desires to manipulate others – and uses free indirect discourse where she means us to be more sympathetic. In a way this may seem paradoxical since quoted interior monologue spoken in the first person would seem to be the deepest dive into a psyche. But perhaps it works exactly the other way, because speaking with first-person pronouns is

how others approach us. Emma's "I" makes her an Other, while the sentences where she is a "she" (and where we work to translate the pronouns, the deictics, and the tenses) absorb us more seamlessly into the fabric of her meditation, make us more empathetic with her. Whether this is more generally true would be harder to say and perhaps impossible to prove.

The Content of *Emma*: Class and Caste

A novel with a snob at its center is inevitably going to be about class, and we can learn a great deal about social structure in England by paying close attention to the distinctions that are made and ignored by the heroine and by other characters. But the first thing to notice is that Austen seems to ignore the class system that Marx saw operating in England and other advanced European countries in the nineteenth century: she doesn't speak of an aristocracy, a bourgeoisie, and a proletariat. For her there are not three classes but two castes, those who belong to the gentry, and everybody else.

Gentlemen comprise landowners and rentiers and members of the genteel professions: barristers and judges, clergymen of all ranks from curate to archbishop, and officers in the army and the navy; gentlewomen are their wives and daughters. *Emma* has samples of all of these. George Knightley of Donwell Abbey is a landowner; he is a country squire par excellence, and his estate is the largest piece of land in the neighborhood. Emma's father, Henry Woodhouse of Hartfield, is primarily a rentier; he has a country house and enough land attached to it to raise his own poultry and pigs, along with a garden and a lawn, but what he primarily has is money in safe investments that yield a good income: "The landed property of Hartfield certainly was inconsiderable, being but a sort of notch in the Donwell Abbey estate, to which all the rest of Highbury belonged; but *their fortune, from other sources*, was such as to make them *scarcely secondary* to Donwell Abbey itself, in every other kind of consequence; and the Woodhouses had long held a high place in the consideration of the neighbourhood."

The Woodhouses may be "scarcely secondary" as Emma thinks, but rentiers are a step below country squires because their commitment to the location where they live is less certain. Mr. Knightley's brother, John Knightley, is a barrister living in London, and we can tell he is a barrister because there are seasons – the courts' sessions – when he cannot come to the country on account of the cases he has to argue. Philip Elton is the rector of Highbury, a gentleman by virtue of having taken orders as a clergyman but – as Emma is conscious – "without any alliances but in trade," he is only barely a gentleman. And both Mr. Weston and Jane Fairfax's father were officers in the army. Money has

everything to do with the style of one's living but nothing to do with gentility: Mrs. Bates and Miss Bates, as a clergyman's widow and daughter, are genteel, and Emma pays calls upon them, despite the fact that they are so desperately poor that Knightley and Emma not only invite them to dinner but send them gifts of meat and produce as acts of charity.

Below the gentry are the undifferentiated common people. At the bottom of this caste are the poor, whom Emma does not treat as equals, but for whom she has deep concern despite her narcissism and her frequent airs of superiority. Here she calls upon a family visited by ill health as well as poverty:

> Emma was very compassionate; and the distresses of the poor were as sure of relief from her personal attention and kindness, her counsel and her patience, as from her purse. She understood their ways, could allow for their ignorance and their temptations, had no romantic expectations of extraordinary virtue from those for whom education had done so little; entered into their troubles with ready sympathy, and always gave her assistance with as much intelligence as good-will. In the present instance, it was sickness and poverty together which she came to visit; and after remaining there as long as she could give comfort or advice, she quitted the cottage with such an impression of the scene as made her say to Harriet, as they walked away,
>
> "These are the sights, Harriet, to do one good. How trifling they make every thing else appear! – I feel now as if I could think of nothing but these poor creatures all the rest of the day; and yet, who can say how soon it may all vanish from my mind?"
>
> "Very true," said Harriet. "Poor creatures! one can think of nothing else."
>
> "And really, I do not think the impression will soon be over," said Emma, as she crossed the low hedge, and tottering footstep which ended the narrow, slippery path through the cottage garden, and brought them into the lane again. "I do not think it will," stopping to look once more at all the outward wretchedness of the place, and recall the still greater within.

Emma's thorniest problem, and perhaps Austen's as well, is the middle class, partly because its existence calls into doubt the dubious equation of birth and worth that underlies her world view. It is easiest to define it out of existence as a social object: as Emma says to Harriet in chapter I.4 – the topic is Harriet's prosperous tenant farmer, Robert Martin – "The yeomanry are precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do. A degree or two lower, and a creditable appearance might interest me; I might hope to be useful to their families in some way or other. But a farmer can need none of my help, and is, therefore, in one sense, as much above my notice as in every other he is below it."

Besides the yeomanry, the middle class comprises those professions that are not included in the sublime foursome of the army, the navy, the church, and the bar, along with those in commerce, or, as Austen usually puts it, trade. William Coxe, a young bachelor with a house full of sisters, is “a pert young lawyer” to Emma, a term she would not use about her barrister brother-in-law John Knightley, and it echoes the distinction observed to this day in the United Kingdom between solicitors, who do contracts, wills, and property transfers, and the bewigged barristers, who argue civil and criminal cases before judges. Another learned profession that had not yet become thought of as genteel was medicine, represented in *Emma* by the apothecary, Mr. Perry, on whom Mr. Woodhouse relies. The topic of the letter that reveals to the attentive reader the clandestine correspondence between Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill is the question of whether Mr. Perry will “set up his carriage”; and the reason why that might be worth writing about is that carriages were for the gentry. Although making house calls in a carriage, rather than on horseback, may be more convenient for the aging medical practitioner, it also might signify to others that Perry aspires to be thought of as gentry, and Perry ultimately decides not to transgress this sumptuary rule.

Trade could be a topic on its own: it was certainly the primary source of the wealth of the United Kingdom at the time, but we meet few representatives actively engaged in trade in the Austen canon – one of the few is Elizabeth Bennet’s uncle Gardiner in *Pride and Prejudice*.[12] But trade is often mentioned as the ultimate source of income of characters who have crossed the line into something like gentility, like Mr. Elton, or the Bingleys in *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Emma*, the wealthy tradespeople are the Coles, whose history, along with Emma’s attitude toward that history, appears in II.7:

> The Coles had been settled some years in Highbury, and were very good sort of people – friendly, liberal, and unpretending; but, on the other hand, they were of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel. On their first coming into the country, they had lived in proportion to their income, quietly, keeping little company, and that little unexpensively; but the last year or two had brought them a considerable increase of means – the house in town had yielded greater profits, and fortune in general had smiled on them. With their wealth, their views increased; their want of a larger house, their inclination for more company. They added to their house, to their number of servants, to their expenses of every sort; and by this time were, in fortune and style of living, second only to the family at Hartfield. Their love of society, and their new dining-room, prepared every body for their keeping dinner-company; and a few parties, chiefly among the single men, had already taken place. The regular and best families Emma could hardly suppose they would presume to invite – neither Donwell, nor Hartfield, nor

> Randalls. Nothing should tempt *her* to go, if they did; and she regretted that her father's known habits would be giving her refusal less meaning than she could wish. The Coles were very respectable in their way, but they ought to be taught that it was not for them to arrange the terms on which the superior families would visit them.

. . . .

There is a bit of shorthand here: the "house in town" is probably the Coles's business, not their residence; "their house" in Highbury is clearly their country house, which they have turned into a gentleman's residence.

And they have observed the rules of social climbing assiduously. They don't pretend to be what they are not, and they first invite only single gentlemen to dine with them (like Mr. Elton before his marriage, or Mr. Knightley), since it is the ladies who are charged with enforcing the boundaries of good society. And in point of fact Emma is wrong in her prediction about the Coles's planned dinner party, which is intended to launch them as within the gentlefolk of Highbury: Mr. Knightley and the Westons have indeed been invited and have already accepted. The only reason the Coles have delayed issuing an invitation to the Woodhouses is that they are waiting for a screen to arrive from London that will guarantee Emma's father's comfort. Emma's snobbery is very much in evidence: she at first hopes to receive an invitation so that she can decline it with disdain, and is frustrated that day follows day and no invitation arrives. By the time it does, Emma has changed her mind, attends the party, enjoys herself, and when it is over has almost forgotten her hostile first thoughts about the Coles and their pretentions.

There are also those who don't know the rules or don't care: Mrs. Elton, formerly Augusta Hawkins of Bristol, [13] is from a family of tradespeople; a gentlewoman primarily by having married the rector of Highbury, she is constantly alluding to the wealth and the possessions of her sister and brother-in-law, the Sucklings of Maple Grove, insisting on her privilege as a bride to precede Emma and all the other ladies on their way in to dinner, and patronizing Jane Fairfax by officiously helping her find a place among her pseudo-genteel acquaintances as governess.

So there are still two castes in Austen's world, but their boundaries are permeable. That there can be downward as well as upward movement is shown in the history of Mr. Weston given at the beginning of chapter I.2. His origins are in Highbury, in a "respectable family, which for the last two or three generations, had been rising into gentility and property." "Respectable" suggests middle-class origins, but Weston does not initially engage in trade of any sort: instead he buys a commission in the army, which makes him by definition an officer and a gentleman. As Captain Weston he marries the Miss Churchill of

Enscombe by whom he has Frank, who is at his wife's death adopted by his brother- and sister-in-law. Impoverished by the expensive tastes of his late wife, Weston descends to engage in trade, helped by the fact that his Weston brothers are able to help him get a good start. He quickly makes enough money to retire, buy Randalls, "a little estate adjoining Highbury," and marry the portionless Anna Taylor, Emma's former governess. So Weston has been in the course of one life an officer (gentry), a tradesman (commoner), and a landowner (gentry), like Jane Austen's favorite brother Henry, who became an army officer, then a London banker, and finally a clergyman.

The denouement, with its marriages, affirms Austen's view of class. Harriet Smith, revealed to be the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy tradesman (rather than of a nobleman, as Emma once imagined), will take her proper place in society among the Martins: "The intimacy between her and Emma must sink; their friendship must change into a calmer sort of goodwill; and, fortunately, what ought to be, and must be, seemed already beginning, and in the most gradual, natural manner." On the other side, the impoverished but worthy Jane will wear the family jewelry of the Churchills. And at Emma's wedding, the parvenue Mrs. Elton will be excluded: Austen lets us know that her critique of the ceremony ("Very little white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business! – Selina would stare when she heard of it.") comes at second hand ("from the particulars detailed by her husband"), since Augusta was not invited.

Emma and the Condition of England

As a novel about class, *Emma* also participates in the most important political question of its day, the one posed by the French Revolution of 1789 and not answered by the final battle of Waterloo in 1815. Coming from the most marginal class within the gentry, the group without land or great monetary wealth within the immediate family, Jane Austen's vision of her society was, as one might expect, highly conservative, taking the side of Edmund Burke rather than the English Jacobins like Godwin and Wollstonecraft. And she was 19 when her fascinating cousin, Eliza Hancock, who had married Jean-François, Comte de Feuillide, was widowed by the guillotine in 1794. *Emma* is not a typical anti-Jacobin novel like those of the 1790s, which create characters and ideas representative of political thinkers like Paine, Godwin, or Rousseau in order to ridicule them.[14] But it does have a very positive message about how England works in a typical village in the home counties. The key representative of government is Mr. Knightley, and he is not only named George, like three Hanoverian kings, the current Prince Regent, and the patron saint of England, but as Claire Lamont has pointed out he is frequently described in national

terms. He greets his brother "in the true English style," addresses Emma "in plain, unaffected, gentlemanlike English," and even criticizes Frank Churchill's manners as lacking in "English delicacy." Knightley is about as far as one can imagine from either the secretive, guilty Falkland of *Caleb Williams* or the credulous if charitable Allworthy of *Tom Jones*: he is the personification of honesty, candor, and good sense. Though his lands comprise much of the Highbury neighborhood, he rules his domain not as a despot but in consultation with all the other men of education and substance who can contribute to the resolution of issues: chapter III.16 refers to a "regular meeting" at the Crown Inn which Elton and Cole and Weston are expected to attend, together with Knightley, to discuss and decide local affairs.

One gets Austen's vision in a nutshell in a brief passage during the episode when Emma and the other gentry are picking strawberries at Donwell Abbey around Midsummer Day. The guests arrive and, after the fatigues of picking fruit, refresh themselves by taking a short walk in the cool of the afternoon. Austen describes both the house and the grounds, focalized through Emma's point of view:

> she viewed the respectable size and style of the building, its suitable, becoming, characteristic situation, low and sheltered – its ample gardens stretching down to meadows washed by a stream, of which the Abbey, with all the old neglect of prospect, had scarcely a sight – and its abundance of timber in rows and avenues, which neither fashion nor extravagance had rooted up. – The house was larger than Hartfield, and totally unlike it, covering a good deal of ground, rambling and irregular, with many comfortable, and one or two handsome rooms. – It was just what it ought to be, and it looked what it was – and Emma felt an increasing respect for it, as the residence of a family of such true gentility, untainted in blood and understanding. …
>
> It was hot; and after walking some time over the gardens in a scattered, dispersed way, scarcely any three together, they insensibly followed one another to the delicious shade of a broad short avenue of limes, which stretching beyond the garden at an equal distance from the river, seemed the finish of the pleasure grounds. – It led to nothing; nothing but a view at the end over a low stone wall with high pillars, which seemed intended, in their erection, to give the appearance of an approach to the house, which never had been there. Disputable, however, as might be the taste of such a termination, it was in itself a charming walk, and the view which closed it extremely pretty. – The considerable slope, at nearly the foot of which the Abbey stood, gradually acquired a steeper form beyond its grounds; and at half a mile distant was a bank of considerable abruptness and grandeur, well clothed with wood; – and at the bottom of this bank, favourably placed and sheltered, rose the Abbey Mill Farm, with meadows in front, and the river making a close and handsome curve around it.

> It was a sweet view – sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive.

Donwell Abbey, as Austen implies by the last sentence, is a personification of England, whose constitution, like the house itself, is not the product of a single architect following an a priori theory at one specific time, but something that developed gradually over many centuries, so naturally it is "rambling and irregular." Unlike the Palace of Versailles it is not designed for show or to peer down upon the landscape, and its "abundance of timber" – timber that might be sold by extravagant owners in order to pay their debts – testifies to the prudent way the Knightleys, like England itself, have managed the estate.[15]

On the walk toward the river, a "low stone wall with high pillars" suggests that in an earlier generation there was a plan of "an approach to the house" that had greater grandeur, but this plan was apparently abandoned. Possibly Austen was thinking allegorically of earlier reigns with pretentions to divine right (or possibly the Catholic monasticism that England abandoned in the sixteenth century, which turned what had once been an actual abbey into the private property of the Knightleys). In any case, the view as the party approaches the river features, at the bottom of the "considerable slope," Abbey Mill Farm, the prosperous holding rented from Knightley by Robert Martin. The relationship between Knightley and Martin, the relationship at its best of gentry and yeomanry in England, is represented within the description of the farm itself: the Mill Farm is lower down the slope but it is "favourably placed and sheltered," and the river boundary "making a close and handsome curve around it" suggests the security of the embrace of his prosperous, rising workers by the landowner of true gentility and understanding.

In this sense Emma may be seen as the first "Condition-of-England" novel – the term was coined by Thomas Carlyle in the first chapter of *Chartism* (1840) – a novel exploring the classes and the masses, the landowners and factory owners and the workers they employ – and whether their relationship is healthy or diseased. Austen is not a Pollyanna: she understands that irresponsible owners and snobbish rentiers pose a threat to the proper order of things as great as the threat posed by improvident workers (or outlaw predators, like the gypsies). But in 1815, the year of Waterloo, she could present a prospect of England as a land prospering "under a sun bright without being oppressive." We enjoy the moment, the cozy world she creates; as the nineteenth century went on, however, Austen's optimism and her Burkean conservatism would come to seem less and less tenable, an ideology in the sense of false consciousness, to be corrected by later "Condition of England" novels. But that will be in a different age.

Notes

1. A sixth son, George, was developmentally disabled; he was boarded at a neighboring farm family, as was the custom at that time.
2. Long afterwards, two Austen nieces recounted a similar story attributed to Cassandra, about a clergyman with whom Jane had become acquainted at a summer holiday resort around 1801, who had proposed meeting again the following summer, but who suddenly died. Austen biographers are divided as to whether this actually occurred or whether it is a mere fabulation based on Cassandra's own tragic romance.
3. One of these flirtations, Tom Lefroy, later Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, recalled having been in love with Jane Austen. The 2007 Austen biopic *Becoming Jane* exaggerates Lefroy's "boyish love" into a full-scale elopement that, needless to say, never happened: both parties were far too prudent to attempt such a thing.
4. The usual diagnosis given in Austen biographies is Addison's disease (adrenal insufficiency), but a 2005 article by Annette Upfal in *Medical Humanities* argues that Hodgkin's lymphoma, a form of cancer, is more likely. (Neither disease had been named at the time of Austen's death.)
5. Volume the First is in the Bodleian in Oxford; Volume the Second and Volume the Third are in the British Library in London.
6. For rough monetary values, multiply by 100 to get current dollars. Austen's total earnings during her lifetime were about £650; after her death commission sales on *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, and the sale of Austen's copyrights to Bentley brought her sister Cassandra another £1000.
7. My guess would be seven.
8. Another clue is that at one point Frank Churchill shows himself to be familiar with a bit of Highbury gossip (that the local apothecary, Mr. Perry, has been thinking about setting up in a carriage instead of making house calls on horseback) that he could only know about from this clandestine correspondence.
9. At one point, in II.12, Frank is about to spill the beans to Emma about his engagement to Jane, saying "In short, … perhaps, Miss Woodhouse – I think you can hardly be quite without suspicion" – but when he looks at Emma, her face betrays her fear that he is about to say "something absolutely serious, which she did not wish," and he pulls himself from the brink of self-revelation for all the wrong reasons. It's a wonderful example, available to us only on a second reading, of the complex ways mind-reading (including the failure to read others' minds) works within this intricate novel.
10. See Leland Monk, "Murder She Wrote: The Mystery of Jane Austen's *Emma*," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 20:3 (Fall 1990): 342–53.
11. The fact that the deictics (temporal or spatial pointer words like "now" or "here") do not change creates what linguist Anne Banfield called "unspeakable sentences": sentences that might be flagged as ungrammatical, but which do not register with us as flawed.
12. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Lizzie's best friend, Charlotte Lucas, is the daughter of Sir William Lucas, a tradesman who was mayor of Meryton and knighted by visiting

royalty; once he had become Sir William he was a gentleman, and was therefore obliged to give up his middle-class profession.

13. Bristol, the primary seaport for transatlantic shipping in the eighteenth century, was notorious for the fortunes made before 1807 in the slave trade. By locating her in Bristol Austen may be implying that the egregious Augusta was connected with that shameful aspect of British commerce.
14. For example Isaac d'Israeli's *Vaurien* (1799) or George Walker's *The Vagabond* (1799).
15. In other novels, Austen critiques landowners who "improve" their estate by adopting fashionable modes of landscape architecture at the expense of tradition, like John Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, who cuts down a grove of walnut trees in order to install a fashionable decorative garden, or Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*, who advises Edmund Bertram to tear down a barn and a forge and make other major changes to his rectory merely to improve the view.

Chapter 12

The World the Novel Made

A Different World

England in 1815, the year of *Emma*, the year of the Battle of Waterloo, was in many ways a very different place from England in 1688, the year of *Oroonoko* and the Glorious Revolution. Many of these changes would have happened if the novel never existed, or indeed if literature itself did not exist. England in 1688 was a single kingdom with a complex of arrangements with Scotland (ruled by the same monarch) and Ireland (where the Glorious Revolution was far from bloodless). But by 1815 England was the most powerful element of a United Kingdom governing Scotland and Ireland from Parliament in London; and movements toward independence by Scotland and Ireland would be dormant for at least the next hundred years. In 1688, England had a few prospering colonies on the western Atlantic seaboard and in the Caribbean. By 1815 a group of American colonies had declared their independence, provoking a brief but disastrous war of national liberation; but the United Kingdom had kept Canada and acquired further territory in the Caribbean, which together with an empire in the East, coastal India from Bombay to Calcutta, and Australia as well, a continent on its own, made the United Kingdom one of the most powerful players in world politics.

With respect to its internal politics, the period begins just before William of Orange gave up any claim of divine right to rule as the price of becoming King William III. When it ends, the anointed king, George III, has sunk into senile oblivion and has been replaced by his eldest son as regent, but for all practical purposes Parliament rules England, and the identity of the king on the throne is no longer very significant. In 1688, trade has begun to rival agriculture as the

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source of British wealth, but by 1815, not only have the profits of trade dwarfed those of farming, but an industrial revolution is under way that will make the United Kingdom the premier European economic power in the manufacture of textiles and other goods. The spinning jenny of Hargreaves, the power loom of Cartwright, the potteries of Wedgwood were the harbingers of what would soon become a factory system, based primarily in the English Midlands, an industrial power that would dominate Europe. And science, which Charles II fostered in the Royal Society, led by Isaac Newton, had begun to change the way people thought about the world. But though we think of literature as a reflection of the culture that produced it, it is equally true that literature changes culture, and some of the cultural differences between 1688 and 1815 can be traced to the influence of the rise of the novel.

The Novel and the Development of a Mass Reading Public

We saw in Chapter 1 that there was not yet a large reading public for fiction in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. But there is evidence for a considerable increase in what might be called "bare literacy" during the eighteenth century. About 50 percent of men and 15 percent of women were able to sign their names to court registers around 1700; around 1820 those figures rose to 65 percent for men and 40 percent for women. This literate fraction was higher in London and the North, and considerably higher in Scotland and the American colonies. Estimating the change in what might be called the mass reading public is far more difficult in an era that did not collect data on what and how much ordinary people read. But the reading public for which Radcliffe, Godwin, Austen, and Scott were writing was much larger than the public of Behn and Defoe.[1]

One index to the change is the sheer number of novels published. The researches of Peter Garside and others have demonstrated that in the last half of the eighteenth century the number of novels published annually doubled from around 50 per year around 1760 to a high of 111 novels published in 1808. Furthermore, the organization of the book trade itself was changing. Peter Feather's researches present an "inward looking and complacent oligopoly" of booksellers dominating the book trade around the middle of the eighteenth century, but that trade both expanded and altered after 1770 with new and more entrepreneurial men entering the field, like John Murray and William Lane, who created the specialized publishing house, attempting to sign up the best authors in their chosen fields. Murray became the prestigious publisher of Jane Austen and Lord Byron; Lane's Minerva Press published what we

would think of as down-market Gothic novels. There was also a bottom rung consisting of publishers like John Bailey and S. Fisher, who put out chapbooks, which were cut-down versions of popular novels, adventure stories, and criminal biographies, each running from a dozen to a hundred pages, and priced at around sixpence each.

The latter half of the period also saw the development of the circulating library. Books were relatively expensive at this stage of publishing technology, and the English reading public wanted to read more novels and other forms of literature than they could afford to purchase outright from booksellers. Entrepreneurial publishers like William Lane established a circulating library – begun in 1770 – that allowed the subscribers to borrow books from a catalogue of over 20,000 titles, and to exchange them for others when they had finished reading them. The enterprising Lane also established franchises for the Minerva Library all over England, in towns like Newcastle, Bath, and Birmingham, providing their proprietors with the books they were to carry. In an 1808 advertisement for the Minerva Library in Leadenhall Street, London, we learn that subscribers paid an annual subscription of 16 shillings to borrow two ordinary novels at a time with exchange privileges. For premium subscribers who wanted access to the "newest and most expensive" books, the annual subscription price was 31 shillings sixpence, which was approximately what one would have to pay to buy outright a single three-volume novel like Scott's *Waverley*. We do not have statistics on how often readers changed their books, but one probably exceptional reader, Mary Russell Mitford, left a record in her letters of having read 55 volumes of fiction in the course of a single month. And English periodicals complained, as noted in Chapter 8, about women who were becoming addicted to reading fiction and in consequence neglecting their household duties.

The vast increase in the sheer quantity of published fiction, and the innovations in the ways of supplying it suggest an equally great increase of demand for entertaining reading for all classes except the poorest and least literate. In the course of the nineteenth century new institutions like railway bookstalls would cater to that demand. But beyond this, there is also evidence that the rise of the novel changed aspects of the way people think.

The Novel and the Modern Epistemé

Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* presents the notion that three modes of thought successively held sway in the Renaissance (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), the Classical Age (roughly from Descartes through Kant), and the Modern Age (the nineteenth century and after). In the Renaissance, thought operated through representations taking the form of the homologies of

macrocosm and microcosm, where the relation of God to humanity might be figured in terms of the relation of a king to his subjects, or a father to his family. In the Classical Age, thought operated through representations like a map, where there need be no direct resemblances between the map and the terrain that is to be understood through the map. (My New York subway map shows me which stations are on each subway line, and in what order they are reached, but the station does not look anything like the circle or hexagon iconically representing the station – nor is the map a "good likeness" of the city terrain: it makes Manhattan much larger than Brooklyn or Staten Island because of the density of stations and lines to be represented there, and it would not be a better map if its representation of the size and shape of the boroughs were more realistic.) The map operates through a series of simple categories (lines, stations, interchanges) that allow the reader to understand how to get from one place to another.

Foucault posited that in the nineteenth century the key way of representing thought was the narrative rather than the map or the analogy: we would understand a phenomenon by understanding its history, through the story of how it had gotten to be what it is. Thus Marx understood the nature of the industrial society he lived in by understanding how it had developed historically from earlier forms of socio-economic organization, from hunter-gatherer tribes in pre-history, through pastoral societies, to feudal societies based on agriculture, to early modern societies in which trade strongly supplements the wealth produced by agriculture. Similarly, Darwin understood the nature of mankind as a product of an evolution from earlier organisms, with the mechanisms of random variation and natural selection generating history, a struggle for existence with the more probable survival of those who are fittest in each environment, who are likely to pass their genetic material down to subsequent generations. Both Marx and Darwin argued that the mechanisms that had generated the human beings and their societies of the present day would continue to operate into the future. Michel Foucault's own discussions of sanity and insanity, health and illness, crime and punishment, licit and deviant sexuality, also took the form of narratives, histories that presented the genealogy of current institutions and ways of thinking as they had developed from previous versions.

While Foucault never suggests that it was the rise of the novel that caused the *coupure* or rupture between the Classical and Modern *epistemés* – indeed, he presents these changes in the representation of thought as though they happened of themselves, without any warning, like earthquakes – it is striking that this move toward grand narratives and toward narrative explanations of historical phenomena occurred precisely when the novel was replacing the lyric and the drama as the most universally read form of imaginative literature, generating throughout Europe entire nations of readers of narrative.

There were also direct influences between the novel and philosophy. David Hume's discussion of the basis of morality in the common sentiments of mankind undergoes a significant change between its presentation in the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1738–40) and in the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). As Carrie Shanafelt has argued,[2] in the *Treatise*, Hume argues for a morality based on sentiment, but views the basis of lived experience which provokes those sentiments as contained within the individual, the monadic self – which poses a problem:

> Can there be consensus regarding moral sentiment when the objects of observation are available only to ourselves? Hume wrestles with this problem throughout the *Treatise* in a way that does not offer much clarity. The *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, however, published twelve years later, much more confidently employs [a] first-person plural style of observation, which emerges alongside his more sophisticated use of descriptive and narrative techniques that elicit the socially appropriate sentiment his interpretation will demand.

Shanafelt argues that it is no accident that in the decade between the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* the major novels of Richardson and Fielding are published, novels that depended for their effect on our collective response to the situations in which the characters found themselves. The novel, in other words, presented objects of observation that Hume's society had in common. Shanafelt argues elsewhere that there are actually direct and specific influences as well, that Fielding's chapter "On Love" in *Tom Jones* seems to have even more intimately reshaped Hume's argument in the chapter on Self-Love in the *Enquiry*.[3]

The Novel and Evolving Forms of Masculinity

It has long been noted that the eighteenth century stands as a watershed in the evolution of masculinity,[4] an evolution that was not merely reflected but advanced and disseminated in literature. As late as the mid-seventeenth century, the most admired form of masculinity was the warrior, as we see from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* as clearly as from *Othello.* The warrior ideal continues to appear in Restoration texts like Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*. During the Restoration, two competitive figures emerge, the libertine rake and the fop. Dorimant, in Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, notoriously based on the courtier and poet John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, was the quintessential rake, a predatory male seeking sexual satisfaction and not very particular about how

he treats the women charmed enough to provide it. The rake's opposite number was the titular "man of mode" or fashion, Sir Fopling Flutter, in the same play. Unlike the rake, who was often characterized as slovenly, the fop competed with women and with other courtly gentlemen for perfection of dress and pursuit of the latest fashions. The Restoration fop is decidedly heterosexual: As Randolph Trumbach has shown, it is not until the early eighteenth century that foppish effeminacy becomes linked to same-sex desire.[5] These Restoration archetypes appear all through the earlier fiction of our period: Richardson's Lovelace in *Clarissa* is the quintessential libertine, and a somewhat toned down version is Pamela's employer and husband Mr. B. And versions of the heterosexual fop also appear the novels of that period, such as Lord Fellamar in *Tom Jones* or Lady Davers's obnoxious nephew Jackey in *Pamela*.

Around mid-century, though, the Restoration model for masculinity undergoes considerable interrogation by both Richardson and Fielding. Superficially, the eponymous hero of *Tom Jones* seems to be a libertine; he has that reputation, certainly, even though Fielding takes pains to make clear that Tom is not sexually aggressive, that he is usually the seduced rather than the seducer, and unlike the rake he takes a sentimental interest in the ladies he beds even after he is done with them. Fielding meant Tom for a model, but his moralistic society did not entirely go along. Richardson, partially in response to Fielding, intentionally created a positive model for masculinity, an idealized Christian gentleman, in his 1753 *Sir Charles Grandison*, and his titular hero had considerable staying power over the following six decades. Like the warrior, Grandison bears arms and is by no means afraid to draw his sword when absolutely necessary, but as a Christian hero, his sense of honor is tempered by a deep respect for the sixth commandment. To the aggressions of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and Count Belvedere, Sir Charles responds not with a challenge to a duel, but with deft maneuvering to get his way while avoiding any encounter that would imperil two immortal souls. As Gerard Barker puts it, "Respectful, gentle, and modest among women, yet bold and forceful among men, Grandison became a feminine wish-dream of the ideal male suitor."[6] Barker traces the evolution of the Grandisonian hero through the later history of the novel, where we can find him in Frances Sheridan's *Sidney Biddulph*, in Frances Burney's *Evelina*, in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, down to his apotheosis as Fitzwilliam Darcy in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The ideal of the Grandisonian hero, circulated throughout British society through the novel, becomes so generally accepted by polite society in the late eighteenth century that it has to be critiqued by the Jacobin novelists of the 1790s. Thomas Holcroft in *Anna St. Ives* (1792) presents in his villain, Coke Clifton, a predatory male *masquerading* as a Grandisonian hero; meanwhile the hero, Frank Henley, is a genuine Grandison combining bravery and honor

with modesty and restraint. Unlike the usual aristocratic hero, though, Henley stems from the lower middle classes like his creator Holcroft, while Clifton is a scion of the landed gentry. And the history we are given of Ferdinando Falkland in the first volume of *Caleb Williams* allows William Godwin to examine the fearful contradictions inherent in the values of the ideal aristocrat. But the fact that the class basis of this form of masculinity is questioned, would only have speeded up the adoption of the ideal of the polite gentleman down the class system, reaching even to the lower orders, as Philip Carter has argued.[7] And the persistence of the Grandisonian ideal, even among the working classes of mid-twentieth century America, is evidenced by my own mother's insistence that I simultaneously "act like a gentleman" by giving up my seat on a streetcar to any elderly person and "stand up for myself" with my coevals. The Grandisonian ideal for masculinity had its triumph in the Regency period, but also found competition from the world-weary, rebellious, anti-social Byronic male, versions of whom we can see in the Victorian period in Edward Rochester and in Heathcliff, and of course with still other versions of the masculine ideal in later periods.

The Novel and Empathy

One factor that brought the novel from its despised status as a genre around the beginning of the eighteenth century to its far higher position a century later, when it surpassed drama and rivaled poetry, was an audience for whom the novel did genuinely important cultural work, the development and control of the empathic responses of individuals within society. Catherine Gallagher has summed up the case for this in the earliest version of her book, *Nobody's Story*.[8]

Starting off with Roland Barthes's essay "*L'Effet de réel*." Gallagher argues that realism was not a way of trying to hide or disguise fictionality but was, rather, the formal sign of fiction. Her point is that, before the middle of the eighteenth century, there were just two categories: truths and lies. Narratives were known to be untrue because they were grossly improbable. Such narratives are not similar to the fictions of mid-century by Richardson and Fielding but radically different from them. When fiction as a third category took shape its mark was realism and verisimilitude, and not improbability (which was a mark of non-truth).

First of all, pure fiction is distinguishable from a lie. Liars want to be believed, whereas fiction has "no intention to be credited." Second, pure fiction is, as Gallagher puts it about Nobody, meaning that the characters have no real-life referents. Pamela and Tom Jones were not surrogates for real people, as Defoe's Moll Flanders was for real people like Moll King or Mary Carleton, or as his

Robinson Crusoe was for Alexander Selkirk. And the story is told for its own sake: we want to read it despite the fact that it is about Nobody.

But Gallagher's ultimate point is that pure fiction could stimulate "compassion," "identification," and "sympathy" precisely *because* the stories were about Nobody. Gallagher suggests that these important emotions – feelings that were in fashion and in turn caused the fashion of the sentimental novel in the 1770s – were normally hard to achieve unless the object was someone whom one knew, a family member or a business associate or a neighbor. The fact that other people had other bodies, other relatives, other property – these were impediments to sympathetic identification. Therefore stories about Nobody – fictional characters with none of those impediments – were more effective than stories about real people, who could be adversaries or competitors. As Fielding says in *Joseph Andrews*, his satirized characters are not an individual but a species. And when we aren't seeing some particular other person, we become capable of seeing ourselves, capable therefore of gaining self-knowledge of an important sort. Gallagher thus views the moral correction we receive in Fielding as a private lesson, as opposed to the public execution of specific people like Lord Hervey or Eliza Haywood that we find in the satires of Pope. This change is similar to the contemporary social changes, which were moving away from public executions and towards modern modes of discipline and punishment.

Most important, Gallagher argues that eighteenth-century readers identified with novel characters *because* they were fictional, rather than in spite of that fact. These readers had to learn how to read fiction, since it didn't come naturally. It is for this reason that we get novels as early as the middle of the eighteenth century like Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) satirizing characters who think fictions are true, and equally why Henry Fielding scolds his reader for thinking that his ridiculed characters are representations of specific individuals rather than embodiments of general faults like selfishness and hypocrisy.

But just as problematic as the naive reader who takes fiction for truth, there is the sentimental reader who takes fiction too seriously. In a sense taking fiction seriously at all might be thought to be taking it too seriously, since our concern in the novel is always about Nobody. At any rate, from about 1760 on, there are attacks on fiction in the press from moralists who think that the "disproportionate activity of the representative faculties" leads to unsteadiness of character and emotional disorder.

And some novelists (not all) begin to "manipulate the processes of identification and disidentification, to teach readers to break off the sympathetic response especially in moments of romantic indulgence." So the novel is a school for the moral sentiments, but the moral education will fail if it works

too sentimentally: the reader has to learn as well how to stop sympathizing and will inappropriate feelings away. As Gallagher put it:

> Learning to recognize Nobody's numerous particular guises and then to identify with them one after another created a new kind of overburdened and therefore tentative emotional being. It was almost inevitable that sophisticated techniques for managing this emotional plurality would evolve in the very genre that had created the perceived problem in the first place. I am suggesting finally, that the telos of emotional overload was its management, and that Nobody's story, simply by virtue of its fictionality, has played a very real role in the creation of the modern self.

A Conclusion, Which Should Have Been a Preface

This book has tried to present its own narrative of how the English novel came into existence and poised itself to dominate the field of literature, as it would in the nineteenth century, through an intensive discussion of individual novels by ten authors who made a difference. And in these last few pages I have backed up from the microscope to view the entire historical period through the lenses of modernity, gender, and empathy. My literary-historical narrative has been generated by the current canon of British literature, which has changed quite a bit since I started teaching fiction fifty years ago, and it might be a salutary exercise to discuss how that canon has changed and to point at three entire genres and two prolific authors that I left out of this story.

To begin with the genres, the three significant forms of narrative fiction that entirely fall out of my history are the Menippean satire, the moral fable, and the religious allegory. John Bunyan, who like Aphra Behn died in 1688, the year of the Glorious Revolution, wrote religious allegory. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) was a moral tract portraying the good Christian's journey, through hardships and temptations, to his heavenly reward, but its allegorical form, portraying temptations as dangers, allowed it to be read as an exciting adventure story. It was Benjamin Franklin's favorite book and its form influenced how he saw his own journey through life, as he revealed it in his *Autobiography*.

Another significant genre is the moral fable (where the characters are representative individuals, but are not walking concepts, as they are in Bunyan). One apologue often taught in classrooms today is Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), which is set in exotic Abyssinia and Egypt, but is essentially an argument, couched as a narrative, that there is no life-choice that will guarantee perfect, secure earthly happiness. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) is probably the most successful and scarifying Menippean satire ever written – and it may

well have been read by more readers than any of the ten novels in my historical narrative, especially if one counts the abridged editions, the illustrated children's books and the animated or live-action films.[9] My primary reason for leaving out Bunyan, Swift, and Johnson, and the genres they wrote in, is that they are survivors rather than progenitors. They look backward rather than forward: allegory and fable and Menippean satire are classical genres, and their influence on the later history of the novel is tangential and oblique. That said, postmodern contemporary fiction has had a tendency to find its formal models in early texts, and novels like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) and David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996) are Menippean satires that owe their existence to Jonathan Swift.

One other important genre which my narrative slights, in terms of space, is the sentimental novel, which gets a few pages in Chapter 7 on *Tristram Shandy* because of Sterne's ambivalent jocularity about sentimentality and the expression of sympathy for distress. It is an important genre, beginning, according to John Mullan, with Sarah Fielding's novel *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744–53), which came out before the term "sentimental" in its modern meaning actually existed.[10] Other important texts in this genre would include Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1764–70), Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), Sarah Scott's *The History of George Ellison* (1770), culminating in Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771). A typical passage from Mackenzie may give some sense of what these novels were all about; here the hero, Mr. Harley, is paying a touristic visit to the London lunatic asylum, Bethlehem Hospital, where he meets a young lady who has gone mad after the death of her lover:

> She turned [her eyes] on Harley. "My Billy is no more!" said she, "do you weep for my Billy? Blessings on your tears! I would weep too, but my brain is dry; and it burns, it burns, it burns!" – She drew nearer to Harley. –"Be comforted, young Lady," said he, "your Billy is in heaven." "Is he, indeed? and shall we meet again? And shall that frightful man (pointing to the keeper) not be there? Alas! I am grown naughty of late; I have almost forgotten to think of heaven: yet I pray some times, when I can, I pray; and sometimes I sing; when I am saddest, I sing …. I am a strange girl; but my heart is harmless: my poor heart! it will burst some day; feel how it beats." She press'd his hand to her bosom, then holding her head in the attitude of listening –"Hark! one, two, three! be quiet, thou little trembler; my Billy's is cold. …" She would have withdrawn her hand; Harley held it to his lips. –"I dare not stay longer; my head throbs sadly: farewell!" She walked with a hurried step to an apartment at some distance. Harley stood fixed in astonishment and pity! his friend gave money to the keeper. –Harley … put a couple of guineas into the man's hand: "Be kind to that unfortunate" – He burst into tears, and left them.[11]

Sentimental novels of this sort continued to be published into the 1780s, including Thomas Day's best-selling children's book *Sandford and Merton* (1783–89) and I argue elsewhere that the Gothic, which takes over in the 1790s, is at least in part an outgrowth of the sentimental novel.[12] While there are no canonical sentimental novels, the genre was genuinely important because it was the literary manifestation of a widespread cultural movement that changed the way people felt towards victims of misfortune. Novels of sensibility were an ethical gymnasium that toned up the higher emotions, teaching the middle-class readers for whom they should feel and how to express those feelings.

There are also two individual authors, Smollett and Edgeworth, whose work, it could be argued, deserves a chapter in *Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel.* Tobias Smollett was a Scottish physician who wrote picaresque romances around mid-century, including *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), *Launcelot Greaves* (1760), and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). Smollett was decidedly a canonical novelist when I was in college and graduate school in the 1960s, and I read him alongside his mid-century contemporaries, Richardson, Fielding,and Sterne. Roderick and Peregrine, the heroes of his first two novels, begin with nothing, are disowned by what remains of their family, and have a sequence of more or less random adventures, in which they are treated brutally and treat others in the same way, before finally ending up wealthy and married to a chaste and beautiful woman.

The protagonists' brutality can be both physical and mental. In the first chapter of *Roderick Random*, the hero before starting his travels throws a rock at the tutor of his wealthy cousin, who has done nothing in particular to harm him, breaking four of his front teeth. In *Peregrine Pickle*, a friend of the hero, a painter named Pallet, has mistakenly been locked up in the Bastille in women's clothing (he had been to a masquerade), and he is soon to be released. Pickle first tells Pallet that his offense would usually be punished by a particularly painful form of execution (breaking on the wheel), but that it had been mitigated to imprisonment for life, and then adds that Pallet is to be castrated for the offense of cross-dressing. When the jailer comes to unlock his cell, Pallet cowers in the farthest corner, holding his chamberpot as a possible weapon, refusing to budge. George Orwell once argued that "these petty rogueries" were still worth reading about "because they are funny."[13] I can attest that by the late 1970s my students were no longer able to find them funny, or to understand why anyone else did. And I took Smollett out of my syllabus. In a way this is unfortunate, because Smollett is historically important: the loose and episodic structure of some of the earlier novels of Dickens, like *Nicholas Nickleby,* comes from his reading of Smollett.

If I were to add another chapter, it would be on *Castle Rackrent* (1800) by Maria Edgeworth, an Anglo-Irish novelist who was the most original woman writer in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Interesting in herself, Edgeworth also directly influenced both Austen and Scott. Austen mentions Edgeworth's society novel *Belinda* (1801) in *Northanger Abbey* as one of those works "in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language." It also explicitly takes up English colonialism, more directly in some ways than Austen's *Mansfield Park*. And Edgeworth's first novel, *Castle Rackrent*, a fast-moving and funny national tale about the decline and fall through four generations of Irish gentry, written in the authentic-sounding voice of an old family servant, is credited by Walter Scott with giving him an impetus to write his own regional novels about Scotland.

Edgeworth's later novels like *Ennui* (1809) and *The Absentee* (1812) take up the economic problems generated by absentee landlords, who receive their rents in Ireland and spend or squander them in England. *Harrington* (1817) is told by an anti-Semite who learns from experience that the myths he learned in childhood were based on lies. Edgeworth combines something of the wit of Jane Austen with an explicit interest in the difficult problems posed by class and nationality. Despite her realism about human nature, she hopes that mutual understanding of cultural differences by people of good will can lead to improvements in social conditions. Her novels were written not merely to entertain but to inform that conversation, and in this sense Edgeworth might also be thought a bridge to the next generation of social novelists like Thackeray and Dickens, Trollope and Eliot, who considered from their later perspective the condition of England. But that would be in another book; this one is concluded.

Notes

1. See Figure 3, "*Literacy in England 1580–1920*," in Gregory Clark, "The Great Escape: The Industrial Revolution in Theory and History,": 57. http://faculty.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/gclark/papers/IR2003.pdf, 2003.
2. Carrie Shanafelt, "Common Sense: The Rise of Narrative in the Age of Self-Evidence," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, CUNY Graduate Center, 2011.
3. Carrie Shanafelt, "The Rhetoric of Consensus: Hume and Fielding on Moral Sentiment," in Stanley Tweyman (ed.), *David Hume: A Tercentenary Tribute* (Ann Arbor MI: Caravan Books, 2013), 85–106.
4. See among many other treatments, Karen Harvey, "The History of Masculinity circa 1650–1800," *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005): 296–311.

5. See Randolph Trumbach, "Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660–1750," in M.B. Duberman, M. Vicinus, and G. Chauncey (eds), *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989).
6. Gerard Barker, *Grandison's Heirs* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 15.
7. Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society: Britain 1660–1800* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001).
8. Catherine Gallagher, "Nobody's Story," *Modern Language Quarterly* (1993): 263–77.
9. There have been eight film versions of *Gulliver's Travels* to date, starting with one by George Meliès in 1902; Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is the only competition.
10. John Mullan, "Sentimental Novels," in the *Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 243.
11. Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (London: T. Cadell, 1771), 33–35.
12. See Chapter Three of *The Progress of Romance: Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel* (Ohio State University Press, 1996), 74–78.
13. George Orwell, "Tobias Smollett: Scotland's Best Novelist," *Tribune*, September 22, 1944.

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Index

Note: Page numbers in **bold** refers to the main discussion of the books in detail. References to endnotes are indicated with an "n" appended to page numbers – e.g. "211n".

Achilles Tatius
  Leucippe and Clitophon, 2, 39
Aikin, John, 148
  "Sir Bertrand", 138–9
Aleman, Mateo
  Guzmán de Alfarache, 5, 169
Alkon, Paul, 65
allegory, 6, 12, 18, 44, 86, 170, 221–2
Althusser, Louis, 147
American Revolution, 152, 213
analepsis, 29. *See also* **flashback**
anti-Jacobin novel, 156, 208
Apuleius
  The Golden Ass, 3
aristocracy, 9, 77, 147, 204
Aristotle, 17, 20–1
Armstrong, Nancy, 15
Austen, Jane, 1, 10, 16, 22, 24, 28, 46, 79, 87, 96, 124, 127, 129, 149, 166, 174, 189–194, 198, 200–214, 224–5
  biography, 189–92, 211n
  Emma, 22, 24–5, 28, 192, **193–210**, 213
  free indirect discourse, 203
  ideology, 210
  Juvenilia, 191
  Mansfield Park, 150n,192–3, 224
  Northanger Abbey, 191, 193–4
  Persuasion, 192–3, 211n
  posthumous fame, 192
  Pride and Prejudice, 191, 201, 206, 218
  response to Scott's *Waverley*, 173
  Sanditon, 192
  selected further reading, 231–2
  Sense and Sensibility, 191, 193
authorial audience (Rabinowitz), 13, 25–6, 61, 64, 73, 84
autobiography, 6, 19–20, 23, 30–1, 61, 77, 102
  naïve incoherent autobiography, 61
autodiegesis (Genette), 32n

Baker, Ernest
  History of the English Novel, 7
Bakhtin, Mikhail M., 30n
Ballaster, Rosalind, 15, 47, 50, 228
Balzac, Honoré de
  Les Chouans, 176

Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel, First Edition. David H. Richter.
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Banfield, Ann, 33n, 211
Barbauld, Anna Laetitia Aikin, 1, 129, 148, 150
Barrett, Eaton Stannard, 149
Barrow, Isaac
 Sermons, 96, 97
Barthes, Roland, 219
Behn, Aphra, 6, 20, 24, 35–8, 42–5, 49, 51, 66, 86, 214, 217, 221, 228
 biography, 36–7
 The Fair Jilt, 35
 The Forc'd Marriage, 37
 Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister, 50, 135
 Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave, 6, 20, 24, 27, **34–45**, 49–50, 54–5, 86, 168, 213, 217, 228
 The Rover, 37
 selected further reading, 228
Bender, John, 15
Bentham, Jeremy, 166
Boccaccio, Giovanni
 Decameron, 4
booksellers
 as mediators of literary production, 9, 214–5
Booth, Wayne C., 17, 24–5, 27, 86
Boswell, James
 The Life of Samuel Johnson, 19
Bronte, Charlotte
 Jane Eyre, 77, 219
Bronte, Emily
 Wuthering Heights, 219
Brooke, Henry
 The Fool of Quality, 222
Brown, Homer Obed, 15n, 98
Brunton, Mary, 149
Budgen, Martha, 150
Bunyan, John
 Pilgrim's Progress, 6, 12, 14, 86, 221–2
Burke, Edmund, 118, 210
 Reflections on the Revolution in France, 152
Burney, Frances, 16, 46, 117–30, 193
 biography, 117–8, 126–9
 Camilla, 129, 202
 Cecilia, 127
 Evelina, **118–26**, 193, 218
 posthumous reputation, 129
 selected further reading, 230
 The Wanderer, 129
 The Witlings, 127
Burns, Robert, 171
Butler, Marilyn, 145, 157
Butler, Samuel
 Erewhon, 99
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 30n, 187n, 214, 219

Caleb Williams, 154, 209
 alternative denouements, 167–8, 170
 ancestor of the "thriller", 157
 back story, 158–60
 mise en abîme, 168–9
 names of characters, 169–70n
 as political novel, 157
 preface, 157, 169n
 and print culture, 166–7
 surveillance and scopophilia, 161–3
 theme of imprisonment, 163–7
Calvino, Italo, 16
Camus, Albert
 The Fall, 32n
capitalism, 8, 10, 54
Capote, Truman
 In Cold Blood, 19
Carlyle, Thomas
 Chartism, 210
Carter, Asa Earl
 The Education of Little Tree, 31n
Causality
 predisposing *vs.* precipitating causes, 12–14
Cervantes, Miguel de
 Don Quixote, 6, 12, 84, 98
character narration, 24–5
Chariton
 Chaereas and Callirhoe, 2

Charlton, Mary, 149
Chatterton, Thomas, 136
Chaucer, Geoffrey
  Canterbury Tales, 4
chroniques scandaleuses, 15–16
Clarissa
  epistolary irony, 79
  initial situation, 77–8
  tragic structure, 78
  voyage, 78
Cohn, Dorrit, 28, 127
coincidence
  in Austen, 96, 201
  in Behn, 39
  in Defoe, 201
  in Fielding, 96–7, 201
  in Godwin, 170
  in Sterne, 115
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 154
colonialism, 213
complication (element of plot), 21
Congreve, William, 6, 38
  Incognita, 38
  The Way of the World, 49, 72
Conrad, Joseph, 16
Cooper, James Fenimore
  The Last of the Mohicans, 176
Corman, Brian, 38
Crane, R.S., 17, 88–90, 96–9
Cromwell, Oliver, 37
Croskery, Margaret, 47, 50

d'Israeli, Isaac
  Vaurien, 212n
D'Urfé, Honoré
  L'Astrée, 6, 36, 45
Dannenberg, Hilary, 99n
Darwin, Charles, 216
Davis, Lennard, 6, 15, 38
Day, Thomas
  Sandford and Merton, 223
Defoe, Daniel, 1, 6–10, 12, 14–15, 19, 24, 26, 30, 45, **51–66**, 68, 80, 86, 98, 135, 214
  biography, 51–2
  Colonel Jacque, 53
  Journal of the Plague Year, 53, 64n
  miscellaneous works, 53
  Moll Flanders, 15, 19–20, 23–4, 26–7, 30, **51–65**, 70, 88, 168, 219, 228
  narrative masks, 57
  Robert Drury's Journal, 64n
  Robinson Crusoe, 12, 15, 45, 53, 55, 57, 135, 220
  Roxana, 6, 15, 53
  selected further reading, 228
Deloney, Thomas
  Thomas of Reading, 5, 175
Descartes, René, 8, 215
dialectic, 10–11
Dickens, Charles, 1, 10, 16, 21, 192, 223–4, 231
  *David Copperfield,*21, 31n
  Great Expectations, 21, 31n
  Nicholas Nickleby, 98
  A Tale of Two Cities, 177
Doody, Margaret, 1–2, 12, 15, 128, 130, 230
Dryden, John, 6
  The Indian-Queen, 36

Eco, Umberto, 31n
Edgeworth, Maria, 223
  Belinda, 193, 224
  Castle Rackrent, 224
Eliot, George, 1, 16, 192, 224
Emma
  as bildungsroman, 194
  as Cinderella story, 193
  class and caste, 204–8
  coincidence in, 200
  as "condition of England" novel, 208–10
  denouement, 200–201
  Donwell Abbey as microcosm of England, 209–10
  mystery and irony, 197–200
  as punitive comedy, 194–7

England 1688–1815, 213
English Civil War, 37
Etherege, George
  The Man of Mode, 217
Evelina
  back story, 118–9
  comedy of embarrassment, 121–4
  comedy of fulfillment, 119–20
  and woman's place, 124–6
expectations and desires, 13, 22–3, 72, 84–5, 90, 92–3, 101
exposition, 21, 89

fabula, 20
Fantomina
  ambiguity of consent, 46–7
  denouement, 49
  ethical complexity, 45–7
  focalization, 46
  free indirect discourse in, 46
  performative desire in, 48–9
  plot, 47–8
Faulkner, William
  The Sound and the Fury, 32n
Feather, Peter, 214
Ferris, Ina, 174
Fiction and truth, 17–20
Fielding, Henry, 1, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15–16, 20–3, 29–31, 49, 76, 79, **81–100**, 111, 113, 118–9, 129, 135, 160, 166, 171, 175, 181, 183–5, 201, 217–20, 223–4
  Amelia, 83
  as barrister and judge, 82
  biography, 81–3
  as dramatist, 81;
  impact of Richardson on, 77
  Jonathan Wild, 77, 82
  Joseph Andrews, 6, 15, 31n, 77, 82–6, 93, 98, 183, 220
  selected further reading, 229
  Shamela, 76–7, 82
  Tom Jones, 15, 20–3, 25, 29–30, 49, 79, **81–99**, 111, 118, 146, 160, 182–5, 188n, 209, 217–9
Fielding, Sarah, 84
  The Adventures of David Simple, 222
Fitzgerald, F. Scott
  The Great Gatsby, 22, 29
flashback (analepsis), 20, 22, 29
focalization, 27–8. *See also* voice
  in *Caleb Williams*, 169
  in *Fantomina*, 46
  in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 141
  in *Tom Jones*, 90
Foucault, Michel
  The Order of Things, 215–16
free indirect discourse, 24–5, 28–9, 33
  in Austen, 127, 202–3
  in Burney, 127–9, 202
  in Haywood, 46
French Revolution, 151–5, 172, 208

Gallagher, Catherine, 15–16, 19, 219–21, 225
Garside, Peter, 214
Gay, John
  The Beggar's Opera, 98n
Genette, Gérard, 29, 32n
Gibbon, Edward
  Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,136, 175
Glorious Revolution, 52, 152, 213, 221
Godwin, William, 208, 214
  biography, 151–6
  Caleb Williams, 23, **157–69**, 219
  Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, 152–8, 163
  Fleetwood, 160, 168
  ideology, 163, 164
  selected further reading, 231
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von
  Werther, 78, 172
Gothic novel, 133–4, 223
  and medievalism, 136
  origin and development, 135–9
  and reader response, 148–9

Grandisonian hero, 79, 119–20
Greene, Robert
Pandosto: *The Triumph of Time*, 4, 5

Haggerty, George, 163, 170
Hardy, Thomas, 16
The Mayor of Casterbridge, 31n
Tess of the D'Urbervilles,31n, 77, 99
Haywood, Eliza, 220
Anti-Pamela, 49, 75
Betsy Thoughtless, 49, 77
Fantomina, 45–9
Love in Excess, 45, 135
selected further reading, 228
Hazlitt, William, 147–8, 157
Hemingway, Ernest
"The Killers", 32–3n
The Sun Also Rises, 32
heterodiegesis (Genette), 32n
historical novel, 174–81, 187
Holcroft, Thomas, 151, 154
Anna St. Ives, 2189
homodiegesis (Genette), 32n
Howells, Coral Ann, 144
Hume, David, 136, 175, 177
Treatise of Human Nature, 217
Hunter, J. Paul, 15

ideal narrative audience (Rabinowitz), 32n
ideology, 10–12, 78, 145–6
as false consciousness, 147
implied author (Booth), 17, 25–6, 73
in *Tom Jones*, 98
implied reader, 25. *See also* narratee, authorial audience
Inchbald, Elizabeth
A Simple Story, 218
individualism, 8, 10
instability (element of plot), 11, 21, 29, 40, 74, 87, 89, 185, 194
Ishiguro, Kazuo
The Remains of the Day, 32n

Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, 82–3, 86, 171, 173, 176–80, 183
James, Henry, 16, 20, 27, 192
Johnson, Samuel, 118, 126–7, 222
Rasselas, 14, 221
Joyce, James, 16
"Araby", 27, 30n, 33n
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, 19, 31n

Kiely, Robert, 158
Kirkman, Francis
The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled, 6
Kramnick, Jonathan, 47, 50, 228

launch (Phelan), 21, 90, 92, 139
Mysteries of Udolpho, 139;
Oroonoko, 37
Pamela, 70
Tom Jones, 89–92
Waverley, 181, 186
Leavis, F.R., 192
Lee, Sophia
The Recess, 175, 176
Leland, Thomas
Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, 175, 176
Lennox, Charlotte
The Female Quixote, 20, 220
Lewis, Matthew
The Monk, 133–4
Tales of Wonder, 172
literacy statistics, 8, 214
Locke, John, 8, 47, 50, 104, 228
Lodge, Thomas
Rosalynde, 4
Longus
Daphnis and Chloe, 2
Lukàcs, Georg, 184
Lyly, John
Euphues, 4

Mackenzie, Henry
The Man of Feeling, 111, 184, 222
Macpherson, James, 136

Malory, Thomas
  Morte d'Arthur, 3, 4, 20
Mantel, Hilary
  Wolf Hall, 16, 187n
Marivaux, Pierre, 118
Marx, Karl, 216
Marxism, 10
masculinity
  history, 217–9
  in *Sir Charles Grandison*, 79, 119
Maturin, Charles Robert
  Melmoth the Wanderer, 26, 146
McEwan, Ian
  Atonement, 16
McInerny, Jay
  Bright Lights, Big City, 32n
McKeon, Michael
  The Origins of the English Novel, 10–14, 31n
Menippean satire, 3, 12, 221–2
middle classes, 9, 11, 15, 205
Minerva Press, 149, 214
Mitchell, David
  Cloud Atlas, 16
***Moll Flanders*, 51–65**
  anachronisms, 53–4, 64–5
  authorial plane, 64
  chronotope, 53–4
  claims of factuality, 54–5
  Defoe as "editor", 55
  episodic voyage, 55–6
  as false true story, 61
  foreshadowing, 63–4
  incoherence, 23, 61, 63
  initiation, 54
  narrative texture, 62–3
  psychological realism, 57–9
  questions of irony, 59–61
  retrospective narration, 56
  signs of authorial presence, 59
  theme of rebirth, 58
Monk, Leland, 201
Montagu, Elizabeth, 131
Morris, Edmund
  Dutch, 31n
Morrison, Toni
  Beloved, 16
Mullan, John, 222
Murray, John, 192, 214
The Mysteries of Udolpho
  and the French Revolution, 145
  launch, 139
  development section, 140–1
  explained supernatural in, 144
  ideology, 145
  texture and atmosphere, 141–4

narratee (Prince), 32n
narrative(s)
  audience (Rabinowitz), 25, 26, 32n
  discourse, 24–30
  levels, 26
  and modern episteme, 216
  nested, 26
  order, 29
  theory, 17–30
narrator, 3, 17, 20, 22–8, 32–3, 35–6, 39–43, 49, 64, 84, 86, 90–1, 93, 96–102, 104, 108, 113, 127, 144, 173, 177, 185, 187, 202
  in Burney, 129
  as character
    in *Tom Jones*, 86
  in *Joseph Andrews*, 84
  in *Oroonoko*, 86;
  second-person narrator, 32n
  unreliable, 24, 32
Nashe, Thomas
  The Unfortunate Traveler, 5
Newgate Calendar, 170
Norton, Rictor, 131, 134, 149n, 230
Novel
  influence on society, 214–21
  prehistory, 1–7
  theories about origin, 1–16
novel of sentiment, 222–3

omniscience (narrational privilege), 27
Oroonoko
bisexual tigers, 42
claims of factuality, 35, 37, 39
contradictions, 40, 50
digressions, 41–2
and *Don Carlos*, 44
as historical allegory, 44–5
historical figures in, 36
launch, 37
narrator, 34–5, 39–41, 43–4
numb-eel, 42–3
plot, 34–5
theme of self-mutilation, 43
theme of slavery, 43, 44
theme of truth/deception, 38, 40
as travel literature, 38
Orwell, George, 223
Animal Farm, 18

pacing, 29–30
Paine, Thomas, 154, 208
The Rights of Man, 152
Pamela
anticlimactic structure, 74
arrival, 74
claims of factuality in, 69, 70
as cognitive structure, 73
dramatic narrative, 72
editorial revisions, 75, 80
influence on later novels, 77
launch, 70–1
as media event, 70
parodies and revisions, 75–6
responses, 74–5
voyage, 73–4
writing "to the moment", 70
pattern (element of story), 23–4, 85, 90, 93, 126, 141, 146, 175
Paulson, Ronald, 145
Percy, Thomas
Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, 172
Petronius
Satyricon, 3
Phelan, James, 17, 21, 26, 32, 70
Phillips, Mark Salber, 187n
picaresque, 5–6, 23, 55, 93, 100, 130, 223
Plato, *Republic*, 17
Poe, Edgar Allan
"A Cask of Amontillado", 32n
point of view, 10, 17, 27, 120, 209
Pope, Alexander
The Dunciad, 49
possible world theory, 18, 31, 187
presentism, 14–16
Price, Richard
"A Discourse on the Love of Our Country", 152
Prince, Gerald, 32n
privilege (feature of narrative discourse), 27
prolepsis (narrative anticipation), 20, 26, 29, 39, 63, 165
Protestantism, 8, 10
Proust, Marcel
In Search of Lost Time, 29, 80n
psychonarration (Cohn), 28, 202
Pynchon, Thomas
Mason and Dixon, 16

quoted interior monologue, 202–4

Rabelais, François
Gargantua and Pantagruel, 102, 187–8n
Rabinowitz, Peter, 17, 25, 32
Radcliffe, Ann, 214
biography, 131–4
The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, 132;
Gaston de Blondeville, 134
The Italian, 133
The Mysteries of Udolpho, 133, 140–5, 175
The Romance of the Forest, 132
selected further reading, 230
A Sicilian Romance, 132
Rader, Ralph, 12–16, 30n, 61–2, 65, 73, 78, 80, 96–8, 99n, 115

reading public, 8, 9, 155, 214, 215
  circulating libraries, 215
realism, 7–10, 15, 183, 192, 219, 224
Reeve, Clara
  The Old English Baron, 137–8
responsibility (as element of story), 22
Richardson, Samuel, 1, 7, 9, 10, 12–16, 20–1, 24, 26, 29, 31, 45, 49, 56, 64, **66–87**, 89, 91, 100, 102, 118–9, 121, 129, 135, 140, 158, 160, 168, 193, 217–9, 223
  biography, 66–8
  Clarissa, 12, 23, 26, 29, 77–80, 85–6, 89, 102, 119, 160, 168, 170n, 218;
  Familiar Letters, 31n, 68–9
  Pamela, 14–16, 20–1, 23–7, 45, 49, 56, 64, **68–77**, 82–4, 86–7, 89–90, 135, 140–1, 173, 193, 218–9
  Pamela in Her Exalted Condition, 79
  selected further reading, 229
  Sir Charles Grandison, 70, 79, 158–60, 218
Richetti, John, 14, 16
Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 16
Robertson, William, 136, 175, 177
romance (genre), 2–4, 6, 11–12, 22, 26, 36, 38–9, 44–5, 50, 129, 134–5, 148–9, 158, 168–9, 173–6, 182–3
Roth, Philip
  The Plot against America, 187n
Rothstein, Eric, 158
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 15, 118, 151, 208
  Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse, 78
Rushdie, Salman
  Midnight's Children, 16
Ryan, Marie-Laure, 31n

Sade, Marquis de, 145
Sancho, Ignatius, 115n
Scott, Sarah
  The History of George Ellison, 222
Scott, Walter, 1, 16, 24, 98, 129, 136, 149, **171–87**, 192, 214–5, 224
  biography, 171–4
  historical romance, 174
  historical skepticism, 177
  The Lady of the Lake, 172–3
  The Lay of the Last Minstrel, 172
  Marmion, 172
  The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 172
  political ideology, 172
  selected further reading, 231
  stadial historiography, 177–80
  Waverley, 19, 173, 177, 181–7
Scottish Enlightenment, 171
Scudéry, Madeleine de, 6, 45
  Artamène, 39
  Clélie, 39
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky
  Between Men, 163
sentimental novel, 111–12
Shakespeare, William, 4, 130, 136, 137, 192, 217
Shanafelt, Carrie, 217
Shelley, Mary Godwin
  Frankenstein, 156
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 156
Sheridan, Frances
  History of Miss Sidney Biddulph, 218
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, 126
Shklovsky, Viktor, 100
Sidney, Philip, 6
  "Apology for Poetry", 17
  Arcadia, 4
sjuzet, 20
Smith, Charlotte, 130n
Smith, Zadie
  White Teeth, 16
Smollett, Tobias, 10, 16, 98, 118–19, 122–3, 130, 136, 139, 223, 225
Sterne, Laurence, 12, 16, 30, 86, **100–115**, 223
  biography, 102, 103
  selected further reading, 229–30
  A Sentimental Journey, 113–15
  Tristram Shandy, 23, 29, 31n, **100–115**, 222

Story and discourse, 20
Swift, Jonathan, 222
Gulliver's Travels, 18, 221
A Tale of a Tub, 102

Talfourd, Thomas Noon, 131–2, 134, 147–9
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 1, 10, 16, 224
Henry Esmond, 176–7
Vanity Fair, 21
Thrale, Hester Lynch, 126, 131
Tolstoy, Leo
War and Peace, 19, 177
Tom Jones
coincidence in, 97
complex characters in, 86–7
denouement, 89
expectations, 92–3
focalization in, 90
historical figures in, 86
launch, 89–92
mystery and irony, 89
narrative ethics, 91–2
narrative technique, 85
narrator as character, 90
pattern in, 93
plotting, 87–8
Providence *vs*. Fortune, 96–8
Tristram Shandy
as anti-novel, 100, 101
bawdy asterisks, 107–10, 116n
closure, 103
hobbyhorses, 104–5
incoherence of, 23
irony against the reader, 113–15
and novelistic conventions, 101
and print culture, 110
as *roman fleuve*, 102;
satire on learning, 105–7
sentimentality, 111–13
story of the struggle to get the story told, 101
thematic content, 103–7
theme of time, 101–2
Trollope, Anthony, 16, 192, 224
Trumbach, Randolph, 218

verisimilitude, 11, 18, 38–9, 176, 219
Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, 5, 55
voice, 27–8, 169–70, 186. *See also* **focalization**

Walker, George
The Vagabond, 156n, 212
Walpole, Horace, 150
The Castle of Otranto, 135–7, 146, 175
Warner, William Beatty, 15
Waterloo, Battle of, 213
Watt, Ian
The Rise of the Novel, 7–10, 12, 15, 57, 60, 65
***Waverley*, 181–7**
as bildungsroman, 182
gendered reading, 173
genre, 181–2
as Gothic romance, 182
historical nostalgia, 180–1
launch, 181–2, 185
masculine reading, 173–4
mediocrity of hero, 184
narrative voice, 186–7
as romantic comedy, 182
White, T.H.
The Once and Future King, 20
Wilmot, John, Earl of Rochester, 217
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 208
Maria or the Wrongs of Woman, 155;
"A Vindication of the Rights of Men", 152
Vindication of the Rights of Women, 155
Woolf, Virginia, 16, 19, 30–31n, 37, 229
To the Lighthouse, 19
Wordsworth, William, 30n, 154
Wroth, Mary
The Countess of Montgomery's Urania, 4