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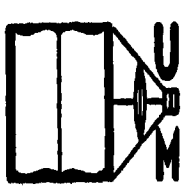
TITLE THE LITERARY VIEWS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

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THE LITERARY VIEWS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

by
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I. INTRODUCTION - SURVEY OF GOLDSMITH STUDIES

Boswell writes that among the works which Johnson had planned to execute was a "History of Criticism, as it relates to judging of authors, from Aristotle to the present age. An account of the rise and improvements of that art; of the different opinions of authors, ancient and modern."[1]

It is to be regretted that Johnson did not undertake the task, for no critic of the eighteenth century did so. Johnson's history of the currents of criticism in the eighteenth century would have been enlightening. Especially would we have appreciated his views on criticism in the third quarter of the century when he was the undisputed Great Cham of literature, when criticism was in a state of imbalance, and when Goldsmith did all of his writing.[2]

Although Johnson in his Lives of the English Poets did not write a life of Goldsmith,[3] he pays a tribute to him in the Life of Parnell:

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[1]James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), IV, 381 n.

[2]Goldsmith made his first literary contribution, to the Monthly Review, in April, 1757; he died in April, 1774.

[3]Malone writes Percy: "I often pressed Dr. Johnson to write his [Goldsmith's] Life, and he would have done so, had not the booksellers from some clashing of interest in the property of his works excluded them from their great collection of English Poetry." Letter from Malone to Percy, March 2, 1785. The Percy Letters, ed. Arthur Tillotson ([Baton Rouge], 1944), pp. 17-18. See also Boswell, op. cit., III, 100 n. 1; Arthur Tillotson, "Dr. Johnson and the 'Life of Goldsmith,'" MLR, XXVIII (1933), 439-443.

> The Life of Dr. Parnell is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith, a man of such a variety of powers and such felicity of performance that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.[1]

In the same essay, when Johnson discusses the collection of Parnell's poems made by Pope, he writes, "Of these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe to contradict."[2] This statement is the only direct one Johnson makes about Goldsmith's criticism. A comment to Boswell on Saturday, June 25, 1763, before Goldsmith had published any of the creative works for which he is famous, undoubtedly refers to Goldsmith's criticism: "Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right."[3]

Johnson kept this high opinion of Goldsmith's work. In the Latin epitaph for the plaque in honor of Goldsmith to be placed in Westminster Abbey, Johnson writes, "Qui nullum fere scribendi genus/ Non tetigit,/ Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit: . . ."[4] Earlier Johnson had made a similar statement to a bookseller: "Sir, Goldsmith never touches any subject,

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[1]Samuel Johnson, "Life of Parnell," Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1905), II, 49.

[2]Ibid., II, 52.

[3]Boswell, op. cit., I, 408.

[4]Ibid., III, 82.

but he adorns it."[1] On Thursday, April 9, 1778, when the name of Goldsmith was mentioned during the course of the conversation, Johnson states, "Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better, than any other man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster-Abbey, and every year he lived, would have deserved it better."[2]

Johnson's high opinion of Goldsmith's criticism has not been held by some later critics who disagree in their evaluation of it. Hamelius[3] and Buck[4] do not mention it. Saintsbury devotes one page to it.[5] Of the Enquiry he writes, "there is scarcely a critical dictum in it which is other than ridiculous." The miscellaneous essays, including the Bee, "are the best evidence of his nullity here." Although Saintsbury considers "An Account of the Augustan Age" better

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[1]Joseph Cradock, Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs (2d ed., London, 1826), I, 231 n.

[2]Boswell, op. cit., III, 253.

[3]Paul Hamelius, Die Kritik in der Englischen Literatur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, Leipzig, 1897. In the subdivision "Allseitige Erweiterung des literarischen Gesichtskreises," Hamelius observes, "Im British Magazine erschien im Jahr 1760 ein Aufsatz über Carolan, den letzten Irischen Barden, . . ." (p. 169). This essay, "Carolan, the Last Irish Bard," was written by Goldsmith. Works, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (London, 1885), I, 392-394. This edition of Goldsmith's works will be used throughout this study.

[4]Philo Buck, Literary Criticism, New York, 1930.

[5]George Saintsbury, A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe (London, 1901-1902), II, 498.

than the Belles Lettres[1] essays, he states that the essay "has all the limitations of its own period."

Among the critics who take a more favourable view of Goldsmith's criticism are Gayley and Scott, who place Goldsmith, along with the Wartons, Young, Gray, Collins, Cowper, and Hurd, "in the line of transition from the romanticism of Sidney and Bacon to that of Wordsworth."[2] This opinion is opposed by Bosker, who gives the most comprehensive treatment of Goldsmith's criticism. He states that "Goldsmith's poetry as well as his criticism marks him in the main as a staunch supporter of the Augustan tradition."[3] He, consequently, places Goldsmith in Part III, "The Champions of Taste," along with Sir Joshua Reynolds, William Shenstone, Hugh Blair, and James Beattie. Miller includes Goldsmith among the historical critics of the eighteenth century and states that An Enquiry illustrates the historical point of view.[4] Draper, under the section "Literature and Drama," enters

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[1]This series of seven essays which appeared in the British Magazine from July, 1761, to January, 1763, was collected by Percy for the 1801 edition of the Works. These essays are no longer attributed to Goldsmith. See Caroline F. Tupper, "Essays Erroneously Attributed to Goldsmith," PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 325-342.

[2]Charles Mills Gayley and Fred Newton Scott, An Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism (New York, 1899), p. 410.

[3]Aisso Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (Groningen, 1930), pp. 143-150.

[4]G. M. Miller, The Historical Point of View in English Literary Criticism from 1570-1770 (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 133-134.

The Art of Poetry [revised by Goldsmith], An Enquiry, Essays, Life of Richard Nash,[1] and some essays from the Bee and Citizen of the World, Crane[2] lists Goldsmith's An Enquiry along with Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and Gibbon's Essai sur l'étude du la littérature as a work "that dealt with the question of criticism itself--its nature, its utility, its kinds, its history.

Similarly, the historians of literature have not agreed in their opinion of Goldsmith's criticism. Taine,[3] Minto,[4] Seccombe,[5] and Millar[6] do not mention it. Gosse[7] calls the Enquiry "a presumptuous, but very bright and daring little treatise in criticism," but he does not show what is "presumptuous" or "daring" about the book. Cazamian,[8] in a footnote, states that Goldsmith wrote "critical articles," but he

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[1] J. W. Draper, Eighteenth Century English Aesthetics (Heidelberg, 1931), p. 55. One wonders why Draper included this work, for it is not about a literary figure. Instead, he should have entered the Life of Parnell.

[2] Ronald S. Crane, "Neo-Classical Criticism," Dictionary of World Literature, ed. Joseph T. Shipley (New York, 1943), pp. 193-203.

[3] H. A. Taine, History of English Literature, London, 1883.

[4] William Minto, The Literature of the Georgian Era, New York, 1895.

[5] Thomas Seccombe, The Age of Johnson, London, 1902.

[6] J. H. Millar, The Mid-Eighteenth Century, London, 1902.

[7] Edmund Gosse, A History of Eighteenth Century Literature (London, 1889), pp. 345-346.

[8] Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature, Vol. II, London, 1926.

does not give the merit of the critical works. A striking sentence appears in a paragraph on the essays of Goldsmith:

> The theorist of taste and letters shows at once a very exact sense of values, when distinguishing the artificial character of classicism in its decline; and a certain timidity, with regard to Shakespeare and the beauties of "Gothic" times.[1]

A man with "a very exact sense of values" may be expected to be a good critic.

Although Elton feels that to call Goldsmith "a critic would be excessive," he admits that Goldsmith's "literary tastes and opinions, even when they are only those of his set; have always gone through his own mind and taken its colour."[2] McKillop calls Goldsmith "one of the most versatile professional writers in London." His Enquiry, McKillop continues, "has the formal and judicial attitude which the age expected of its critics, . . ."[3] He does not pass a judgment upon Goldsmith as a critic. Sherburn states that "Aesthetically he [Goldsmith] was a traditionalist; mentally he was of the Enlightenment; he was too hard-headed to be a thorough sentimentalist, and too sympathetic to be an outright satirist."[4] Bredvold, who mentions An Enquiry as

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[1] Ibid., II, 203.

[2] Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780 (London, 1938), I, 104.

[3] Allan McKillop, English Literature from Dryden to Burns (New York, 1948), p. 348.

[4] George Sherburn, "The Restoration and Eighteenth Century," in A Literary History of England, ed. Albert Baugh (New York, 1950), p. 426.

"a survey of what he [Goldsmith] considered the degeneracy of literature in all European countries, with special attention to England,"[1] does not evaluate Goldsmith as a critic.

Neither have the biographers of Goldsmith agreed upon his criticism. Irving,[2] King,[3] and Scott[4] do not mention it. Both Forster[5] and Gwynn[6] state that he was not a good critic. Percy,[7] however, acknowledges Goldsmith's "success as a critic." Prior places Goldsmith next to Johnson as a writer and critic.[8] Bohn[9] thinks, "From the judgment displayed in the few pieces of criticism which he has left, there is reason to believe that he would have excelled in this art, had he devoted to it a greater share of attention." Black writes that Goldsmith's "chance criticisms on dramatic

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[1]Louis I. Bredvold, "The Literature of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century," in A History of English Literature, ed. Hardin Craig (New York, 1950), p. 426.

[2]Washington Irving, Oliver Goldsmith: A Biography, rev., New York, 1854.

[3]Richard Ashe King, Oliver Goldsmith, London, 1910.

[4]Temple Scott, Oliver Goldsmith, New York, 1928.

[5]John Forster, The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith, London, 1848.

[6]Stephen Gwynn, Oliver Goldsmith, New York, 1935.

[7]Thomas Percy, "The Life of Dr. Oliver Goldsmith," Miscellaneous Works (London, 1801), I, 77.

[8]James Prior, Life of Goldsmith, 2 vols. (London, 1837), II, 275-276.

[9]Henry G. Bohn, "Life of Oliver Goldsmith," Works, ed. Gibbs (London, 1885), I, 52-53.

and poetical literature . . . are generally found to be incisive and just; while sometimes they exhibit a wholesome disregard of mere tradition and authority."[1] Dobson believes that upon "matters theatrical" Goldsmith showed the knowledge of "a shrewd and common-sense critic."[2] Although Buckland works under the misapprehension that at the time Goldsmith was writing, "Criticism in its true sense was hardly known," he concludes, "In enlarging the message of poetry, the motive of the drama and the functions of fiction, Goldsmith fulfilled the responsibilities of higher criticism, . . ."[3] Moore calls the criticism in the reviews "distinctly critical and illuminating," and the Enquiry "superficial" but original; he thinks that Goldsmith "was only a common-sense critic of life and literature and the drama, . . ."[4]

In the large number of essays written about Goldsmith, most of the authors have shown interest primarily in his life.

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[1]William Black, Goldsmith (English Men of Letters, New York, 1878), p. 78.

[2]Austin Dobson, Life of Oliver Goldsmith (London, 1888), p. 130.

[3]E. S. Lang Buckland, Oliver Goldsmith (London, 1908), p. 78.

[4]Frank Frankfort Moore, The Life of Oliver Goldsmith (London, 1910), pp. 150, 186, 76.

DeQuincey,[1] Thackeray,[2] Elwin,[3] Hill,[4] Leslie Stephen,[5] and McAdam[6] do not refer to the critical works. Hunt objects to the thesis of An Enquiry and cites the situation in Italy and Germany in proof of Goldsmith's error that there was a decline in literature. He adjudges the Essays (1765) to be "feeble or fastidious attempts at poetical criticism, a subject which he might have been expected to handle better.[7] Macaulay considers An Enquiry "of little or no value."[8] Dobson states that The Citizen of the World revealed "Goldsmith as a critic," but he does not pass a judgment on his criticism.[9]

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[1]Thomas DeQuincey, "Oliver Goldsmith," Essays on the Poets, Boston, 1853.

[2]William M. Thackeray, "Sterne and Goldsmith," The English Humourist, London, 1858.

[3]Whitwell Elwin, Some XVIII Century Men of Letters, ed. Warwick Elwin, Vol. II, London, 1902.

[4]G. Birkbeck Hill, "Oliver Goldsmith," Dr. Johnson: His Friends and His Circle, London, 1878.

[5]Leslie Stephen, "Goldsmith," Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London, 1890), XXII, 86-95.

[6]Edward L. McAdam, "Goldsmith, the Good-Natured Man," The Age of Johnson, New Haven, 1949.

[7]Leigh Hunt, "Goldsmith," Classic Tales (London, 1807), I, 58, 73.

[8]Thomas B. Macaulay, "Oliver Goldsmith," The Miscellaneous Works, Vol. VII, Philadelphia, 1910.

[9]Austin Dobson, "Oliver Goldsmith," Cambridge History of English Literature, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (New York, 1913), X, 220-244.

Recent students of Goldsmith's canon have referred to Goldsmith's critical ideas in an attempt to identify his characteristic views on the basis of internal evidence. Neither Miss Tupper,[1] Crane,[2] Friedman,[3] or Seitz[4] has described Goldsmith's critical ideas.

Gibbs, up to this date Goldsmith's best editor, writes a short introduction to the reviews in which he agrees, in the main, with the opinion of Johnson that "it is seldom safe to contradict" Goldsmith's critical judgment:

> Dr. Johnson said of Goldsmith's criticisms that "it is seldom safe to contradict" them . . . and with a few exceptions--notably in some of the perverse utterances upon Shakespeare and Milton . . . this judgment may stand. Perhaps, however, as the criticisms, or most of them, are the very earliest of the printed writings of our author, it will be safest to view them rather as early indications of the genius which was afterwards to shine forth in the "Traveller," the "Vicar," and his other leading works, than writings demanding attention upon their intrinsic critical merit alone.[5]

This editor takes the rather paradoxical position that Goldsmith's criticism is sound but not worthy of study.

Two students of some special aspects of Goldsmith's works have passed judgment on his criticism. Hudson calls

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[1]Caroline F. Tupper, op. cit., 325-342.

[2]Ronald S. Crane, New Essays by Oliver Goldsmith (Chicago, 1927), pp. xxvii-xxviii, 119 n. 1.

[3]Arthur Friedman, "Goldsmith's Contributions to the Critical Review," MP, XLIV (1946), 23-52.

[4]R. W. Seitz, "Goldsmith and the Literary Magazine," RES, V (1929), 410-430.

[5]J. W. M. Gibbs, op. cit., IV, 232.

Goldsmith a "consistent classicist" as a theorist and critic of poetry.[1] Sells, although concerned with Goldsmith's French sources, includes in his book a section on "Théories littéraires de Goldsmith."[2] He concludes "Le goût littéraire de Goldsmith resemble, dans une large mesure, à celui de Boileau ou de Voltaire." Such students as Hertha B. C. Sollas,[3] James Hall Pitman,[4] Hamilton J. Smith,[5] Katherine Balderston,[6] Elizabeth Eaton Kent,[7] and Howard J. Bell[8] have shown no interest in Goldsmith's criticism.

The situation appears to be that many critics have ignored Goldsmith's criticism. The authors who venture an opinion upon it differ in their views. Johnson and Gibbs

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[1]William H. Hudson, Johnson and Goldsmith & Their Poetry (London, 1918), p. 88.

[2]Arthur Sells, Les Sources Françaises de Goldsmith (Paris, 1924), pp. 203-207.

[3]Hertha B. C. Sollas, Goldsmiths Einfluses in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert, Heidelberg, 1903.

[4]James Hall Pitman, Oliver Goldsmith's "Animated Nature," New Haven, 1926.

[5]Hamilton J. Smith, Oliver Goldsmith's "The Citizen of the World," New Haven, 1926.

[6]Katherine Balderston, A Census of the Manuscripts of Oliver Goldsmith, New York, 1926; The History and Sources of Percy's Memoir of Goldsmith, Cambridge, 1926; The Collected Letters of Oliver Goldsmith, Cambridge, 1928.

[7]Elizabeth Eaton Kent, Goldsmith and His Booksellers, Ithaca, 1933.

[8]Howard J. Bell, "The Deserted Village and Goldsmith's Social Doctrines," PMLA, LIX (1944), 747-772.

believe that his criticism cannot be safely contradicted, while Saintsbury, Moore, and Gwynn state that Goldsmith was never a good critic. Hudson, Bosker, and Sherburn acclaim Goldsmith as a supporter of Augustan traditions; Gayley and Scott place him among the critics showing romantic characteristics. This study will describe Goldsmith's literary criticism in order to do two things: 1) to describe his theory--to systematize his opinions concerning the characteristics of the poet, the nature and function of the literary work, and the response of the normative audience; 2) to state his concept of actual practices in England--to give his views on the position of the author, audience, criticism and the critic, and to state the method Goldsmith followed in his literary criticism.[1]

No attempt has been made to place Goldsmith in his milieu or to show the extent to which his criticism does or does not reflect the imbalance of critical opinions in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Comparisons with his contemporaries have been made whenever they pointed up the significance of Goldsmith's ideas.

The dissertation has six chapters. This chapter of introduction reviews the studies made of Goldsmith's critical ideas. Chapter II discusses the poet as Goldsmith defined

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[1]In order to impose a system upon Goldsmith's critical views, the study follows, in part, the topics treated by Crane in his article "Neo-Classical Criticism," op. cit., pp. 193-203.

him in terms of his art and states his method of work. The chapter closes with some of Goldsmith's statements about the authors he admires enough to write a critical paragraph about them.

Chapters III and IV discuss Goldsmith's concept of the literary work. Chapter III includes Goldsmith's concept of the nature and function of the work and the response of the normative audience to literature. Chapter IV comprises Goldsmith's comments on the types of poetry, drama, and the novel.

Chapter V presents Goldsmith's criticism of the position of the author, the audience, and critic in England in the seventeen-sixties. Chapter VI, the conclusion, raises the question, What kind of critic is Goldsmith? It shows that Goldsmith is not a systematic critic, that he is both a defender and opponent of neo-classical literary traditionalism. It, also, reveals his critical method.

The study has been based upon the canon of Gibbs as it has been modified by Caroline F. Tupper, Ronald S. Crane, R. W. Seitz, and Arthur Friedman.[1] A note on the canon will be found in Appendix A. Appendix B shows Goldsmith's interest in the theatre.

Since the study is descriptive rather than critical, no attempt has been made to evaluate Goldsmith's pronouncements.

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[1]Ronald S. Crane and Arthur Friedman are preparing an edition of Goldsmith's works. In a letter to me dated November 10, 1950, Mr. Friedman wrote, "The edition probably will not be ready for publication for another five years."

The conclusions have been based upon the evidence presented in the Works. In general, the material shows that Goldsmith is not a systematic critic, that his comments are based largely upon his own experience as an author rather than upon extensive reading, and that his statements show that he is not so thorough-going a traditionalist as some of his critics seem to think. His judgments are, none the less, interesting since they are the opinions of one of the most colorful writers of the era whose articles reached a comparatively large reading audience. That the study will add another facet to the general knowledge of critical principles and practices in the third quarter of the eighteenth century is the hope of the author.

II. GOLDSMITH'S CONCEPT OF THE AUTHOR

Of the three concepts, author, work, and audience, which were central to much of the literary criticism of the early eighteenth century, the artist[1] was usually subordinated to the work and the audience. One evolution in the criticism of the last half of the century was the prominence given to the author. Certainly in the writings of Goldsmith, the author as a person appears more important than he had been in the criticism of Goldsmith's early contemporaries.[2] It is the purpose of this chapter to define Goldsmith's concept of the author, state his chief characteristics, and discuss his methods of work. Finally, we shall look at Goldsmith's evaluation of some of the authors whom he mentions in his essays.

I

Goldsmith's concept of the author is two-fold. One view is realistic, based upon his own experience as an author; the other is idealistic, formed upon his opinions of what a poet should be. In Chapter V we shall look at

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[1]In this chapter author, artist, and poet will be used as synonyms.

[2]See "Memoirs of M. de Voltaire" and "Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 3-46, 157-178. Both works are more biographical than critical.

the actual position of the professional author, but let us now consider the idealistic view.

Goldsmith conceives of the poet as a seer and teacher. He writes, "The intention as well as excellence of the poets' labours procured them to be rewarded with the most respectable denominations, as priests of virtue, friends to mankind, and champions of morality; and in the Latin, priest and poet were synonymous terms."[1] Succeeding poets have attempted to fulfill their high calling in "developing the passions, painting characters, or delineating manners." Goldsmith calls the beginning of learning the age of poets;[2] and in this idea he comes close to the opinion of Duff,[3] for example, and other primitivists who believed that poetry thrives best in the early and uncultivated periods of society. Goldsmith, who is not a primitivist, would emphasize the origin of poetry in the first stage of learning.

Further, he states, "Musical period, concise expression, and delicacy of sentiment were all excellencies derived from the poet, . . ."[4] It was the poet who developed and refined the decorative and emotional aspects of the language. These

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[1]"Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 61-62. The anthology is attributed to Samuel Derrick by the editor of "An Exhibition in the Yale University Library of the Works of Oliver Goldsmith" (New Haven, 1928), p. 2. References are made to the preface, for it is still considered a part of Goldsmith's canon. See Gibbs' note, Works, V, 60 n.

[2]Enquiry, Works, III, 475.

[3]William Duff, Essay on Original Genius (London, 1767), Book II, Section v.

[4]Enquiry, Works, III, 470.

techniques have been utilized by the orator and historian who followed the poet after he had enriched the language and shown the possibilities of its use. He is then imitated by other prose writers who frequently absord his "fire, and leave him no real mark of distinction, except the iteration of numbers regularly recurring."[1] The poet and historian "diffuse a lustre upon the age" which the philosopher is never able to do,[2] for the philosopher does not appear until society is mature. When the critic arrives, literature has begun to decline.

According to Goldsmith, the poet is able to release and discipline the emotions, give pleasure, and create ideal views of life; "To strike the imagination even at the expense of probability," is a part of the poet's art.[3] He creates images, characters, and incidents that may not have happened but could have happened. The author of the Belles Lettres essays[4] also believes that the poet presents "a glowing picture of the scene and exhibits it in the most lively colours to the eye of the imagination."[5] The poet creates

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 153.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 476.

[3] The Grecian History, Works, V, 170.

[4] The Belles Lettres essays are no longer attributed to Goldsmith. See Caroline F. Tupper, "Essays Erroneously Attributed to Goldsmith," PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 325-342; also see Appendix A.

[5] "On Poetry," Works, I, 355.

beauty by means of language; his position is, therefore, an honourable one.

Goldsmith's concept of the poet reminds a reader of Sidney's, for both authors looked upon the poet as a teacher and seer, and both accorded the poet the prominent place of appearing before any other professional man. In order to execute his tasks "with a masterly hand," Goldsmith writes, "a man must be born a poet; . . ."[1]

But Goldsmith did not hold such idealistic views of the poets of his age. In fact, he thought they were responsible for a decline in the literary taste of the public.[2] In "A New Simile" he wrote a satire on the modern poet. Goldsmith took Mercury, messenger of the gods, noted for his temperamental fickleness, to represent the typical poet:

> Imprimis; pray observe his hat,
> Wings upon either side--mark that.
> Well, what is it from whence we gather?
> Why, these denote a brain of feather.
> A brain of feather, very right,
> With wit that's flighty, learning light;
> Such as to modern bard's decreed;
> A just comparison--proceed.
>
> In the next place, his feet peruse,
> Wings grow again from both his shoes;
> Design'd, no doubt, their part to bear,
> And waft his godship through the air:
> And here my simile unites;
> For in a modern poet's flights,
> I'm sure it may be justly said,
> His feet are useful as his head.[3]

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[1]"Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 62.

[2]"An Account of the Augustan Age in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 451.

[3]"A New Simile," Works, II, 88, ll. 15-30.

II

This description of the author indicates not only personal but professional interest in the man whom Goldsmith often calls a "genius." Goldsmith uses the word genius in two senses: as a man endowed with great gifts of creative ability; and, second, as the heaven-given endowment possessed by some men. The first sense of the word appears in a statement about Voltaire:

> Nature every day produces in abundance men capable of filling all the requisite duties of authority, but she is niggard in the birth of an exalted mind, scarcely producing in a century a single genius to bless and enlighten a degenerate age.[1]

Goldsmith states that Bacon is "a great and hardy genius;"[2] Dryden, also, is "a great and undisputed genius;"[3] and Swift owes his fame "not so much to the greatness of his genius, as to the boldness of it."[4] Chapter X of An Enquiry, "Of Rewarding Genius in England," shows Goldsmith using the word genius rather loosely to mean a person of superior ability, "the man of wit," who is usually an author.[5]

The author embodied some distinguishing characteristics both natural and acquired. The list is not static but varies from critic to critic. Newbery writes, "A true poet

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XLIII (June 3, 1760), Works, III, 162.

[2] Ibid., Letter CVIII (February 27, 1761), Works, III, 388.

[3] "An Account of the Augustan Age in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 445.

[4] A History of England, Works, V, 345.

[5] See chapter in Enquiry, Works, III, 500-509.

is distinguished by a fruitfulness of invention, a lively imagination tempered by a solid judgment, a nobleness of sentiment and ideas, and a bold, lofty, and figurative manner of expression."[1] Dr. Johnson notes that Pope had all the qualities which constitute genius; he had invention, judgment, imagination, and colours of language.[2] Duff states that the "principal ingredients of genius" are imagination, judgment, and taste.[3] Goldsmith did not list the characteristics of the author, but he does write about genius, invention, imagination, judgment, and taste, qualities which other critics have named to be characteristics of the author. Let us look at these characteristics as Goldsmith describes and illustrates the terms.

The author is distinguished chiefly by his genius.[4] This is a special aptitude embodied in the poet at birth, a natural characteristic which cannot be acquired, but it can be developed. It is a rare power that "appears in different degrees, and under a variety of forms."[5] Moreover,

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[1]John Newbery, Art of Poetry on a New Plan (London, 1762), I, 7. This work, no longer attributed to Goldsmith, was revised by him. See Works, V, 409-410, 412.

[2]Samuel Johnson, "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 247.

[3]Duff, op. cit., p. 6.

[4]For an historical study of the use of the word, see Logan Pearsall Smith, Four Words: Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius, Society for Pure English, No. XVII (Oxford, 1924), pp. 22-48. See also Paul Kaufman, "Heralds of Original Genius," Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell (Cambridge [Mass.], 1926), pp. 189-217.

[5]James Beattie, Dissertations: Moral and Critical (Dublin, 1783), I, 179.

it was felt to be a gift "indispensable in the fine arts." The topic interested many critics of the period whose opinions are to be compared or contrasted with those of Goldsmith in this section of the study. Hugh Blair discussed genius in his third lecture on Belles Lettres (delivered between 1760-1780, published 1783);[1] William Duff wrote an Essay on Original Genius (1767);[2] Alexander Gerard published An Essay on Genius (1774);[3] Sir Joshua Reynolds delivered an address on the subject (December 19, 1782);[4] and James Beattie has a chapter on genius in his work, Memory and Imagination (1783).[5] Earlier Addison had devoted an issue of the Spectator to genius,[6] and Edward Young championed the cause of genius in his Conjectures on Original Composition (1759).[7]

To most of the critics genius had come to mean a person's natural bent or disposition,"[8] or "an extraordinary creative

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[1]Hugh Blair, Lectures on Belles Lettres (Philadelphia, 1833), pp. 27-30.

[2]William Duff, Essay on Original Genius, London, 1767.

[3]Alexander Gerard, An Essay on Genius, London, 1774.

[4]Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Eleventh Discourse," Discourses, ed. Roger Fry (London, 1905), pp. 291-317.

[5]Beattie, op. cit., I, 177-199.

[6]Joseph Addison, Spectator Papers, No. 160 (September 3, 1711), ed. George A. Aitken (New York, 1898), II, 376-380.

[7]Edward Young, Conjectures on Original Composition (London, 1759), pp. 30-33.

[8]L. P. Smith, "Four Words," op. cit., p. 24.

faculty."[1] The mark of genius stressed by most neo-classical critics is invention. "Genius is shown only by invention," Johnson writes in the Idler.[2] He later calls it "that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates. . ."[3] Reynolds, Blair,[4] Gerard,[5] Beattie,[6] Duff,[7] and the author of the Belles Lettres essays[8] stress invention as the leading characteristic of genius. Perhaps it is Reynolds who best states the neo-classical idea of invention in its most accepted form. To him invention meant using the material already gathered in the production of a work of art. He tells his students:

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[1]Kaufman, op. cit., p. 196. "No one in that age would have dreamed of suggesting that it is genius which dictates new forms, new rules of art." Ibid., p. 200.

[2]Idler, No. 40 (January 20, 1759), IV, 267.

[3]Johnson, "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 222.

[4]"Genius always imports something inventive or creative; which does not rest in mere sensibility to beauty where it is perceived, but which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in such a manner as strongly to impress the minds of others." Blair, op. cit., p. 29.

[5]Invention is ". . . the capacity of producing new beauties in works of art, and new truths in matters of science; which can be accomplished only by assembling ideas of various positions and arrangements, that we may obtain uncommon views of them." Gerard, An Essay on Genius, p. 27.

[6]"The talent of invention, applied to useful purpose, is called Genius." Beattie, Dissertations, I, 177.

[7]". . . invention is the province of original Genius, . . ." Duff, op. cit., p. 95.

[8]". . . invention and enthusiasm constitute genius, in whatever manner it may be displayed." "On Poetry," Works, I, 352.

> It is indisputably evident that a great part of every man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory: nothing can come of nothing: he who has laid up no materials, can produce no combinations.[1]

Goldsmith does not define invention or say very much about it. One reason may be that he was such a strong advocate of originality that he placed little value upon invention as the term was commonly used by neo-classical critics. In his best developed statement about invention, a reader feels that originality is the topic under discussion, for Goldsmith speaks of an adventurer in pursuit of the unknown:

> Every science has its hitherto undiscovered mysteries, after which men should travel, undiscovered by the failure of former adventures. Every new attempt serves, perhaps, to facilitate its future invention. We may not find the Philosopher's stone, but we shall probably hit upon new inventions in pursuing it.[2]

Although Goldsmith uses the word <u>invention</u> only a few times, it appears that the notion has been absorbed into his ideas of originality.

Another characteristic of the author which occupies little space in Goldsmith's criticism is the imagination. Goldsmith appears to distrust the imagination and to doubt

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[1]"Second Discourse," pp. 22-23. Cf. "Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find, that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others, that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think." "Sixth Discourse," p. 148.

[2]"The Characteristics of Greatness," <u>Bee</u>, No IV (October 27, 1759), <u>Works</u>, II, 375.

its value. We can be reasonably sure that he knew Addison's papers on the imagination,[1] and, perhaps, he had read Akenside's "The Pleasures of the Imagination" but seems not to have been impressed by it.[2]

Goldsmith recognizes the exercise of the imagination in ordinary life. The birds appealed to the imagination and gave one pleasure;[3] prejudice caused the imagination to become biased and to paint the toad "in the most hideous colouring."[4] About the toad Goldsmith confesses, "My first imaginations were too strong not only for my reason, but for the convictions of my senses."[5] In the education of the young he thought history should be taught so that it will appeal to the child's imagination.[6]

In the aesthetic experience Goldsmith appears skeptical of that power which can create objects not present to the sense to serve as a substitute for passion. He is critical

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[1]He had the Spectator Papers in his library. Prior, op. cit., II, 518.

[2]Akenside is not mentioned in the Works. Perhaps Goldsmith had the experience of Johnson who admitted he "could not read it [the poem] through." Boswell, op. cit., II, 164.

[3]Animated Nature, Works, V, 238.

[4]Ibid., p. 240.

[5]Ibid.

[6]"On Education," Bee, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Works, II, 407. This article was published before Rousseau's Emile (1762). Goldsmith's experience as usher at the Peckham School led to an interest in education and methods of teaching. Prior, op. cit., I, 216-220.

of those authors who "paint to the imagination" instead of moving the emotions. Twice he points out the need for restraining the fancy. Both times he is showing his preference for rhyme over blank verse. He considers the poets of the reign of Queen Anne superior to the modern poets, for the fancy of the earlier poets was inhibited by rhyme:

> They submitted to the restraint of numbers, and similar sounds; and this restraint, instead of diminishing, augmented the force of their sentiment and style. Fancy restrained may be compared to a fountain, which plays highest by diminishing the aperture.[1]

The identical idea is expressed in the Enquiry. Goldsmith inveighs against the decadence of poetry in England as it is shown by the prevalence of blank verse. But here he appears to believe in restraint for its own sake, the need for the poet to be disciplined and to work within a pattern:

> If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult, for that very reason I would have our poets write in rhyme. Such a restriction upon the thought of a good poet, often lifts and increases the vehemence of every sentiment; for fancy, like a fountain, plays highest by diminishing the aperture.[2]

Upon a visit to Leasowes, ten years after the death of Shenstone, "himself a poet . . . possessed of that warm imagination,"[3] Goldsmith calls upon his imagination which suggests a reverie. The Genius of the Garden appears to give an account of the estate and its owners. He points the moral of

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 153.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 513.

[3] "The History of a Poet's Garden," Westminster Magazine (January, 1773), Works, I, 395.

worldly vanity and blames "a strong imagination" for the poet's discontent with a simple estate:

> "You see, in the place before you, the paternal inheritance of a poet; and, to a man content with little, fully sufficient for his substance: but a strong imagination, and a long acquaintance with the rich are dangerous foes to contentment."[1]

But Goldsmith expected a poet to have a creative imagination, to have the ability to make and produce characters and situations of its own. He, also, expected the readers to be able to reproduce the situations which the author presented. He writes that it is part of the poet's art "to strike the imagination even at the expense of probability."[2] In the review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer, Goldsmith writes that it is the business of a "poet only to select such circumstances and descriptions as tended to strike the imagination, or promote the real design; . . ."[3] In giving the origin of poetry he states it was "begotten by Imagination upon Genius."[4] Yet with this parentage, Goldsmith thought poetry should do more than appeal to the imagination.

Goldsmith not only fails to discuss the imagination as one of the characteristics of genius, but he makes no

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[1] Ibid., p. 396.

[2] Grecian History, Works, V, 170.

[3] Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 18. This article has been attributed to Goldsmith by Ronald S. Crane, "A Mid-Eighteenth-Century Plea for Originality," PQ, XIII (1934), 21-29. See note in English Literature, 1660-1880, A Bibliography of Modern Studies, ed. Louis A. Landa, et al. (Princeton, 1950), I, 406.

[4] "Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 60.

distinction between imagination and fancy,[1] has no comment on the association of ideas,[2] says nothing about the imagination as perceptive response,[3] nor treats the imagination as a creative power.[4] He does not even state that a luxuriant imagination needs to be restrained by judgment. This was the common opinion of most critics, Gerard, for instance, who wrote that the "judgment must preserve imagination from losing itself in its excursions."[5] Goldsmith retains the attitude toward the imagination which Johnson held when he wrote Rasselas;[6] but Goldsmith does not name the imagination as a quality of genius and Johnson does.[7]

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[1]The author of "On Poetry," on the contrary, distinguishes between the "flowers of imagination" and the "gaudy offspring of a cold insipid fancy." Works, I, 361. See also Beattie, "On Memory and Imagination," Dissertations, p. 87.

[2]Frances Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (4th ed., London, 1738), pp. 73, 80-82; Beattie, op. cit., I, 95-132; Henry Home (Lord Kames), Elements of Criticism (7th ed., Edinburgh, 1788), I, 17-26; Gerard, Essay on Genius, pp. 108-131.

[3]Spectator Papers, No. 411-421, The Spectator, ed. G. Gregory Smith (London, 1898), VI, 56-96. See also C. D. Thorpe, "Addison's Theory of Imagination as 'Perceptive Response,'" Papers of the Michigan Academy, XXI (1935), 509-530.

[4]Kames, op. cit., II, 519-520; 525-526.

[5]Gerard, An Essay on Genius, p. 71.

[6]"The Dangerous Prevalence of Imagination," Rasselas, I, 292-295.

[7][Pope]". . . had imagination, which strongly impressed on the writer's mind and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, . . ." Johnson, "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 247.

The two characteristics of the author about which Goldsmith has the most to say are judgment and taste. To the neo-classical critic, judgment was the author's leading characteristic. It was, as Locke wrote, the faculty that distinguishes and discerns; it separates "carefully one from another ideas wherein can be found the least difference, . . ."[1] Johnson stated that Pope

> had Judgment, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality; . . .[2]

It was the judgment which enabled the writer to produce artistic belief and verisimilitude; the neo-classical writers eschewed a photographic representation of nature.

Goldsmith's concept of the importance of the judgment concurs with that of the other neo-classical critics. Judgment, he thinks, can be taught to children. He condemns those masters who "are fonder of making their pupils talk well than think well," and he criticizes them for being "better qualified to give praise to a ready memory than a sound judgment."[3] On the other hand, he praises those Greek philosophers who "saw that there was more excellence in

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[1]John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. A. S. Pringle-Pattison (Oxford, 1924), p. 86.

[2]Johnson, "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 247.

[3]History of England in a Series of Letters, Works, V, 256.

captivating the judgment, than in raising a momentary astonishment."[1] One criticism directed against modern books was that they contained no information and made no appeal to the judgment. The reader, "in order to be pleased," must "first leave his good sense behind him."[2]

In the Citizen of the World, the Chinese Philosopher gives a short allegory on man's relation to his world. The world is likened to "a vast sea," and man is a vessel "sailing on its tempestuous bosom." Prudence is the sails, science the oars, and "judgment is the rudder; without this last the vessel is tossed by every billow, and will find shipwreck in every breeze."[3]

Having recognized the importance of judgment in everyday life, Goldsmith states the need for the author to have sound judgment. This information is conveyed in a delightful dream about the fountain of fine sense. Goldsmith dreamed that he was at the foot of a high mountain where there were many people milling around. He joined the crowd that climbed half way up the summit to drink from a fountain. He noticed that the water caused the drinkers to speak "without understanding what they said," to decide "magisterially on subjects which they did not comprehend," and to judge "of

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[1]Enquiry, Works, III, 471.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter XCVII (November 7, 1760), Works, III, 358.

[3]Letter LXXXIII (October 15, 1760), Works, III, 313.

works they had never seen."[1] He, then, became apprehensive and viewed the crowd critically. When invited to drink of the fountain of fine sense, he declined with the answer, ". . . I disclaim all pretensions to fine sense, and am much better pleased with common sense."[2] Having made up his mind to leave the company, he discovered some people at the summit. He climbed to the location of a second fountain around which many persons were assembled. Those who drank from it united "gravity, sense, and humour." Among this international gathering were such persons as Metastasio, Maffei, Voltaire, Piron, Johnson, Gray, and Mason "conveying strong sense in the wildest sallies of poetical enthusiasm."[3]

All of these authors (with the exception of Piron) were men for whose works Goldsmith held the highest esteem. These writers had all drunk from the fountain of common sense. Goldsmith was persuaded that the judgment should control all the faculties, for "a shallow understanding generally aspires at the reputation of wit; but true genius ever chooses to wear the appearance of good sense."

Taste, the discernment of beauty and the nameless graces of a work of art by a gentleman of cultivated sensibilities, was another distinguishing quality of the artist. When two

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[1]"A Dream," British Magazine (May, 1760), Works, IV, 477.

[2]Ibid., p. 478.

[3]Ibid., p. 479.

young ladies of distinction and fashion were introduced by Mr. Thornhill to the Primroses, the daughters of the family became quite disconcerted, for the visitors would talk of nothing but "fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses."[1] In the early sixties, when the Vicar of Wakefield was written, taste as a subject of conversation was a bit passé, yet the topic was of interest to critics of literature for two decades longer.[2]

In the eighteenth century, the word **taste** was almost as ambiguous as the word nature; however, taste was further complicated by its metaphorical origin. Many of the writers attempted to define the word. Addison, who was the first critic in England to discuss taste, defined it "to be that Faculty of the Soul, which discerns the Beauties of an Author with Pleasure, and Imperfections with Dislike."[3] Other definitions and pronouncements were given by Akenside,[4]

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[1]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 105.

[2]Andrew Cannon Smith notes four stages in the rise and progress of taste in England: 1) taste, a novelty in criticism, 1700-1725; 2) taste, "the fashionable word," 1725-1750; 3) taste wins the philosophers, 1750-1770; and 4) taste loses in vogue, 1770-1790. "Theories of the Nature and Standard of Taste, 1700-1790," Unpublished Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1934, p. 27.

[3]Spectator, No. 409 (June 19, 1712), VI, 49.

[4]What then is taste, but these internal powers
Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
For things deform'd or disarrang'd or gross
In species? Mark Akenside, "Pleasures of the Imagination," Poetical Works, ed., Alexander Dyce (Boston, 1863), III, 515-520.

Burke,[1] Johnson,[2] Reynolds,[3] Blair,[4] Gerard,[5] and the author of the essay "Upon Taste."[6]

Goldsmith, who has been listed by one critic among the "champions of taste,"[7] defines taste as the "capacity of receiving pleasure" in the objects of nature.[8] But Goldsmith gives another definition for taste in writing. The author faces the dilemma of being "perspicuous and concise," on the one hand, and of being "minute," on the other. When there is a conflict between the reason and the imagination, the resolution must be brought about by taste. "Taste, in

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[1]"I mean by the word Taste no more than that faculty or those faculties of the mind, which are affected with, or which form a judgment of, the works of imagination and the elegant arts." Edmund Burke, "On Taste," Works (Boston, 1826), I, 75.

[2]". . . difference of taste . . . [is], in truth, difference of skill." Boswell, Life of Johnson (Oxford Standard Edition, 1933), I, 467.

[3]"We apply the term Taste to that act of the mind by which we like or dislike, whatever be the subject." Reynolds, "Seventh Discourse," op. cit., p. 189.

[4]"Taste may be defined, 'The power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art.'" Blair, op. cit., p. 16.

[5]"Taste consists chiefly in the improvement of those principles which are commonly called the powers of imagination, and are considered by modern philosophers as internal or reflex senses, supplying us with finer and more delicate perceptions, than any which can be properly referred to our external organs." Gerard, An Essay on Taste, pp. 1-2.

[6]". . . taste is the power of relishing or rejecting whatever is offered for the entertainment of the imagination." Works, I, 327.

[7]Aisso Bosker, op. cit., pp. 143-150.

[8]"Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 534.

writing," Goldsmith states, "is the exhibition of the greatest quantity of beauty and use that may be admitted into any description without counteracting each other."[1] It is this natural sensitivity of the author to beauty and utility upon which he can rely when the reason and imagination reach an impasse. Taste maintains the balance; it is, really a type of judgment. In fact, Gerard, calls taste "another kind of judgment, that which pronounces concerning beauty, . . ."[2]

Unfortunately, Goldsmith did not show the operations of taste in the aesthetic experience. For his example of the beautiful and useful combined, he selects a gold coin, a guinea. The reviewer of the Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe for the Gentleman's Magazine, after commenting on the way Goldsmith shifts the meaning of the word taste from "a capacity of receiving pleasure" to an "exhibition of beauty and use," writes,

> . . . but if he cannot shew that all which pleases in Shakespeare's Lear, arises from the beauty and use of some sensible object of the same kind as a guinea, which Shakespeare has exhibited by his skill in writing, as a polite art, his conclusion will not follow his premises.[3]

The failure to show how taste resolves the conflict of reason and imagination in literature makes the notion theoretical rather than practical.

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[1]Ibid., p. 535.

[2]Gerard, An Essay on Genius, p. 392.

[3]"Review of the Enquiry," Gentleman's Magazine, XXIX (April, 1759), 171.

After defining taste and giving an example of it, Goldsmith speaks of the man of taste. He occupies a central position "between the scholar and the man of the world."[1] Here the scholar is the specialist, ensconced in his ivory tower, out of touch with the problems of struggling society, unmindful of its needs, and disdainful of its plight. He writes in a jargon which the average reader does not understand:

> The man of taste, however, stands neutral in this controversy. He seems placed in a middle station, between the world and the cell, between learning and common sense. He teaches the vulgar on what part of the character to lay the emphasis of praise, and the scholar where to point his application so as to deserve it.[2]

Goldsmith thinks of the man of taste as an interpreter of knowledge to the man in the street. The new role of the author in a society in which knowledge and power were "slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent" was early recognized by Goldsmith. He conceived of the function of the artist to be highly social; it was the author who should guide the masses and make available to them the benefits of the knowledge of the highly trained. Beattie, however, does not envision the service that can be rendered by the man of taste; rather, he thinks of taste as the embodiment of personal characteristics.[3] His man of taste, with a lively imagination and

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[1]"Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 534.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Beattie, Dissertation, I, 202.

good judgment, can hardly be distinguished from Duff's man of genius who had imagination, judgment, and taste or Johnson's man of genius who embodied imagination, judgment, powers of invention, and ability for self expression.

Goldsmith, in the revised edition of the Enquiry (1774), omitted most of the material on taste. By that time taste was losing its vogue as the criterion of a work of art, and the man of taste was no longer popular. Deleted are the passages on the parallel between the "degeneracy in literature, as well as in morals"[1] until he reaches the "Conclusion." In this chapter he shows the relation between taste and morality:

> The man, the nation, must therefore be good, whose chiefest luxuries consist in the refinement of reason; and reason can never be universally cultivated, unless guided by Taste, which may be considered as the link between science and common sense, the medium through which learning should ever be seen by society.[2]

Like Gerard, Goldsmith believes taste is related to judgment. Although Gerard stated that taste was a kind of judgment which passed on works of beauty, Goldsmith makes taste the guide of reason. Just as he considers the man of taste the bridge between society and the cell, he now adjudges taste to be the link between knowledge and "common sense." Since taste is an indefinable quality it would be hard to evaluate; but it is indispensable to an author.

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 467 n.

[2] Ibid., p. 527.

Some critics gave wit and humour as marks of genius. This opinion was opposed by Duff who stated that the function of genius was "to invent incidents or characters, to create new and uncommon scenery, and to describe every object it contemplates, in the most striking manner, and with the most picturesque circumstances: . . ."[1] For this task the chief qualification is a "vigorous, extensive, and Plastic Imagination," while a "lively Fancy" represents "Men, Manners, and Things in such a ludicrous light, as to excite Pleasantry and provoke Risibility."

Goldsmith, on the other hand, did not relate wit and humour to genius, imagination, or fancy; he stated that there is no effect in writing more difficult to achieve than humour.[2] Since these qualities of a work illustrate the author's art, it may be well to include what Goldsmith writes about each. In the first place he lists the absence of works of wit and humour as one mark of degeneracy in English literature along with the use of blank verse, the increase in the volume of critical works, and the withdrawal of patronage.[3]

He continues that critics frequently "mistake humour for wit."[4] "Wit," he writes, "raises human nature above its

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[1]Duff, op. cit., p. 58.

[2]"Review of Works of the Reverend William Hawkins," Critical Review (August, 1759), Works, IV, 397.

[3]Enquiry, Works, III, 510-516.

[4]Ibid., p. 515. For a discussion of the evolution in the meaning of "humour," see Edward Niles Hooker, "Humour in the Age of Pope," HLQ, XI (1947-1948), 361-385.

level; humour acts a contrary part, and equally depresses it."[1] He further contrasts the two by stating:

> When an unexpected similitude in two objects strikes the imagination--in other words, when a thing is wittily expressed--all our pleasures turn into admiration of the artist, who had fancy to draw the picture. When a thing is humorously described, our burst of laughter proceeds from a very different cause: we compare the absurdity of the character represented with our own, and triumph in our conscious superiority.[2]

The clause to be noticed in the above passage is "when an unexpected similitude in two objects strikes the imagination." This observation of similitudes which are rarely noticed by other people is Hobbes' definition of a good wit.[3] Addison had not accepted Hobbes' definition entirely; to him only the resemblances of ideas which give "delight and surprise to the reader" could be called wit.[4] Johnson has Eumanthes define wit as:

> . . . the unexpected copulation of ideas, the discovery of some occult relation between images in appearance remote from each other; an effusion of wit, therefore presupposes an accumulation of knowledge; a memory stored with notions, which the imagination may call out to compose new assemblages.[5]

All four of these writers look for unexpected relations in objects in order to produce wit. Goldsmith in his concept of wit is much nearer to Hobbes, Locke, Addison, and Johnson

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 515.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Thomas Hobbes, The Leviathan (London, 1887), Part I, Chapter VIII, p. 39.

[4] Spectator, No. 62 (May 11, 1711), I, 321.

[5] Rambler, No. 194 (January 25, 1752), III, 403.

than to Dryden[1] or Pope.[2] The last two authors considered wit to consist primarily of appropriate expression.

The possession of wit is so important to Goldsmith that he inserts in the Bee an article on the subject written by Voltaire.[3] After pointing out that wit is more than "judgment, genius, taste, talent, penetration, grace, and delicacy," Voltaire defines wit as "ingenious reason."[4] Further, he thinks of wit as a figure of speech and states that it is "at best, an ornament."[5] The great art is to time properly the figure.[6] Goldsmith inserts in the article a comment on

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[1]Dryden's ". . . definition of Wit. . . is only this: that it is a propriety of thoughts and words: or in other terms, thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject." John Dryden, "The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License," op. cit., I, 190. Cf. "Propriety of words is the clothing of those thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them; and from both these, if they are judiciously performed, the delight of poetry results." "The Preface: Albion and Alvanius, An Opera," ibid., I, 270.

[2]Alexander Pope, "Essay on Criticism," Selections from A. Pope, ed. George Sherburn (New York, 1929), ll. 297-300.

[3]"On Wit," by Voltaire, Bee, No. III (October 20, 1759), Works, II, 356-360.

[4]Ibid., p. 356.

[5]Ibid., p. 357.

[6]This notion of proper timing becomes fundamental in Goldsmith's thinking. He writes a choice paragraph on success as a "happy concurrence of circumstances" and compares it to wit: "So it is with wit, which generally succeeds more from being happily addressed, than from its native poignancy. A bon mot, for instance, that might be relished at White's may lose all its flavour when delivered at the Cat and Bagpipes in St. Giles's. A jest calculated to spread at a gaming table, may be received with a perfect neutrality of face, should it happen to drop in a mackerel boat. We have all seen dunces triumph in some companies, where men of real humour were disregarded by a general combination in favour of stupidity." "Introduction," Bee, No. I (October 6, 1759), Works, II, 306.

Addison's use of the phrase "false wit;" he prefers to call the situation "wit displaced." False wit, he continues, is different from displaced wit, for it is both a "false thought" and a "far-fetched one."[1] In the last part of the article Voltaire contrasts false wit with false taste. The ability to discern unexpected relations in objects is such a rare one that it indicates great art.

Goldsmith's idea of humour is close to that of Jonson and Dryden; both used the term to mean an innate individual peculiarity. To delineate this uniqueness in personality requires great gifts, for every country has its own individuality.[2] "In writing," Goldsmith states, "humour consists in an imitation of the foibles, or absurdities of mankind, so our pleasure in this species of composition arises from comparing the picture in description with the original in nature."[3] The humorous character exhibits individual divergences which cause laughter. The subject of humour is low, for the object is always placed in a "state of inferiority."[4]

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[1]"On Wit," op. cit., p. 357.

[2]"There is a cast of humour, as well as of manners, peculiar to each country; and this is what makes every nation give preference to its own writers on humorous subjects. Nor is this preference ill-founded; since the several drawings are made from originals widely different from each other; and, as in portrait painting the value of the picture is enhanced by our connexion with the person who sat for it, so here we most approve those pieces the originals of which we are best acquainted with." "Review of Rabener's Satirical Letters," Monthly Review (August, 1757), Works, IV, 283.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Enquiry, Works, III, 516.

It is apparent why the presentation of humour requires great art. Not only must the author know the unique features of national traits, but he must be able to imitate them in his representation so that the artistic creation can be recognized. In addition, he must know which features are risible; finally, he must be able to produce laughter.[1]

Most neo-classical critics, Johnson, for example, would have stressed learning as a prerequisite for an author. He would have conceded that genius is a natural characteristic, but that learning is acquired. Addison, in his paper on genius,[2] had contrasted the natural genius with the genius formed by rules and art. Among the first group he placed Homer, Pindar, and Shakespeare, and in the last group Virgil and Milton. He fails, however, to state which group of writers was superior. Following Addison, the critics had tended to prefer the natural genius to the one restrained by art.

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[1] In connection with the discussion of humour, Goldsmith brought up the source of laughter. He takes issue with Hobbes who states that laughter is a result "of the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison thereof" the observer feels superior [Leviathan, Part I, Chapter VI]. "No natural defects," Goldsmith writes, can cause laughter; instead, they arouse the emotions of pity or horror. When we laugh, "we compare the absurdity of the character represented with our own and triumph in our conscious superiority. . . We laugh at those instances of moral absurdity, to which we are conscious we ourselves are not liable." Enquiry, Works, III, 515. Beattie, on the other hand, did not believe that laughter is a concomitant either to wit or humour. James Beattie, "An Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition," Essays: on Poetry and Music (London, 1779), p. 301. Cf. Spectator, No. 249 (December 15, 1711), III, 384-388.

[2] Spectator, No. 160 (September 3, 1711), II, 376-380.

Edward Young was among the first to state that the beauties and excellencies of genius lie without the pale of learning's authorities, and laws."[1] He contrasted the two types of geniuses to the advantage of the natural genius.

> Learning we thank, genius we revere; That gives us pleasure, This gives us rapture; that informs, This inspires; and is itself inspired; for genius is from heaven, learning from man: . . .[2]

He used Jonson and Shakespeare as examples of the learned man and the natural genius, respectively. "Genius," he writes, "sometimes owes its greater glory" to the neglect of learning. Later, he asks the challenging question, "Who knows whether Shakespeare might not have thought less, if he had read more?"[3]

Goldsmith, however, does not show much interest in the author's learning. In a paragraph on Otway, Goldsmith writes, "He appears to have had no learning, no critical knowledge, . . ."[4] Goldsmith, evidently, thinks of him as a natural genius. He ranks him next to Shakespeare as the greatest tragedian.[5] He, also, states that Bolingbroke lacked the learning necessary to be a good critic or philosopher.[6]

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[1]Young, op. cit., p. 28.

[2]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[3]Ibid., p. 81.

[4]"An Account of the Augustan Age in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 446.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 448.

Although Goldsmith does not list the characteristics of the author, he expresses his views on invention, imagination, judgment, and taste, qualities which the author would be expected to possess. He is very much interested in wit and humour, but he does not relate them to genius or imagination. He appears to be less interested in the author's learning than in his natural characteristics.

III

The author's method of composition received much attention throughout the eighteenth century. None of the critics denied the Aristotelian principle that art is an imitation, but many of them objected to the neo-classical principle that art is an imitation of the ancient writers. Goldsmith cautions all writers to imitate nature directly; the representation then will not be an imitation but an original. In interpreting the causes for the decadence of literature in Greece, Goldsmith blames the pedants who taught their pupils to imitate other writers:

> Their disciples, instead of aiming at being originals themselves, became imitators of that merit alone which was constantly proposed for their admiration. In exercises of this kind, the most stupid are generally most successful; for there is not in nature a more imitative animal than a dunce.[1]

One mark of literary decay in France and England was "affectation in some popular writer, leading others into vicious

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 475.

imitation; . . ."[1] It could be seen in Murphy's Orphan of China "that all the faults of the performance proceeded from vicious imitation, and all its beauties were the poet's own."[2]

In discussing Parnell, Goldsmith makes a concession to the imitation of the ancients. He calls Parnell "the last of that great school that had modelled itself upon the ancients, . . ."[3] Any ordinary artist can make a photographic reproduction of a scene, but to heighten a scene with creative imagination required a study of the ancients or originality:

> To copy nature is a task the most bungling workman is able to execute; to select such parts as contribute to delight, is reserved only for those whom accident has blest with uncommon talents, or such as have read the ancients with indefatigable industry.[4]

Moreover, the poet must not be a mere copyist; he must represent the ideal beauty in nature. This dislike for imitation of other authors carries over into his practical criticism, as we shall later see, when he criticizes such poems as "The School-Mistress," "A Pipe of Tobacco," "The Splendid Shilling," and Gray's "Odes."

The same objection to imitations can be found in Addison, Young, and Dr. Johnson. Addison writes, "An imitation of the

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[1] Ibid., p. 510.

[2] Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 353.

[3] "Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 172.

[4] Ibid.

best authors is not to compare with a good original; . . ."[1] Young, like Goldsmith, does not object to imitation as a principle of composition, but he disapproves of the manner of imitating the ancients instead of nature:

> Must we then, you say, not imitate antient authors? Imitate them by all means: but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine Iliad, does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method, which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great. Tread in his steps to the sole fountain of immortality; drink where he drank, at the true Helicon, that is, at the breast of nature: Imitate; but imitate not the Composition, but the Man. For may not this paradox pass into a maxim? viz. "The less we copy the renowned antients, we shall resemble them the more."[2]

Johnson writes, "No man ever yet became great by imitation."[3] West's Imitations of Spenser are successful with respect to "the metre, the language, and fiction;" but, Johnson concludes, "the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim."[4] He called Pope's Imitations of Horace "neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern;" "such imitations can not give pleasure to common readers."[5] He does like Shenstone's "The School-Mistress"[6] which is more than a mere copy of Spenser's Faerie Queene.

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[1] Spectator, No. 160 (September 3, 1711), II, 380.

[2] Young, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

[3] Rambler, No. 154 (September 7, 1751), III, 233. The same idea is found in Rasselas, I, 221.

[4] "Life of West," op. cit., III, 333.

[5] "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 247.

[6] "Life of Shenstone," op. cit., III, 358-359.

Richard Hurd, on the other hand, defends imitation. In his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation," he shows how imitation is revealed in the matter or manner of the best writers. He gives as the chief cause of the degeneracy of taste "this anxious dread of imitation in polite and cultivated writers."[1] He, also, states that there may be "greater merit in the copyist, than the original.[2]

Reynolds, who lists three stages in the development of a painter, defends imitating the ancients in the first stage. He feels "that by imitation only, variety, and even originality of invention, is produced. . .even genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation. . ."[3] The artist then should follow a "course of imitation, that is not to cease but with his life."[4] Reynolds does distinguish between copying the style of the masters and copying "their conceptions."[5] He advises his students to possess the spirit of Michaelangelo or Raphael and to approach their work in the manner of these masters. But the defenders of imitation were in the minority.

Goldsmith, with Young and Johnson, attacks imitation of the ancients and holds up originality as the standard for all

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[1]Richard Hurd, "A Discourse on Poetical Imitation," Works (London, 1811), II, 240.

[2]Hurd, A Letter to Mr. Mason; on the Marks of Imitation (Cambridge, 1777), 44.

[3]"Sixth Discourse," p. 145.

[4]Ibid., p. 171.

[5]"Second Discourse," p. 27.

writers. He states that Gray did not reach his highest capabilities; he might have given greater pleasure and acquired larger fame, if, "instead of being an imitator," he had done "justice to his talents, and ventured to be more original."[1] And in the preface to A Poetical Dictionary, Goldsmith writes, "It is in their original works, their imitations of nature, and not of men, that we must look for that excellence in our celebrated writers which reflects honour upon the nation, and helps to exemplify its literary character."[2]

The original work may be eccentric and different from the common run of the mill. This emphasis upon deviation from the norm is repeatedly pointed out as a characteristic of original work. He observes, ". . . the little mind who loves itself, will write and think with the vulgar, but the great mind will be bravely eccentric, and scorn the beaten road, from universal benevolence."[3] The same idea is to be found in the Enquiry; Goldsmith remarks, "But it should be observed, that the more original any performance is, the

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[1]"Review of Gray's Odes," Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 297.

[2]Works, V, 63.

[3]"The Characteristics of Greatness," Bee, No. IV (October 27, 1759), Works, II, 376.

more it is liable to deviate; for cautious stupidity is always in the right."[1]

Goldsmith is concerned about the self-satisfaction and smugness of his age. As a citizen of the world, he was cosmopolitan in his view; consequently, he became critical of the insularity and uniformity of thinking among the intelligentsia. The author should dare to be original:

> This enterprising spirit is, however, by no means the character of the present age: every person who should attempt to be more than a commentator upon philosophy, or an imitator in polite learning, might be regarded as a chimerical projector. Hundreds would be ready not only to point out his errors, but to load him with reproach. . . . Yet this is certain, that the writer who never deviates, who never hazards a new thought, or a new expression, though his friends may compliment him upon his sagacity, though criticism lifts her feeble voice in his praise, will seldom arrive at any degree of perfection. . . . An author who would be sublime, often runs his thoughts into burlesque: yet I can readily pardon his mistaking ten times for once succeeding. True genius walks along a line; and perhaps our greatest pleasure is in seeing it so often near falling, without being ever actually down.[2]

The author should "fly from the herd of imitators by some happy singularity."[3] Goldsmith so strongly admires originality that in his review of Murphy's Orphan of China he is willing to balance one original scene against all of the defects in the play.[4] Yet, he admits that originality may be

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[1] Works, III, 467.

[2] "The Characteristics of Greatness," op. cit., pp. 274-275.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 512.

[4] Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 353.

superficial. He quotes Voltaire who states that the public which "grows whimsical, desires something new, and mistakes change for improvement." The author, unwilling to be called an imitator, "borrows peculiarities from affectation, and becomes original only in trifles."[1]

Both Goldsmith and Young believed that originality could be destroyed. Young thinks that the "meddling ape" imitation has driven out originality, but Goldsmith blames the current practice of criticism for the decline in original work. In the chapter of An Enquiry, "The Causes Which Contribute to the Decline of Learning," Goldsmith also accuses pedantry of destroying originality in Greece:

> In a word, the commonwealth of literature was at last wholly overrun by these studious triflers. Men of real genius were lost in the multitude, or, as in a world of fools it were folly to aim at being an only exception, obliged to conform to every prevailing absurdity of the times. Original productions seldom appeared, and learning, as if grown superannuated, bestowed all its panegyric upon the vigour of its youth, and turned encomiast upon its former achievements.[2]

Pedantry and faulty criticism had kept the artist from striving to be original. It is against both that Goldsmith took up his pen in the Enquiry. The artists of the late eighteenth century were seeking both new materials and new methods. Goldsmith had no suggestions for new subject matter, for the "follies of mankind"[3] had been supplying the satirists with

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[1] "On Wit," Bee, No. III (October 20, 1759), Works, II, 359.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 473.

[3] "A Dream," British Magazine (July, 1760), Works, IV, 486.

topics. Neither did he have any new methods to present. He did, however, place strong emphasis upon the emotions which would later require new methods of treatment. Goldsmith's plea for originality did not remain unheeded, and it is to his credit that he, with Young, spearheaded the movement for original work.

IV

Up to this point this chapter has been concerned with presenting the outstanding characteristics of the artist and his methods of work. In the closing pages it will be interesting to see how Goldsmith's opinions of the ancient and the modern authors emerge in his criticism. Goldsmith consistently held to the view that the ancient writers were praised by modern critics in order to show their discernment.[1] Considering the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns "trifling,"[2] and preferring the moderns to the ancients, he was much better read in modern literature than in ancient literature; consequently, he showed a greater appreciation for modern writers. In an essay contributed to the British Magazine, he makes a visionary trip to Elysium in which he visits the Mansions of Poetry and Taste. His report of such ancients as Homer, Pindar,

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[1]"The praise bestowed on a writer of established reputation, is perhaps more frequently designed as a compliment to ourselves than the author: we only shew the rectitude of our own taste by a standard allowed already to be just: . . ." "Review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer," Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 11.

[2]Enquiry, Works, III, 529.

and Horace may be interpreted as lacking in deference for these great literary figures.

Walking with a cane, supported by two commentators and showing an inclination to sleep, Homer was greeted by the shouts, "The divine old man! the incomparable poet! the marvellous genius! the admirable philosopher! the sublime orator!"[1] This fulsome adulation caused him to blush, for the old bard, "who in the main was a man of good sense, seemed ashamed of so much unmerited praise."[2] When he was alive "his fame consisted in being a good ballad-singer, and he considered his poems only as a trade taken up for want of a better, by which he scarce found a subsistence."[3]

Here Pindar is represented as trying "to climb all the sign posts" and attract attention to his lofty height. Frequently he fell, but he was never hurt. When Pindar would fall, Horace would tell the crowd that the fall came "through design." He, then, began to emulate Pindar with laughable results:

> From admiration he soon began to strive at imitation, and began to climb; but when he had got half-way up the post, his strength and spirits failed him; there he stuck, and could get neither up nor down. He looked most pitifully round on the crowd that was laughing below, and begged that some one would lend him a shoulder; when a meagre, tall figure, whom I knew to be Scaliger,

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[1] "A Dream," British Magazine (July, 1760), Works, IV, 489.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 490.

> appearing, took the little man in his arms and brought him off unhurt before the faces of all the spectators.[1]

Upon asking Homer why a similarity ran throughout the books of the Iliad, the dreamer was referred to some commentators who met him with invectives instead of reasoned arguments. The "Dream" has for its thesis the familiar one for Goldsmith --the ancient authors are over-praised, and the commentators have found more in the works than there is.[2] By placing these famous ancients in ridiculous situations, Goldsmith has a lot of fun at their expense.

His treatment of the moderns is more just. Among the French his ideal was Voltaire. The "Memoirs of M. de Voltaire" (1759), written as an introduction for an edition of Voltaire's works to be published by Griffiths, but released serially in the Lady's Magazine, is mainly biographical with few comments about the French author's works.[3] In a review of Voltaire's Universal History, Goldsmith gives a general estimate of Voltaire as a writer. His beauties are "many and obvious; his faults few, and those well concealed under the dazzle of his abilities;"[4] Goldsmith continues:

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[1] Ibid., pp. 488-489.

[2] Cf. "Pope, one would have thought, had be-praised the Grecian sufficiently, saw more in Homer than Homer knew, and vigorously defended him almost through thick and thin: . . ." "Review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer," Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 14.

[3] "Memoirs of M. de Voltaire," Works, IV, 3-46.

[4] "Review of Voltaire's Universal History," Monthly Review (August, 1757), Works, IV, 280.

> It is certain Mr. Voltaire often colours too strongly. Fond of characters and anecdotes that may serve to strike the reader, he generally raises or depresses both, as best suits the point of representation he has in view; and if he does not find his facts and personages sufficiently remarkable, or to his purpose, he generally makes them so. His maxims are commonly drawn from too small a number of instances, to be always true; and though as short and comprehensive as those of Tacitus, they are, by no means, so striking. The remarks of Tacitus seem to rise from the narration; those of Voltaire often from the man.[1]

It appears that Goldsmith thinks that Voltaire is not scientific in his history; he draws conclusions from insufficient evidence; and his works are marred by long moral reflections. Joseph Warton agrees with Goldsmith that Voltaire is much too egocentric in his writings.[2]

Goldsmith refers to Dryden numerous times. Although many of the references are biographical, three times they acknowledge his contribution to improving and harmonizing the language. In one of those rare paragraphs, Goldsmith writes a short profile of Dryden as a poet and dramatist.

> Dryden, though a great and undisputed genius, had the same cast as L'Estrange. Even his plays discover him to be a party man, and the same principle infects his style in subjects of the highest nature; but the English tongue as it stands at present, is greatly his debtor. He first gave it regular harmony, and discovered its latent powers. It was his pen that formed the Congreves, the Priors, and the Addisons, who succeeded him; and had it not been for Dryden, we never should have

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Voltaire in his Henriade ". . . gives no proofs of a picturesque fancy, in a work that abounds more in declamation, in moral and political reflections than in poetic images; in which there is little character, and less nature; and in which the author himself appears throughout the piece, and is himself the hero of his poem." Joseph Warton, op. cit., II, 167.

> known a Pope, at least in the meridian lustre he now displays. But Dryden's excellencies, as a writer, were not confined to poetry alone. There is in his prose writings an ease and elegance that have never yet been so well united in works of taste and criticism.[1]

Dryden is censured for his party affiliations, for Goldsmith felt that an author should maintain the integrity of his opinion. The praise given to Dryden's style is both deserved and expected, for Goldsmith liked fluidity and ease of expression. The directness of Dryden contrasts so much with the involved sentences of Milton that Goldsmith would prefer Dryden over his contemporary. The statement that Dryden was the source of a good middle style that was imitated successfully by Congreve, Prior, and Addison and that his use of the couplet prepared the way for the highly polished couplet of Pope was not original. Goldsmith's chief concern is with Dryden's style rather than with his unique qualities as a poet, dramatist, or critic. A note on Dryden's criticism like Johnson's, to the effect that Dryden was the first person to judge works of art by critical principles, would have been perceptive.

The poet for whom Goldsmith held the greatest admiration is Pope, but Goldsmith was never so categorical in his remarks as to name his favorite. He did state that the writers of the reign of Queen Anne arrived at perfection, but he protests that no single author attracts his attention solely.[2] The

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[1] "An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 445-446.

[2] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 531.

same statement is repeated in the article on the Augustan Age in England;[1] most critics state that Goldsmith is a member of the school of Pope.[2] The poetry of Pope forms a large part of Goldsmith's anthologies, for Goldsmith considered him the best English poet.

> But of all who have added to the stock of English poetry, Pope, perhaps, deserves the first place. On him foreigners look as one of the most successful writers of his time: his versification is the most harmonious, and his correctness the most remarkable of all our poets. A noted contemporary of his own, calls the English the finest writers on moral topics, and Pope the noblest moral writer of all the English. Mr. Pope has somewhere named himself the last English muse; and, indeed, since his time, we have seen few productions that can justly lay claim to immortality: he carried the language to its highest perfection; and those who have attempted still further to improve it, instead of ornament have only caught finery.[3]

Goldsmith regarded Pope a model poet who can be recommended to the reading world as typical of English genius at its best, for his versification is the most correct and his moral tone the highest. He, with Dryden, contributed to the purity of the language. The Fame Machine carried Pope with Addison, Swift, Congreve, and Colley Cibber to the Temple of Fame.[4] This high evaluation of Pope varies from that of Warton, who made a special study of Pope's works and published an

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[1]"An Account of the Augustan Age in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 444.

[2]See Henry Bohn, "The Life of O. Goldsmith," Works, I, 53-54.

[3]History of England, Works, V, 346.

[4]"A Reverie," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 389.

Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, Part I (1756) and Part II (1782), with the conclusion that Pope was not "at the head of his profession," that he excelled in the type of poetry that he wrote,[1] but that he did not compose the highest type of poetry which is the sublime and pathetic. The three English poets named by Warton who were superior in this species were Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. Reynolds preferred Shakespeare and Milton to Pope. Northcote quotes from a paper which Reynolds wrote in 1759 that "the smooth numbers of Pope are not so grand as the masculine style of Milton and Shakespeare."[2] Addison had stated that "the first place among our English poets is due to Milton."[3] Goldsmith, by implication, gives that position to Pope.

Goldsmith's knowledge of literature may not have been profound, but his works reveal an interest in Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English authors from Homer to Chatterton and Johnson. He had read more modern literature than ancient. He does not appear to know the early history of English literature so well as Johnson[4] or Thomas Warton.[5] Still, Goldsmith passed his opinion upon many of his

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[1]J. Warton, op. cit., I, i-ii.

[2]Northcote, op. cit., I, 93.

[3]Spectator, No. 262 (December 31, 1712), IV, 55.

[4]See Walter B. C. Watkins, Johnson and English Poetry before 1660, Princeton, 1936.

[5]Thomas Warton, The History of English Poetry, ed. Richard Price, 3 vols., London, 1840.

contemporaries and included in his anthologies poems from Young, Gray, Ogilvie, Collins, Shenstone, Dodd, Smollett, and Johnson.[1] Much of the material about the authors is biographical; for Goldsmith, like Johnson,[2] enjoyed the biographical part of literature. Both the Memoirs of M. de Voltaire[3] and Life of Parnell[4] are, in the main, biography with little attention paid to an analysis of the literary works of the men.

Goldsmith shows great interest in the author as a person; in fact, he dwells rather ominously upon the misfortune of authors. He appears to have had little interest in the author's equipment as an artist. He writes little about invention as the chief element of genius or about the imagination which he distrusts. He maintains the neo-classical belief in the primacy of the judgment while he believes that in cases of the conflict between the imagination and judgment the decision should be made by taste. In his defence of wit and humour, he fails to relate the qualities to genius. Neither does he stress the importance of learning.

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[1]Duff, writing in 1767, included some of the same persons among his list of geniuses of the age. "The names of Young, Gray, Ogilvie, Collins, Akenside, and Mason, as they do honour to the present age, will probably be transmitted with reputation to posterity." Duff, op. cit., p. 288. Goldsmith omits Akenside and Mason, but includes Smollett and Johnson.

[2]Johnson, "Bayle's Dictionary is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most." Boswell, Life of Johnson, Oxford Edition, I, 284.

[3]Works, IV, 3-46.

[4]Ibid., pp. 157-178.

Formerly imitation had been the approved pattern for the artist to follow. Goldsmith stands with Young and Johnson who believe that the proper method of work should be that of originality rather than imitation. He argues that the author must dare to be original and deviate from the expected channels of expression. Goldsmith's great concern with original expression and the artist as a person demonstrates a subjective tendency which reaches fruition in the works of the romantic critics.

III. GOLDSMITH'S CONCEPT OF THE LITERARY WORK

I

Most of the critics of the eighteenth century conceived of the literary work in terms of Aristotle's definition of the arts. It was an imitation of human nature in action which could be copied by the artist in the medium which he used. His only restriction was that the action should appear necessary and probable. Goldsmith, too, accepted this common definition of art. In the Enquiry he writes, "The poetic arts, in all their variety, are only an imitation of nature."[1] The author of the Belles Lettres essays makes a similar assertion, "It is the business of art to imitate nature."[2] About the concept of art as an imitation of nature, there was no disagreement.

Disagreement did come when the critics stated their concept of nature, for the term nature had acquired many meanings, and the word became ambiguous.[3] In Goldsmith's Works it is possible to find nature as a romanticist would use the word to indicate the external world of trees, flowers,

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[1] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 534.

[2] "On the Cultivation of Taste," Works, I, 338.

[3] For the many ideas expressed by nature, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," MLN, XLII (1927), 444-450. He calls attention to the way Goldsmith used nature in the "Cultivation of Taste," as essay no longer attributed to him. Ibid., p. 445.

and shrubs.[1] Nature may convey the notion of the creator, natura naturans;[2] or the creation, natura naturata;[3] or literal realism, fidelity of the representation to the object imitated;[4] or "intuitively known principles," "man's conscience;"[5] or human nature, human behavior, which is, perhaps, the most common use of nature in neo-classical

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[1]"How beautiful . . . is Nature! how lovely even in her wildest scenes! How finely contrasted is the level plain that lies beneath me, with yon awful pile that hides its tremendous head in clouds!" "Asem," Works, I, 264.

[2]"Modest nature has concealed her secret operations from rash presumption; it may suffice man to be certain that she always acts with uniformity and success." "Preface and Introduction to Brookes's Natural History," Works, V, 93. "Goldsmith's 'Nature' is simply God as he is manifested in the working of natural laws; . . ." Pitman, op. cit., p. 129.

[3]"In those great outlines of nature, to which art cannot reach, and where our greatest efforts must have been ineffectual, God himself has finished these with amazing grandeur and beauty. Our beneficent Father has considered these parts of nature as peculiarly his own; as parts which no creature could have skill or strength to amend; and therefore, made them incapable of alteration, or of more perfect regularity." Animated Nature, Works, V, 196.

[4]At the end of a poem which Goldsmith included in a letter, "All this is taken you see from Nature." Letter to the Reverend Henry Goldsmith, Collected Letters, p. 65. Cf. with statement of poet who reads his poem before the members of his club, ". . . it is a heroical description of nature." Citizen of the World, Letter XXX (May 2, 1760), Works, III, 113.

[5]"While there a constant revel keep,
Shall Reason only teach to weep?
Hence, intruder! we'll pursue
Nature, a better guide than you."
"The Captivity: An Oratorio," Works, II, 68.

literature.[1] Goldsmith uses the formula for nature in eighteenth century aesthetics in the speech of the coachman to a person denied admission to the Fame Machine: "Follow nature . . . and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity."[2] To follow nature meant to imitate "the universal and immutable in thought, feeling, and taste; what has always been known, what everyone can immediately understand and enjoy."[3]

Some of the critics, following Cicero, Quintilian, and Horace, advocated the imitation of one author by another, especially the ancients. Pope, for example, had stated that

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[1]"It was the fashion of the day to consult books, not nature, . . ." Enquiry, Works, III, 478 n. "We deserted nature, sentiment, and true taste, to lead a weary life of affectation, folly, and intemperance; . . ." "On the Proper Enjoyment of Life," Works, IV, 498. "She stoops among the low to copy Nature." "An Epilogue," Works, II, 115.

[2]"A Reverie," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 392.

[3]Lovejoy, op. cit., No. 17, p. 449. "The neo-classical injunction to 'follow nature' implies, then, that the laws of poetry must approximate as closely as possible to the laws of life." Joel Spingarn, Critical Essays in the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1908), I, lxviii, Cf. "When a poet, then, is advised to 'follow nature' or 'love reason,' what is meant is this: that he should reveal normal and general truth, with the rider that he should abstain from dealing with particulars (as, for instance, historical or abnormal) truths or with the vagaries of the fancy." A. F. B. Clark, Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England, 1660-1830 (Paris, 1925), pp. 380-381. See also Sherburn, op. cit., pp. 827-828; Louis I. Bredvold, "Platonism in Neo-Classical Esthetics," ELH, I (1934), 98-99; and Austin Warren, Alexander Pope as Critic and Humanist (Princeton, 1929), pp. 26-29.

imitating the ancients approximated imitating nature.[1] Goldsmith, though he believed in following nature, preferred a direct study of nature to a study of the ancients. The Greeks, he found, discovered that their "most admired poets had copied nature,"[2] and from them they formulated rules which led to the decadence of their poetry. He pointed out that Dante observed that "to imitate nature was . . . the surest way of imitating antiquity;" therefore, the Italian Renaissance rivalled the Augustan Age.[3] Goldsmith further stated that "those works which were imitated from nature, were more like the writings of antiquity than even those written in express imitation."[4] He reported that Porée, Voltaire's teacher, was of the same opinion. In the instruction of his illustrious student, Porée "showed him that the true method of copying the ancients was to draw after nature, and instructed him from the copious volume

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[1] "Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
. . . . . .
Nature and Homer were, he [Virgil] found, the same.
. . . . . .
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them."
Pope, "An Essay on Criticism," ll. 124-125, 135, 139-140.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 472.

[3] Ibid., p. 480.

[4] "Upon Unfortunate Merit," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 397.

of mankind; . . ."[1] Goldsmith praised Parnell, who appears, he said, "to be the last of that great school that had modelled itself upon the ancients, and taught English poetry to resembed what the generality of mankind have allowed to excel."[2]

All of these statements prove that Goldsmith believed that the author should make a direct observation of nature. This direct imitation of nature will be an original, he wrote, but the imitation of an ancient writer will be a copy. In this, Goldsmith agrees with his contemporaries. Burke, for example, gives his reason for the limitations of English poetry, "they [the poets] have been rather imitators of one another than of nature; . . ."[3] Young also believed that the author should follow nature directly.[4] Johnson shared the same opinion.[5]

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[1]"Memoirs of M. de Voltaire," Works, IV, 5.

[2]"Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 172.

[3]Burke, A Philosophical Inquiry, op. cit., I, 111. Contrast this opinion with that of Sir Joshua Reynolds: ". . .we must have recourse to the Ancients as instructors. It is from a careful study of their works that you will be enabled to attain to the real simplicity of Nature; they will suggest many observations which would probably escape you, if your studies were confined to Nature alone." "Third Discourse," p. 60.

[4]Young, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

[5]Johnson, Rambler, No. 29 (June 26, 1750), II, 142-143.

Since the rules were considered rational expressions of nature, or "nature methodized,"[1] many critics evaluated the merits of a work by its adherence to the rules of the genre, and all young artists were taught to study and follow them. Though Goldsmith once admitted that the rules were established by practice, "because nature and the rules were the same,"[2] his attitude was generally that the rules could not produce the highest poetic effects. "Of all misfortunes in the commonwealth of letters," he wrote, "this of judging from rule, but not from feeling, is the most severe."[3] "Rules can never teach," he emphasized, "a good sense and a fine ear."[4] Neither can rules instruct the emotions, "but they may be extinguished by rules."[5] In a discussion of eloquence he stated, "Eloquence has preceded the rules of rhetoric, as languages have been formed before grammar."[6] "Rules will never make either a work or a discourse eloquent;

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[1] "Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are nature still, but nature methodized; . . ."
Pope, "An Essay on Criticism, ll. 88-89.

[2] "Review of the Works of the Reverend William Hawkins," Critical Review (August, 1759), Works, IV, 396-397.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 510.

[4] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 154.

[5] "Review of Ward's System of Oratory," Critical Review (April, 1759), Works, IV, 349.

[6] "Of Eloquence," Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 420.

they will only serve to prevent faults, but not to introduce beauties; . . ."[1] He blamed the Virtuosi and Filosofi for the decadence of taste in Italy, for the Virtuosi "judge of medals by the smell, and pictures by feeling" while the Filosofi boast of their knowledge "from books and study."[2] If, he conceded, criticism can be of service to learning, "its rules should be taken from the inhabitants, and adapted to the genius and temper of the country it attempts to refine."[3]

This idea of deducing rules from the national characteristics of the readers is an important principle in Goldsmith's critical theory. Goldsmith, who considered himself a citizen of the world, noticed the distinctive national traits of the people whom he met on the continent. These impressions are recorded in the Traveller[4] in which he writes thumb-nail sketches of the countries he visits. No longer believing that human nature is entirely uniform and universal, Goldsmith became an aesthetic relativist. This position will be developed in the chapter on his critical method. Some of the inconsistencies in his theory may be explained on the basis of

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[1] Ibid., p. 421.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 482. Cf. "Men bred up among books see nature only by reflection." Ibid., p. 474.

[3] "Appendix to the Enquiry, Works, III, 533.

[4] "The Traveller," Works, II, 7-19.

his belief in aesthetic relativism at the same time that he holds the genres to be distinct.

Goldsmith's relativism was not held by other critics so generally as his opinion that the rules could be disregarded by the man of genius. Addison had noticed that some authors chose "to depart" from the rules,[1] and even Pope had acknowledged "a grace beyond the reach of art."[2] Young, too, felt that the "rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, tho' an impediment to the strong."[3] Joseph Warton wondered whether "Arts of Poetry" deduced from "that philosophical, that geometrical, and systematical, spirit so much in vogue, which has spread itself from the sciences even into polite literature, by consulting only REASON, has not diminished and destroyed SENTIMENT, . . ." and whether the rules were not responsible for works "stiff and forced, and affected in their thoughts and diction."[4]

Goldsmith, Young, and Warton are to be counted with Johnson who speaks against the pedantry that "impose[s] rules

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[1] Spectator, No. 160 (September 3, 1711), II, 377.

[2] Pope, "Essay on Criticism," l. 153. See Samuel Holt Monk, "A Grace beyond the Reach of Art," JHI, V (1944), 131-150.

[3] Young, op. cit., p. 28.

[4] Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 198-199. Yet he states, "A petulant rejection, and an implicit veneration, of the rules of the ancient critics, are equally destructive to true taste." Ibid., p. 120.

which can seldom be observed;"[1] who affirms that "rules may obviate faults, but can never confer beauties;"[2] and who insists "that many rules have been advanced without consulting nature or reason, . . ."[3] Perhaps Reynolds is the only critic of prominence to recommend "an implicit obedience to the Rules of Art, as established by the practice of the great Masters."[4] But it should be noticed that he is addressing beginning students of art, and he recommends a quite different method for the mature artist. Two other teachers, Blair at the University of Edinburgh and Beattie at the University of Aberdeen, cautiously distinguish between the rules which are essential and those that are ornamental. By the third quarter of the century, most of the critics had come to the position that the rules may prevent faults but would not create beauties.

II

If a literary work is an imitation of nature which follows the laws of its own making, what is its function? Most of the eighteenth century critics followed the dictum

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[1] Idler, No. 91 (January 12, 1760), IV, 418.

[2] Ibid., No. 57 (May 17, 1759), IV, 318. Dick Minim wished to establish an academy where "nothing would any longer be applauded or endured that was not conformed to the nicest rules, . . ." Ibid., No. 61 (June 15, 1759), IV, 350.

[3] Rambler, No. 156 (September 14, 1751), III, 240.

[4] "First Discourse," op. cit., p. 9.

of Horace's Ars Poetics: "To teach--to please--comprise the poet's views,/ Or else at once to profit and amuse."[1] In the main, Goldsmith concurs in the opinion expressed in the last part of the sentence, that literature "should blend in one the delightful and the useful." This idea is plainly stated in the preface to A Poetical Dictionary:

> The greatest bards, from Homer to Horace, made it a point to mix the utile dulce, instruction with delight, in their composition; and the latter lays it down as an essential property of the poem. Such a view was sufficient to impress the people with a veneration for the promoters of it, and on this account were they cherished and esteemed by the most ingenious of mankind, as well as the most powerful and wisest of states. Very different had been the case, if the mere intention of poetry had been to amuse, because then it had been too weak to seize the patronage of wisdom and virtue; nor could it ever have reached the heart, the only seat of noble and permanent satisfaction.[2]

Other expressions of the belief that poetry should "blend in one the delightful and the useful" are found in the prefaces to the anthologies which Goldsmith edited. Here we have the idea of the "sugarcoated pill", for "knowledge, supported by ornament, will be insensibly conveyed to the young gentleman's heart, who shall reap instruction from amusement."[3] A similar statement is made in the preface to

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[1] Horace, "Art of Poetry," trans. Howes, ed. Albert S. Cook (Chicago, 1892), ll. 333-334. "The poet's aim is either to profit or to please, or to blend in one the delightful and the useful." Trans. Allan H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (Chicago, 1940), p. 139.

[2] "Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 61.

[3] Ibid., p. 64.

A Collection of Poems for Young Ladies: "In this little work, a lady may find the most exquisite pleasure, while she is at the same time learning the duties of life; and, while she courts only entertainment, be deceived into wisdom."[1] Being "deceived into wisdom" by literature points up the high moral purpose of literature which was held by Goldsmith, even though we do not, necessarily, think of him as a great moralist. He states, also, that the Beauties of English Poesy is designed to "unite precept and example, show them what is beautiful, and inform them why it is so: . . ."[2]

Moreover, it must not be thought that the emphasis is placed upon instruction to the disparagement of pleasure. Goldsmith opposed the heavy didacticism which was frequently exhibited in the poetry of the period:

> . . . I mean, a disgusting solemnity of manner into our poetry; and, as the prose writer **has** been ever found to follow the poet, it must consequently banish in both all that agreeable trifling, which if I may so express it, often deceives us into instruction. Dry reasoning and dull morality have no force with the wild fantastic libertine. He must be met with smiles, and courted with the allurements of gaiety. He must be taught to believe that he is in pursuit of pleasure, and be surprised into reformation.[3]

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[1]"Preface to a Collection of Poems for Young Ladies," Works, V, 151.

[2]"Preface to the Beauties of English Poesy," Works, V, 153. For similar statements see Citizen of the World, Letter LVII (July 9, 1760), Works, III, 216; Ibid., Letter LXXV (September 17, 1760), Works, III, 284; "Review of Butler's Remains in Verse and Prose," Critical Review (September, 1759), Works, IV, 378.

[3]Enquiry, Works, III, 514. The last three sentences were deleted from the revised edition.

This insistence upon beguiling the reader into morality by presenting a blend of the delightful and useful is perhaps old-fashioned in the third quarter of the century. In this respect Goldsmith is closer to Dryden than to Beattie. In fact, he differs from Dr. Johnson who usually states "the end of poetry is pleasure,"[1] although in his earlier writings he, too, had said that the author "undertakes either to instruct or please, or to mingle pleasure with instruction."[2] Sir Joshua Reynolds repeatedly affirms that "it is not enough that a work be learned; it must be pleasing."[3] He goes so far as to say "the true test of all the arts is not solely whether the production is a true copy of nature, but whether it answers the end of art, which is to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind."[4] Hume, too, writes that the object of poetry is "to please by means of the passions and imagination."[5] Goldsmith states that the function of the work is to unite the pleasing and the instructive; this

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[1]Johnson, "Life of Milton," op. cit., I, 175. See also "Life of Waller," ibid., I, 392; "Life of Addison," ibid., II, 144.

[2]Idler, No. 97 (February 23, 1760), V, 433.

[3]"Seventh Discourse," op. cit., p. 239.

[4]"Thirteenth Discourse," op. cit., p. 369. Cf. John Dennis, "Now the End of Poetry is to Instruct and Reform. . . ." "Epistle Dedicatory to the Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry," Critical Works of John Dennis, ed. Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore, 1939), I, 199.

[5]David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects (London, 1768), I, 271.

purpose of the work may account for much of his attitude toward specific works which come up for discussion under the genres.

III

Goldsmith was especially interested in the normative audience and the effect which the literary work should produce upon the reader or spectator. He thought that the chief purpose of the work was to give instruction and pleasure to the audience. Other critics, holding the same idea, with a "tincture of philosophy" started with the effect which a work produced upon a reader. From that point they sought the source of the effect. Most of the critics, following Addison,[1] agreed that the pleasures of the imagination proceeded from a contemplation of the "great, uncommon, or beautiful." Three terms, then, the sublime, the beautiful, and novelty appear with great frequency in the criticism of the period.

For the most part, Goldsmith, who is not an aesthetician, is not concerned with the problem of emotional effects.[2] In five footnotes attached to his review of Burke's A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, he states most of his opinions on the sublime in giving his objections to those of Burke.[3]

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[1] Spectator, No. 412 (June 23, 1712), VI, 59-62.

[2] See Samuel H. Monk, The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England, New York, 1935.

[3] "Review of Burke's A Philosophical Inquiry," Monthly Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 239-247.

No doubt Goldsmith had read a translation of On the Sublime by Boileau or the Reverend William Smith.[1] He appears familiar with the current ideas on the subject, for he is impressed with Burke's original approach. Goldsmith comments on the new procedure, "He rejects all former systems, and founds his philosophy on his own particular feelings."[2] Burke, instead of following Longinus who found the sources of sublimity in the artist and the art, stated that the sources of sublimity lie in the subject matter. These sources are obscurity, power, privation, vastness, infinity, difficulty, and magnificence.

Goldsmith's review is really a digest of the book; therefore, it does not interest us so much as the footnotes. In the first place, Goldsmith does not believe that terror is the only source of the sublime.[3] For example, he thinks we may have sublime ideas of God without regarding Him as a Lord of terror. In addition, love and admiration may serve as sources of the sublime. He writes:

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[1]Boileau's Complete Works, including the translation of Longinus' work, were published in England in 1711-1713. The translation by William Smith appeared in 1739. See Clark, op. cit., p. 367 and Note 3, pp. 367-368.

[2]"Review of Burke's A Philosophical Inquiry," op. cit., p. 240.

[3]"Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, . . . whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terrour, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." Burke, Inquiry, p. 97.

> Whatever raises our esteem of an object described, must be a powerful source of sublimity; and esteem is a passion nearly allied to love: our astonishment at the sublime as often proceeds from an increased fear.[1]

The poet writes a beautiful description of the morning after having pictured a storm. Goldsmith insists that the reader feels enjoyment from the contrast and that these feelings are of beauty or sublimity without terror.[2] Dennis, also, states that ideas of God and admiration are sources of the sublime.[3]

A second objection is raised against the statement that obscurity is a source of the sublime.[4] Here Goldsmith reveals his deep-grained neo-classical ideas when he states,

> Distinctness of imagery has ever been held productive of the sublime. The more strongly the poet or orator impresses the picture upon his own mind, the more apt will he be to paint it on the imagination of his reader.[5]

Enargia, clearness of representation, had been advocated by both Quintilian and Cicero. By means of clearness a poet conveys his exact meaning to his reader. Goldsmith hurries, however, to explain that he does not mean minuteness, "which,

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[1]Footnote 1, "Review of A Philosophical Inquiry, op. cit., p. 242.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Dennis, "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry," op. cit., I, 340, 342-344.

[4]Burke, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

[5]Footnote 1, op. cit., p. 243. Burke's "position is clearly at variance with the standards of Augustan art, and it represents an advance toward that element in romantic art that manifests itself in half-lights, suggestions, and mystery." Monk, op. cit., p. 94.

instead of impressing our imagination with a grand whole, divides our idea into several littlenesses."[1] He, then, expects the distinct in the general. He concludes the discussion by stating that it is not from "the confusion or obscurity of the description" that poetry is superior to all descriptive art, but from the power of presenting so many varying facets of the object.

The third objection is based upon Goldsmith's knowledge of physiology. Burke had stated that darkness is terrible and that the tension of the muscles in the eyes may arouse sensations of sublimity.[2] Goldsmith, giving a technical explanation based upon his medical knowledge, counters "that the sublime is often caused by a relaxation of the muscles, as well as by a tension."[3]

Burke had given seven sources of the sublime. In the footnotes Goldsmith does not note any omissions, but in the essay "Of Eloquence" he points out the pathetic as a source of the sublime:

> Pathetic eloquence, it is true, has for its only object to affect; but I appeal to men of sensibility, whether their pathetic feelings are not accompanied with some degree of elevation. We may then call eloquence and sublimity the same thing, since it is impossible to be one without feeling the other.[4]

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[1]Footnote 1, op. cit., p. 244.

[2]Burke, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

[3]Footnote 1, op. cit., p. 247.

[4]Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 422.

Longinus had given five sources of the sublime--boldness and grandeur of thought, the pathetic, skillful application of figures, noble and graceful manner of expression, and structure.[1] Goldsmith, therefore, follows him in insisting upon pathos as a source of the sublime. In the Vicar of Wakefield Sophia speaks of "something so pathetic in the description" of the lovers described by Mr. Gay, that she has read the book "a hundred times with new rapture."[2] Moses prefers the pathos in the Acis and Galatea of Ovid; "the Roman poet understands the use of contrast better; and upon that figure, artfully managed, all strength in the pathetic depends."[3] Chapter IV of this study contains other examples of the pathetic as Goldsmith conceives the emotion.

Goldsmith held that there is no such thing as a sublime style. "Eloquence is not in the words, but in the subject; and in great concerns the more simply anything is expressed, it is generally the more sublime."[4] Sublimity, Goldsmith

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[1]Longinus, On the Sublime, trans. William Smith (3d ed., London, 1752), pp. 23-25. A modern translator has given these sources as lofty enterprise in the thought, strong and inspired passion, figures of thought and figures of expression, and composition. Longinus, On the Sublime, intro. Elder Olson (Chicago, 1945), pp. 14-15.

[2]Works, I, 98. The story appears in "a letter to Mr. Fortesque, written August 9, 1718." Notes, Vicar of Wakefield, ed. Oswald Doughty (London, 1928), p. 237.

[3]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 98.

[4]"Of Eloquence," Bee, No. VIII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 422-423.

believes, "lies only in the things; and when they are not so, the language may be turgid, affected, metaphorical,--but not affecting."[1] The writer of the Belles Lettres essays, however, discusses tropes and figures as a source of "the pathetic, the sublime, and the beautiful."[2] In this instance Goldsmith does not follow Longinus, who devotes over half of his work to a discussion--fully illustrated from Homer, Herodotus, Plato, and Xenophon--of tropes and figures, but Boileau.[3]

Goldsmith also raised some objections to Burke's concept of beauty. Burke had stated that all our passions have their origin in self preservation and in society. Goldsmith dissents from Burke's theory that the society of man with man has beauty as its object.[4] "Self interest" may be the object:

> . . . it is not from beauty in the man, we cement friendships; it is not from beauty in animals, that we value and maintain them; nor from the beauty of

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[1] Ibid., p. 423. Cf. "In general in all good writing, the sublime lies in the thought, not in the words; and when the thought is truly noble, it will for the most part, clothe itself in a native dignity of language." Blair, op. cit., p. 48. "That style is sublime, which makes us conceive a great object, or a great effort, in a lively manner; and this may be done, when the words are very plain and simple." Beattie, "Illustrations on Sublimity," Dissertations, II, 391. "Periphrasis . . . is an enemy to the sublime, of which a concise expression is always the best vehicle," Gibbon, "Examination of Longinus' Treatise upon the Sublime," op. cit., II, 82.

[2] "On Poetry," Works, I, 355; "On Metaphors," Works, I, 363.

[3] "So Boileau's whole effort comes to be concentrated on showing that, most often sublimity consists in a great thought expressed in the simplest language; . . ." Clark, op. cit., p. 374.

[4] Burke, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

> vegetables that we improve them by culture: were this the case, there would be no society betwixt the deformed of mankind: we should entertain an abhorrence of every ill-looking, though useful and inoffensive animal; receive the painted snake to our bosom, and the spotted panther into our dwelling.[1]

"We prefer use to beauty," Goldsmith states. And it is reason, not sensation, which largely determines what is beautiful. As examples he speaks of the beauty of horses or the beauty of dogs, a concept of which many people are ignorant until they receive "a knowledge of their fitness." Beauty, then, arises from a "rational inference drawn with an eye to self-interest."[2]

Burke had stated that beauty does not depend upon fitness.[3] His position is upheld by Kames who distinguishes between "intrinsic" beauty and "relative" beauty. Kames does admit that it is possible for "the beauty of the effect, by an easy transition of ideas . . . [to be] transferred to the cause," and for an object "void of intrinsic beauty" to appear beautiful. For examples he gives a convenient dwelling house, a tree that bears good fruit, and a Gothic tower which is a defense against the enemy.[4]

Goldsmith, on the other hand, stands with Hogarth in requiring utility for objects of beauty. Hogarth had given fitness, variety, uniformity, simplicity, intricacy, and quantity

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[1]Footnote 2, op. cit., Works, IV, 242.

[2]Ibid., pp. 242-243.

[3]Burke, op. cit., pp. 154-156.

[4]Kames, op. cit., I, 198-199.

as principles which make for beauty.[1] Fitness, the first principle, "is of the greatest consequence to the beauty of the whole."[2] He listed as examples the size and proportions of chairs, tables, windows, doors, and the parts of the human body.[3] Goldsmith, also maintains that utility is a principle of beauty.

One point that should be emphasized is that Goldsmith views beauty subjectively. To him beauty is an emotional effect, a state of mind, rather than a quality residing in the object.[4] Once he does mention "the beauty of the object" without stating any of the qualities of the object. In one interesting paragraph Goldsmith discusses pleasure as arising from the sensation of beauty:

> All the objects affect us with pleasure one of these two ways, either by immediately gratifying the senses with pleasing sensations, or by being thought in a secondary manner capable of making other objects contribute

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[1]William Hogarth, "Analysis of Beauty," Works, ed. Thomas Clerk (London, 1812), II, 12-13.

[2]Ibid., p. 13.

[3]Goldsmith and Hogarth were friends. Hogarth painted Goldsmith's picture and a picture of Goldsmith's hostess at Islington. Between 1758-1760 Goldsmith lived at Green Arbour Court where T. Legg had a printing shop at the Parrot and Crown. In 1762, this printer had published "Low-Life: or One half of the World, knows not how the Other Half Lives . . ." With an Address to the ingenious Mr. Hogarth. See Forster, op. cit., pp. 264-267; Austin Dobson, William Hogarth (New York, 1907), pp. 90, 208, 284.

[4]This idea is held by Hume who writes, "Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. Hume, op. cit., I, 259. Cf. "These different beauties [intrinsic and relative] are equally perceived as belonging to the object." Kames, op. cit., I, 198.

> to this effect. The pleasures of immediate sensation are coeval with our senses, and, perhaps, most vivid in infancy; the secondary source of pleasure results from experience only, from considering the analogy of nature, or the capacity a part has to unite to a whole. The pleasures of the first sort, are derived from the beauty of the object; those of the second, from a consideration of its use. The first are natural; no art can increase them without mending the organ which was to give them admission. The second are artificial, and continually altering as whim, climate, or season direct.[1]

The belief in receiving pleasure from the sensations allies Goldsmith with Locke and Hartley rather than with Shaftesbury or Hutcheson who calls beauty an internal sense.[2] The second method of receiving pleasure results from a contemplation of the use of the object; it is learned and may be altered according to numerous circumstances. The emotional effect which we call <u>beauty</u> is a complex one depending upon natural and acquired characteristics.

Unfortunately, Goldsmith did not state his concept of beauty in literature. He makes one reference to the beautiful in writing: "Examine a writer of genius on the most beautiful parts of his work, and he will always assure you that such passages are generally those which have given him the least trouble, for they came as if by inspiration."[3] He did not

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[1]"Appendix to the <u>Enquiry</u>," <u>Works</u>, III, 533-534.

[2]". . . the Word <u>Beauty</u> is taken from <u>the Idea rais'd in us</u>, and a Sense of Beauty for our Power of receiving this Idea. . . I should rather choose to call our Power of perceiving these Ideas, an Internal Sense, . . ." Hutcheson, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 7-8.

[3]"Of Eloquence," <u>Bee</u>, No. VII (November 17, 1759), <u>Works</u>, II, 421-422.

give an example of the beautiful in literature as he had illustrated the pathetic and the sublime.[1] The failure to apply the principle of beauty and use to a poem or a play is to be regretted. One can readily see how it might be applied to architecture or industrial arts, for modern aestheticians have stated the theory that an object is beautiful if the form expresses the function. In literature the application appears more difficult.

Goldsmith's attitude toward novelty is mixed. Johnson wrote, "Novelty is said to be one of the causes of beauty: . . ."[2] and "the great source of pleasure."[3] Goldsmith assumes two attitudes toward novelty. If one uses "novelty" to mean the "new" and "popular," Goldsmith is against it; if, on the other hand, the word "novelty"[4] approaches the meaning of "original," it meets with his acceptance. In his article "On Education," for example, he speaks of the need for

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[1]The example of sublimity is from a sermon by Massillon, Bishop of Clermont. Ibid., p. 423. See Beattie, "Illustrations of Sublimity," Dissertations, II, 359-425; Blair, op. cit., pp. 37-49.

[2]Idler, No. 82 (November 10, 1759), IV, 394.

[3]Johnson, "Life of Prior," op. cit., II, 206. See also Blair, op. cit., p. 55; and Kames, op. cit., I, 258-271.

[4]Notice the use of novelty: ". . . for the same Novelty of a single Experiment does not please us much: nor ought we to conclude from the greater Pleasure accompanying a new, or unexpected Advantage, that Surprize; or Novelty, is the only Pleasure of Life, or the only Ground of Delight in Truth." Hutcheson, op. cit., p. 33.

treatises upon education "not to tell us anything new, but, to explode the errors which have been introduced by the admirers of novelty."[1] A similar aversion for the "new" is expressed by Voltaire in the article "On Wit" which Goldsmith included in the Bee. Wondering whether to ascribe the decline in taste to the reader or the author, Voltaire comments on the author's "oddities of style." These, he continues, are introduced by the great to please for a day and to be "displaced by others which have the advantage of being more new. . . ." He, then, makes the important pronouncement, "The literary republic, however, will never suffer real injury from such; whatever pleases from its novelty alone, can never please long."[2] Goldsmith inserted in the Bee an article in which the perverseness of mankind is exposed. The author, a cynic, condemns society; "what we know nothing of, we hug and delight. Thus there are such things as perpetual novelties; for we are pleased no longer than we are amazed, . . ."[3] Although the inclusion of these articles does not necessarily mean that the ideas on novelty are those that Goldsmith approved, we are fairly safe to conclude that they are.

His opposition to the "new" is shown by a deletion made in The Vicar of Wakefield. Johnson had quoted a passage from the novel which he liked:

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[1] Bee, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Works, II, 401.

[2] Bee, No. III (October 20, 1759), Works, II, 360.

[3] "On Deceit and Falsehood," from The Humourist, Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 439.

> Boswell. "That was a fine passage." Johnson. "Yes, Sir: there was another fine passage which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over; for, I found that generally what was new was false.'"[1]

The crux of the antipathy to the new is that it is usually false. One chapter in the novel has for its title "The History of a Philosophic Vagabond, Pursuing Novelty, but Losing Content." George Primrose recounts his adventures as a writer, actor, connoisseur of painting, usher in a school, gentleman's companion. In each instance the occupation was one for which he had no training or preparation; as a consequence, he failed because he was unable to make the proper adjustment.

In one case only do we find Goldsmith approving of novelty. In the chapter "Of the Marks of Literary Decay in France and England," in An Enquiry, Goldsmith lists lack of originality as one of the marks. He blames, in part, the connoisseurs who do not understand material that does not follow the beaten path; "Thus novelty, one of the greatest beauties in poetry must be avoided, or the connoisseur be displeased,"[2] He does, however, conclude the chapter on literature in the reign of King George I with the statement, "All desire of novelty, in thinking, is suppressed among us; and our scholars, more pleased with security and ease than honour, coolly follow the reasonings of their predecessors, and walk round the circle of former discovery."[3] When

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[1]Boswell, op. cit., Oxford Edition, II, 283.

[2]Enquiry, Works, III, 512.

[3]A History of England, Works, V, 347.

novelty can be equated to a "happy singularity" or originality, Goldsmith approved of it.

Goldsmith conceived of the nature of the work in the manner of most of his contemporaries; the work was an imitation of nature. His one requirement was that the work should imitate nature directly, not follow the models of ancient writers. At the same time he objected to following the rules of the ancients. The rules may obviate some faults, but they can not produce the highest poetic effects.

The function of the work was to produce a blend of pleasure and instruction. In insisting upon the moral function of art, Goldsmith appears more didactic than many of his contemporaries who stated that the aim of the work was to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind.

Goldsmith recognized the effects which literature produces upon the reader, and thus he allied himself with Burke and other psychological critics. Although he raised a few objections to Burke's theory of the sublime, he agreed, in the main, with Burke's method. In his attitude toward copying nature directly, disregarding the rules of the ancients, and judging a work on the basis of its effects upon the reader, Goldsmith showed that he is not a traditionalist.

IV. GOLDSMITH'S CONCEPT OF THE LITERARY WORK (CONTINUED)

The neo-classical critics believed in the doctrine of genres; that is, they held that there were fixed patterns or moulds into which material must conform in order to produce a desired effect. Such literary forms as tragedy, comedy, epic, ode, and elegy have been established by the ancients;[1] consequently, if an author desired to write an epic, he must follow the principles established for the type. The tragi-comedies of Shakespeare were usually condemned, for they did not follow an established genre.

Goldsmith, too, maintained the neo-classical belief in the genres. He writes, "There is no species of poetry that has not its particular character; and this diversity, which the ancients have so religiously observed, is founded in nature itself."[2] He continues that the more exact the imitation is, the more distinctly will the genres be separated. Although Goldsmith is commenting specifically on poetry, he would make the same statement for drama. In this chapter we shall observe Goldsmith's criticism of poetry, the novel, and drama.

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[1] Dennis, "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry," op. cit., I, 338. Dennis lists the literary types which excite the "great" passions and the "less" passions.

[2] "Review of Langhorne's Translation of Death of Adonis," Critical Review (March, 1759), Works, IV, 339.

I. Poetry

Goldsmith believes poetry to have been the first art from which the other arts developed.[1] Poetry was a "principal amusement among unpolished nations,"[2] and it "preceded all culture."[3] It has been found "amidst the snows of Greenland" and the "wildest paths" of America.[4]

The origin of poetry "was great and magnificent."[5] Man's "acknowledgment of the immensity and omnipotence of that supreme being to whom he owed his nature and perfections" expressed itself in "numbers of harmony."[6] Poetry, then, had its origin in religion.[7]

> Thus like Jove-born Minerva, Poetry, even at her birth, appeared mature, and, as it were, invested with sovereign power. Her throne was founded upon religion; she thence gave strength to philosophy, form to policy, and regulation to manners. The arts were nurtured and invigorated under her hands; she even softened the rigours of the tumult of war, and her company was courted by Alexander, Scipio, Julius, and Augustus, in many of their expeditions.[8]

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[1] "Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 60.

[2] Dedication to "The Traveller," Works, II, 4.

[3] "Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 60.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., . . .

[6] Ibid., p. 61.

[7] "In that department, namely, the praise of our Maker, by which poetry began, and from which it deviated by time, we are most faultily deficient." "Preface to A Collection of Poems for Young Ladies," Works, V, 151.

[8] "Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 61.

This connection between poetry and religion is reminiscent of the view of Sidney, who names religious poetry as the chief type of poetry; he lists the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the book of Job as examples of religious poetry.[1] He does not state that poetry had its origin in religious worship. Rather, he quotes Aristotle; poetry is "an arte of imitation."[2] So does the author of the Belles Lettres essays. In the essay, "On the Cultivation of Taste," he devotes a long paragraph to Aristotle's theory of imitation,[3] but in "The Origin of Poetry" he writes that poetry had its origin in religion.[4]

That poetry had its origin in religious ceremony was a rather common idea in the eighteenth century. The view was expressed by Addison[5] and Lowth[6] and intimated by

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[1]Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry," Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford, 1904), I, 158.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Works, I, 340.

[4]Works, I, 341-344.

[5]Spectator, No. 405 (June 14, 1712), VI, 38. See also No. 453 (August 9, 1712), VI, 205-208.

[6]"Is it not probable that the first effort of rude and unpolished verse would display itself in the praise of the creator, and flow almost involuntarily from the enraptured mind? Thus far, at least, is certain, that poetry has been nurtured in those sacred places where she seems to have been first called into existence; and that her original occupation was in the temple and at the altar. However ages and nations may have differed in their religious sentiments and opinions, in this at least we find them agreed, that the mysteries of their devotions were celebrated in verse." Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, trans. G. Gregory (4th ed., London, 1839), 18-19.

Collins.[1] Dennis believed that the "strongest Enthusiasm that can be employ'd in Poetry" is derived from religious ideas.[2] Many writers on the poetry of the Bible came to the same conclusions.[3]

Goldsmith does not define poetry. The figurative ancestry of poetry, "begotten by Imagination upon Genius,"[4] points a reader to its distinctive characteristics. The author of the Belles Lettres essays gives a more conventional statement of what poetry is.

> It is a species of painting with words, in which the figures are happily conceived, ingeniously arranged, affectingly expressed, and recommended with all the warmth and harmony of colouring: it consists of imagery, description, metaphors, similes, and sentiments, adapted with propriety to the subject, so contrived and executed as to soothe the ear, surprise and delight the fancy, mend and melt the heart, elevate the mind, and please the understanding.[5]

Goldsmith, who preferred plain speech, objected to stating that poetry was characterized by metaphors and similes; in his list of the chief elements of poetry, he included imagery, description, and sentiment, in addition to expression and modulated periods.

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[1]William Collins, "Ode on the Poetical Character," in The Poems of William Collins, ed. Walter C. Bronson (Boston, 1898), ll. 19, 23-24.

[2]Dennis, "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry," op. cit., I, 340.

[3]Hamelius, "Einfluss Spensers, Miltons und der Bibel," op. cit., pp. 88-97.

[4]"Preface to A Poetical Dictionary," Works, V, 60.

[5]"On Poetry," Works, I, 354-355.

Both of these authors feel that poetry is distinguished by its content rather than its form. Goldsmith writes that only the untrained considered poetry to be verse of a definite number of feet with rhyme. He states his conception of poetry: "But glowing sentiment, striking imagery, concise expression, natural description, and modulated periods, are full[y] sufficient to fill up my idea of this art, and make way to every passion."[1] It is this description of poetry that will be developed in the next few pages.

The sentiments, ideas based upon the feelings, are prominent in Goldsmith's literary principles. Passions, or emotions, were a characteristic mark of poetry.[2] Most of the neo-classical critics thought that without passion there could be no poetry, for it was one function of poetry to move the passions. In his emphasis upon passion, Goldsmith may be grouped with Hobbes,[3] Dennis,[4] and Pope[5] who insisted that poetry must excite the passions. Yet Goldsmith associates

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 152.

[2] Dennis, "Advancement and Reformation of Poetry," op. cit., I, 215.

[3] Thomas Hobbes, The Leviathan, ed. Henry Morley (5th ed., London, 1887), p. 41.

[4] Dennis, op. cit., I, 215-216.

[5] Alexander Pope, "The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace: To Augustus," ll. 338-347. See also Letter to Mallet, November 1, 1729, Works, ed. Whitwell Elwin and W. J. Courthope (London, 1886), X, 80.

passion with what most psychologists would call sensations. He thinks their apprehension is immediate. This statement about the passions appears in an essay on eloquence:

> It is much easier to deceive our reason than ourselves: a trifling defect in reasoning may be overseen, and lead a man astray, for it requires reason and time to detect the falsehood; but our passions are not easily imposed upon,--our eyes, our ears, and every sense, are watchful to detect the imposture.[1]

This belief in the importance of the emotions may be seen in a letter which the Chinese Philosopher, Goldsmith's frank, but ostensibly naive, observer of English life in the Citizen of the World, wrote to his son:

> Philosophers, my son, have long declaimed against the passions, as being the source of all our miseries: they are the source of all our misfortunes, I own; but they are the source of our pleasure too: and every endeavour of our lives, and all the institutions of philosophy, should tend to this, not to dissemble an absence of passion, but to repel those which lead to vice, by those which direct to virtue.[2]

Having recognized the importance of the emotions, Goldsmith thinks that the author may both discipline and train them.

Goldsmith is very critical of writers who "paint to the imagination" when they should touch the heart. He writes that every village in Europe has its "rhymer who makes smooth verses and paints to our imagination when he should only speak to our hearts."[3] Again, he accuses the poet who is

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[1]"Of Eloquence," Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 422.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter XLVII (June 12, 1760), Works, III, 179.

[3]"On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur," Bee, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Works, II, 416-417.

"content if he can paint to the imagination without any desires or endeavors to affect: . . ."[1] And in the Citizen of the World he points out one defect of modern poets to be "that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart."[2]

This emphasis upon affecting the heart, or stirring the emotions, runs throughout Goldsmith's works. At the same time the statements show a distrust of the imagination. The need for touching the heart accounts for his interest in the pathetic which he sought in drama. Too, it is responsible for the unique quality of his poems and his novel; and it has led many critics to call him a sentimentalist.[3] Without doubt, his sympathy for the Methodists resulted from their type of preaching which appealed to the emotions. In two articles on the popular preaching of the day, he is critical of the sermons that address the reason. "Reason," he writes, "is but a weak antagonist when headlong passion dictates; in all such cases we should arm one passion against another: . . ."[4] The minister moves his congregation "not by studied periods, or

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[1]"An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 451.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter, XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 159.

[3]Refuted by W. F. Gallaway, "The Sentimentalism of Goldsmith," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 1167-1181.

[4]"On the English Clergy, and Popular Preachers," Works, I, 271.

cold disquisitions; not by the labours of the head, but the honest spontaneous dictates of the heart."[1]

Bion's "Death of Adonis," Goldsmith says, shows an adaptation of the "sentiments to the subject."[2] Samuel Butler's chief merit "consists in the strength and justness of his sentiments"[3] which were entirely original. Although Goldsmith was critical of the language and meter of Smollett's "The Tears of Scotland," he calls the pathetic in the stanza next to the last "exquisitely fine:"[4]

> The pious mother doom'd to death,
> Forsaken, wanders o'er the heath,
> The bleak wind whistles round her head,
> Her helpless orphans cry for bread,
> Bereft of shelter, food, and friend,
> She views the shades of night descend,
> And stretch'd beneath th' inclement skies,
> Weeps o'er her tender babes, and dies.[5]

The human problems created by the war are presented in this stanza. The despairing mother followed by her crying children has no choice but death. The bare heath and the piercing winds heighten their distress. Darkness and loneliness provide the setting for inevitable death. Love of mother for

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[1]"Of Eloquence and Popular Preaching," Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 425.

[2]"Review of Langhorne's Translation of Death of Adonis," Critical Review (March, 1759), Works, IV, 340.

[3]"Review of Butler's Remains in Verse and Prose," Critical Review (September, 1759), Works, IV, 381.

[4]"Introductory Criticism," Works, V, 160.

[5]Beauties of English Poesy, ed. Oliver Goldsmith (London, 1767), II, 89.

child, of child for parent, of brother for brother touch the heart. These themes are noted by Goldsmith repeatedly; they provide the "glowing sentiment" which should characterize all good poetry. He named Pope's "Eloise to Abelard" as an example of poetry in which "the passions vary with great judgment."[1] Joseph Warton had a similar view of the poem; he thought Pope's reputation would rest on this poem, "Windsor Forest," and the "Rape of the Lock" for "Nature and Passion" are eternal. He continues that the emotional appeal of "Eloisa and Abelard" would insure Pope immortality.[2] For Goldsmith, also, sentiments are not only expected but required of good poetry.

In a comment on the expression of the emotions, Goldsmith states that a heightened style is used, "when the emotion is strong, the words rise almost involuntarily, to give our feelings all the force of expression."[3] Goldsmith points out the widespread use of figurative language by most barbarous nations where they "feel with passions unabated by judgment, and tropes and figures are the natural result of their sensations."[4] Similarly, the author of "On Hyperbole" feels that "poetry is animated by the passions; and all the passions exaggerate."[5] As a consequence, hyperbole is to be

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

[2]Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 330.

[3]"Review of Ward's System of Oratory," Critical Review (April, 1759), Works, IV, 348.

[4]Ibid., p. 349.

[5]"On Hyperbole," Works, I, 378.

expected in poetry, but "the language of passion will not admit simile, which is always the result of study and deliberation."[1] In a rather typical attitude Goldsmith, who believes the emotions are good, states that "strong and virorous emotions . . . can be nowhere taught, but they may be extinguished by rule." He continues that oratory in Greece did not thrive after the rules of Aristotle, nor in Rome after the rules of Quintilian.[2] One of the most distinguishing characteristics of good poetry is glowing sentiment.

Another characteristic of poetry is striking imagery. Goldsmith, to be sure, does not emphasize imagery to the extent of modern poets; he would not state that the chief quality of poetry was an image that must be hard and clear. Neither would he name images as the chief characteristic of poetry. Rather, he persists in the view of Longinus[3] and the classical rhetorician Quintilian that clearness of representation, enargia,[4] was the first prerequisite of good poetry. The images should present such particulars of an object that the imitation is both lucid and valid. Clearness is opposed to obscurity; therefore, Goldsmith protests in opposition to Burke's statement that obscurity is one source

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[1] Ibid., p. 374.

[2] "Review of Ward's System of Oratory," op. cit., p. 349.

[3] Longinus, op. cit., p. 73. In poetry the aim of imagery is "surprise," that of oratory is "perspicuity." Ibid.

[4] Not to be confused with energia. See Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), p. 29 n. 4.

of the sublime. "Distinctness of imagery has ever been held productive of the sublime,"[1] he insists. He liked the images in Collins' Oriental Eclogues, for he thought that Asiatic subject matter, a comparatively new topic in English literature, could furnish a great "variety of poetical imagery."[2] Goldsmith stated that Parnell is "ever happy in the selection of his images, and scrupulously careful in the choice of his subjects."[3]

Natural description, one excellence that the man of genius could produce, is a characteristic of good poetry. Goldsmith liked the "bold yet distinct strokes" of Virgil's description which he considered superior to the "minute" ones of Ovid or the "equally bold yet confused ones" of Lucan.[4] His objection to Ovid's description was that it was minute, "which instead of impressing our imagination with a grand whole, divides our idea into several littlenesses."[5] Like all of the neo-classical critics, Goldsmith thought that the general was more affecting than the particular. Johnson impressively states the theory in his study of the Metaphysical poets, "Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not

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[1] "Review of Burke's Philosophical Inquiry," Monthly Review (May 1757), Works, IV, 243 n. 1.

[2] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 158.

[3] "Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 172.

[4] "Review of Burke's Philosophical Inquiry," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 244 n.

[5] Ibid., pp. 243-244, Footnote 1.

descending to minuteness."[1] He has Imlac state that the duty of the poet is not to "number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest;"[2] he is to portray the prominent characteristics which will recall the original.

Goldsmith praises Lucretius for amusing his readers "with the glowing description of a fine imagination" in De Rerum Natura.[3] In this respect Lucretius is much superior to De Polignac in his Anti-Lucretius. One reason why Goldsmith liked Denham's Cooper Hill was that the descriptions excelled any which were found in poetry at the time the poem was written.[4] He approved Thomson's poetry; "there were many natural pictures and descriptions in it, but involved in an unnecessary parade of words."[5] Description, not minute but general, was an important characteristic of good poetry.

Expression, both literal and figurative, occupies a large part of Goldsmith's critical views. He is very much interested in language and diction, the material with which the artist works. He notes the English poets who have contributed to the flexibility of the language. It is to Dryden that Goldsmith thinks the language owes its greatest debt,

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[1]Johnson, "Life of Cowley," op. cit., I, 21.

[2]Johnson, Rasselas, Works, I, 222.

[3]"Review of De Polignac's Anti-Lucretius," Monthly Review (July, 1757), Works, IV, 267.

[4]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

[5]Prior, op. cit., II, 160.

for "he first gave it regular harmony and discovered its latent power."[1] Goldsmith credits Dryden, Addison, and Pope with improving and harmonizing the native tongue;[2] and in a later work he names Dryden, Butler, and Otway as men who "gave strength and propriety to the language."[3] Goldsmith calls Parnell's diction equally pleasing as his subjects, for the poet looked upon "the language of poetry as the language of life, and conveys the warmest thoughts in the simplest expression."[4]

Goldsmith disliked conceits, epithets, tropes, and figures. Clark associates this crusade against conceits as a concomitant to the demand to "follow nature." Whatever the motive, Goldsmith used simple language in his works and expected it in the writings of others. One of the fullest statements of his condemnation of epithets is found in The

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[1]"An Account of the Augustan Age in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 445.

[2]"Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 173.

[3]History of England, Works, V, 334.

[4]"Life of Parnell," op. cit., p. 173.

[5]'The crusade against "conceits" and the trend towards simplicity of style, are closely connected with the injunction to "follow nature." For "conceits" are "false wit" or "false thoughts," that is to say, thoughts that are abnormal, fanciful, the product of the individual fancy, not of that universal reason which is common to all men; and, just as our thoughts are to be clear and sensible, so a plain unadorned style will be their fitting dress. So the setting-up of the philosophical basis of Nature and Reason for literature and the tendency towards simplicity in thought and style, may, for our purpose, be considered as one movement.' Clark, op. cit., p. 381.

Vicar of Wakefield. Mr. Burchell (although he is not to be identified with Goldsmith, the two share the same opinion) comments on Gray, who loads his lines with epithets, and decries some tendencies in the poetry of the age:

> Men of little genius found them [Gray and Ovid] the most easily imitated in their defects; and English poetry, like that in the empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection; a string of epithets, that improve the sound without carrying on the sense.[1]

Then Goldsmith introduces a poem which is free from these faults; it is his ballad "Edwin and Angelina."[2] This aversion for "bloated and compound epithets"[3] is to be found in many of the works. The Chinese Philosopher writes about reading poetry in which "a parcel of gaudy images pass on before his imagination like the figures in a dream."[4] And in An Enquiry Goldsmith condemns "the pompous epithet, laboured diction, and every deviation from common sense which procures the poet the applause of the month: . . ."[5] In the same work, the author expresses the hope that his readers will no longer

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[1]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 98.

[2]Ibid., pp. 99-102. For the story of this ballad as an imitation of a poem in Percy's Reliques, see Thomas Percy, "The Life of Dr. Oliver Goldsmith," op. cit., I, 74-76.

[3]Citizen of the World, Letter XCVII (November 7, 1760), Works, III, 358. ". . . for poetry now was nothing else but a mosaic of luxurious colours, cemented with a proper quantity of rash and inadequate epithets." "The State of Literature," New Essays, p. 114.

[4]Citizen of the World, Letter XCVII, op. cit., p. 358.

[5]Enquiry, Works, III, 512.

be pleased "with the inflated style" that has been called "fine writing." ". . . instead of writing finely," he pleads, "try to write naturally."[1] In his essay, "Of Eloquence," he writes: "Fine declamation does not consist in flowery periods, delicate allusions, or musical cadence, but in a plain, open, loose style, where the same thought is often exhibited in several points of view: . . ."[2] He wishes, then, that authors would no longer use a heavy, bombastic style but that they would write the way they talk:

> It were to be wished, therefore, that we no longer found pleasure with the inflated style that has for some years been looked upon as fine writing, and which every young writer is now obliged to adopt, if he choose to be read. We should now dispense with loaded epithet, and dressing up trifles with dignity. For to use an obvious instance, it is not those who make the greatest noise with their wares in the street that have most to sell. Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally; nor hunt after lofty expressions to deliver mean ideas, nor be for ever gaping, when we only mean to deliver a whisper.[3]

Commenting on the current vogue of Eastern tales, the Chinese Philosopher was moved to tell his hostess that "strained allusions" are easily written by those who choose to do so:

> Paltry affectation, strained allusion, and disgusting finery, are easily attained by those who choose to wear them: and they are but too frequently the badges of ignorance or of stupidity, whenever it would endeavor to please.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 516.

[2] Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 425-426.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 516.

[4] Citizen of the World, Letter XXXIII (April 25, 1760), Works, III, 128.

Goldsmith quotes from Voltaire that in the "most applauded productions there is scarce a sentence that is not loaded with unnecessary ornament."[1] This method is to be decried, for it "disunites the force of a paragraph." Voltaire also disliked puns which he called "the worst sort of false wit."[2]

Goldsmith's dislike of epithets is to be compared with that of Blair who states that they are used by poets of "inferior genius" as "props of their affected sublimity." He adds, "They give a sort of swell to the language, and raise it above the tone of prose; but they serve not in the least to illustrate the object described; on the contrary, they load the style with a languid verbosity."[3] But the writer of the Belles Lettres essays highly praises epithets and tropes which may be found in "works of genius":

> Besides the metaphors, similes, and allusions of poetry, there is an infinite variety of tropes or turns of expression, occasionally disseminated through works of genius, which serve to animate the whole, and distinguish the glowing effusions of real inspiration from the cold efforts of mere science. These tropes consist of certain happy choice and arrangement of words, by which ideas are artfully disclosed in a great variety of attitudes; of sounds collected in order to echo the sense conveyed; of apostrophes; and, above all, the enchanting use of the prosopopoeia, which is a kind of magic, by which the poet gives life and motion to every inanimate part of nature.[4]

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[1]"On Wit," by Voltaire, Bee, No. III (October 20, 1759), Works, II, 359.

[2]Ibid., p. 358.

[3]Blair, op. cit., p. 459.

[4]"On Poetry," Works, I, 357.

Against this practice of ornamentation by using figures, tropes, epithets, and other means of "fine writing," Goldsmith was strongly opposed. Good poetry was determined by its sentiments and imagery, not by its ornaments.

Goldsmith and the author of the Belles Lettres essays stood with Duff[1] and Beattie[2] in believing that versification does not distinguish poetry from prose. Dr. Johnson, to the contrary, thought that "versification, or the art of modulating his numbers, is indispensably necessary to a poet."[3] However, the Chinese Philosopher saw several poets "in disguise" among the English:

> . . . men furnished with that strength of soul, sublimity of sentiment, and grandeur of expression, which constitute the character. Many of the writers of their modern odes, sonnets, tragedies or rebuses, it is true, deserve not the name, though they have done nothing but clink rhymes and measure syllables for years together: their Johnsons and Smolletts are truly poets; though for ought I know they never made a single verse in their whole lives.[4]

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[1] "Smooth versification and harmonious numbers will no more make genuine Poetry, than the atoms of a skeleton put together can make an animated and living figure." Duff, op. cit., p. 125.

[2] "First, then, I am of opinion, that to poetry verse is not essential. In a prose work, we may have the fable, the arrangement, and a great deal of the pathos, and language of poetry; and such a work is certainly a poem, though perhaps, not a perfect one. For how absurd would it be to say, that by changing the position only of a word or two in each line, one might divest Homer's Iliad of the poetical character!" Beattie, Essays: on Poetry and Music (London, 1779), p. 273.

[3] Rambler, No. 86 (January 12, 1751), II, 404.

[4] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 152-153. Gibbs writes that Goldsmith must have known the poems of Johnson and Smollett. "By making his Chinese, however, acquainted with Johnson and Smollett as eminent writers, and yet ignorant of their poetry, he very cleverly insinuates that the poetical works of these authors was already almost forgotten." Ibid., p. 153 n.

An author may be a poet without writing poetry; the corollary is also true, a work may be a poem without being written in verse and meter.

Even though Goldsmith does not consider versification as the distinguishing characteristic of poetry, he commented on the "harmony of numbers" in the selections which come under his observation. He considered Waller's "On the Death of the Lord Protector" almost a prodigy of harmony for the time in which it was written.[1] Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" owes its distinguished rank to the "severity of the satire, and the excellence of its versification."[2] The versification of Parnell's "The Hermit" is called "chaste and tolerably harmonious."[3] Bolingbroke's poetry exhibits "more wit than taste, more labour than harmony in . . . [the] versification."[4] Goldsmith wrote that had the harmony of Addison's "Letter from Italy" been as good as that found in Pope's verse the poem would have been one of the best in English.[5] Among all the poets he thought Pope's versification the best. He stated that "The Rape of the Lock" exhibits "more harmony of numbers" than any of Pope's poems;[6] the "harmony of numbers" in "Eloisa

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 160.

[2]Ibid., p. 157.

[3]Ibid., p. 155.

[4]"Life of Lord Bolingbroke," Works, IV, 184.

[5]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

[6]Ibid., p. 154.

to Abelard" is "very fine."[1] Although Shenstone's "A Pastoral Ballad" had been "chiefly commended for the natural simplicity of the thoughts, and the harmony of the versification," Goldsmith commented that the poem was not excellent in either.[2] Evidently he objected to Shenstone's frequent use of anapestic feet, but a reader would expect him to enjoy the variety in the pattern.

Goldsmith believed that versification could not be taught by rules, such as those found in Bysshe's The Art of English Poetry,[3] for example. Instead, a writer needed "good sense and a fine ear"[4] in order to vary the accents to suit the sentiments.

> The rapturous flowing of joy, or the interruptions of indignation, require accents placed entirely different, and a structure consonant to the emotions they would express. Changing passions, and numbers changing with those passions, make the whole secret of Western as well as Eastern poetry. In a word, the great faults of the modern professed English poets are, that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart.[5]

The poet must modulate his meter in order to fit the emotions. One criticism leveled at modern poets is that they lack this

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[1] Ibid., p. 156.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

[3] Edward Bysshe, "Rules for Making English Verse," The Art of English Poetry (4th ed., London, 1710), pp. 1-36. Goldsmith had a copy of this book in his library.

[4] Citizen of the world, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 154.

[5] Ibid.

ability. Goldsmith objected to the octosyllabic lines in Parnell's "A Night Piece on Death" which he considered "very improper for the solemnity of the subject;"[1] no doubt he would have preferred the heroic couplet.

Goldsmith's concept of versification may be contrasted with that of the author of the Belles Lettres essays who devotes one essay to the subject.[2] His definition of verse follows:

> Verse is an harmonious arrangement of long and short syllables, adapted to different kinds of poetry, and owes its origin entirely to the measured cadence, or music, which was used when the first songs and hymns were recited.[3]

This conventional definition of verse shows that the two critics expected quite different techniques in versification. The essay is filled with such conventional material as that "rhythmus or number" is essential to verse, and that to say "modern poetry has no feet, is a ridiculous absurdity."[4] He, then, describes the feet found in ancient poetry and states, "Now all the feet of the ancient poetry are still found in the versification of living languages: . . ."[5] It is the number of syllables that distinguishes English verse from Greek and Latin. At this point he explains accent, pause, and

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 158-159.

[2]"On Versification," Works, I, 281-286.

[3]Ibid., p. 381.

[4]Ibid., p. 382.

[5]Ibid., p. 383.

cadence and states that pause and accent in English poetry vary "according to the meaning of the words."[1] He closes with what he calls a "striking" example of the use of cadence, lines from Denham's "Cooper's Hill."[2]

The type of stanza which drew Goldsmith's ire was blank verse. He looked upon the current popularity of blank verse as a "mark of literary decay," a kind of pedantry, and bewailed its use in didactic poetry:

> From a desire in the critic of grafting the spirit of ancient language upon the English, have proceeded of late several disagreeable instances of pedantry. Among the number, I think we may reckon blank verse. Nothing but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing; however, we now see it used upon the most trivial occasions. It has particularly found its way into our didactic poetry, and is likely to bring that species of composition into disrepute for which the English are deservedly famous.[3]

He feels that the "language runs almost naturally into blank verse" and that too many writers, "who have no notion of style, naturally hobble into this unharmonious measure."[4] Also, he views this verse form as a kind of affectation; and "the tuneless flow of blank verse" is to be associated with ". . . the pompous epithet, laboured diction, and every other deviation from common sense, which procures the poet the

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[1] Ibid., p. 385. Cf. Bysshe, op. cit., pp. 3-7.

[2] Sir John Denham, "Cooper's Hill," in A Collection of English Poems, 1660-1800, ed. R. S. Crane (New York, 1943), 11, 189-192.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 513.

[4] Ibid.

applause of the month: he is praised by all, read by a few, and soon forgotten."[1]

Although poetry may be neglected by the powerful, Goldsmith feels that the "mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it" have not been effective. He asks, equally indignant,

> What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse and Pindaris odes, choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.[2]

In the criticism of Gray's Odes, Goldsmith writes that experiments have proved that the "English cannot have Odes in blank verse; . . ."[3]

This aversion to blank verse is shared by Dr. Johnson who liked poetry that was regular, smooth, and rhymed. He did approve of Milton's use of blank verse;[4] he called Thomson's Seasons "one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used";[5] and he stated that Young's Night Thoughts was a poem "in which the blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage."[6] He thought that unless blank verse is "tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled prose; . . ."[7]

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[1] Ibid., p. 512.

[2] Dedication to "The Traveller," Works, II, 4.

[3] Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 297.

[4] "Life of Milton," op. cit., I, 194.

[5] "Life of Thomson," op. cit., III, 299.

[6] "Life of Young," op. cit., III, 395.

[7] "Life of Somerville," op. cit., II, 319-320.

Some of the other critics, on the other hand, approved of blank verse. The author of the Belles Lettres essays, for example, raises no complaints against it. He notes that the English used blank verse not only in tragedy and epic, but in lyric poetry. Milton's translation of Horace's ode to Pyrrha, Collins' "Ode to Evening," in almost free verse, and the poems of the Wartons, all meet his approval.[1] Young did not disapprove of blank verse, but he objected to the name blank and preferred a change of label.[2] Blair states that blank verse has some "great advantages, and is indeed a noble, bold, and disencumbered species of versification."[3] He especially liked the freedom of the lines in which the thought can flow from one line to another. The "constraint and strict regularity of rhyme," he tells his students, "are unfavourable to the sublime, or to the highly pathetic strain."[4] Joseph Warton, too, writes that for lofty subjects blank verse should be the chosen medium:

> It is not my intention to enter into a trite and tedious discussion of the several merits of rhyme and blank verse. Perhaps rhyme may be properest for shorter pieces; for lyric, elegiac, and satiric poems; for pieces where

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[1]"On Versification," Works, I, 383-384.

[2]"Blank is a term of diminution; what we mean by blank verse, is, verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaim'd, reinthron'd in the true language of the gods; who never thunder'd, nor suffer'd their Homer to thunder, in rhime; and therefore, I beg you, my Friend, to crown it with some nobler term; nor let the greatness of the thing lie under the defamation of such a name." Young, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

[3]Blair, op. cit., p. 431.

[4]Ibid., p. 432.

> closeness of expression, and smartness of style, are expected: but for subjects of a higher order, where any enthusiasm or emotion is to be expressed, or for poems of a greater length, blank verse is undoubtedly preferable.[1]

Goldsmith, although the term is not used in his works, prefers the heroic couplet to blank verse or any other stanzaic form. This preference can be established not only by the selections chosen for his anthologies but by his practice. The anthology, Beauties of English Poesy, selected by Goldsmith for Griffin and published in 1767, stands as proof of the type of versification Goldsmith preferred. At the time of publication, the work, which is in two volumes, was considered an anthology of modern English poetry, for no poem included is written by an author living earlier than Milton. Of the 269 pages of the first volume, there is no blank verse; 43 pages contain poems in freer verse patterns--"Il Penseroso," "L'Allegro," Gray's "Elegy" (with its heroic meter, perhaps it should be placed with the heroic couplet), "The School-Mistress," "Alexander's Feast," "Ode for Music," and Part I of "A Pipe of Tobacco." Goldsmith writes that the irregular meter of Milton's poems "hurts an English ear."[2] The rest of the volume is devoted to poems written in couplets. With the exception of Swift's "On Poetry" and Imitations II and VI of "A Pipe of Tobacco," which are in octosyllabic couplets, all of the poems are written in heroic couplets.

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[1]Joseph Warton, op. cit., II, 149-150.

[2]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 155.

Volume II shows more catholicity of taste. Of the 262 pages, 45 are in blank verse. The selections in blank verse are "Palamon and Lavinia" from Thomson's Seasons and Nights I and II from Young's Night Thoughts. Goldsmith implies that "Palemon and Lavinia" is included as a concession to public taste, for it is more "esteemed by the public than by the editor."[1]

Among the poems with freer verse patterns are Parnell's "A Fairy Tale" written in stanzas of six lines rhyming aabccb; Tickell's "Colin and Lucy" in ballad stanzas; Smollett's "The Tears of Scotland" in eight lines rhyming ababcdcd; Byrom's "Phoebe" in eight line couplets with anapestic meter; and Rowe's "A Song" in eight lines rhyming ababcdcd. These poems with freer verse patterns occupy 30 pages.

The rest of the volume is filled with poems written in couplets. Of these poems, many are written in octosyllabic couplets rather than heroic couplets. Parnell's "A Night Piece on Death"; Moore's "Poet and Patron," "The Wolf, Sheep, and Lamb," and "Female Seducers"; Nugent's "Epistle to a Lady"; Prior's "Hans Carvel" and "The Ladle"; and Swift's "Baucis and Philemon" are written in octosyllabic couplets. The rest of the poems are in heroic couplets.

Goldsmith's practice shows his preference in stanzaic pattern. His major poems "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village" are both written in heroic couplets; he uses the same medium for such minor works as "Retaliation," "The Haunch of Venison," the letter in verse to Mrs. Bunbury, the

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 159.

translation of Vida's "Game of Chess," the epilogues for "She Stoops to Conquer" and Mrs. Lennox's The Sister, the prologue to Cradock's Zobeide and the "Description of an Author's Bed-Chamber" included in a letter to his brother Henry.[1]

Goldsmith states that he prefers the practice of the last age when the authors were restrained by rhythm and rhyme:

> From this, then, it appears that poetry is not discontinued, but altered among the English at present; the outward form seems different from what it was, but poetry still continues internally the same: the only question remains, whether the metric feet used by the good writers of the last age, or the prosaic numbers employed by the good writers of this, be preferable. And here the practice of the last age appears to me superior. They submitted to the restraint of numbers and similar sounds; and this restraint, instead of diminishing, augmented the force of their sentiment and style.[2]

Another reason for preferring the heroic couplet was the opportunity it gave for presenting a "variety of modulation;" "the numbers in verse are capable of infinite variation."[3] He accuses modern poets of lacking any knowledge of musical variety, but he says that the poets of the reign of Queen Anne were "masters of this variety."[4]

Blair, who had less regard for the heroic couplet, points out the principal defect of rhyme is "the full close which it

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[1]Letter to the Reverend Henry Goldsmith, January 13, 1759, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 153.

[3]Ibid., p. 154.

[4]Ibid.

forces upon the ear, at the end of every couplet."[1] He states that rhyme is best adapted to poems in which "no particular vehemence is required in the sentiments, nor great sublimity in the style" as in pastorals, elegies, epistles, and satires.[2]

Having stated his preference for the poetry of the age of Pope, Goldsmith reveals his opinion that rhymes should be exact. In the reviews of some of the poems, he shows his "fine ear" for the sound of words. For example, he points out the bad rhymes in Wilkie's Epigoniad. The criticism is quite urbane:

> If bad rhymes are to be deemed, as some think they are, a capital defect, our author will be capitally convicted on many an indictment in the court of criticism. For instance, p. 242, we have the following strange couplet:
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> "Graceful the goddess turn'd, and with a voice,
> Bold, and superior to the vulgar noise,
> O'er all the field commands"--3

The critic objects to rhyming the sibilants [s] and [z]. This criticism is sound, but in Marriott's Horace Modernized Goldsmith betrays the "brogue and blunders" of the Irish. He quotes fifteen lines from the poem and then he observes:

> A piddling reader, it is certain, might object to almost all the rhymes of the above quotation; but the less rhyme the more like blank verse, and all know that Milton wrote without such a restraint; but if any reader is for having the above quotation to be rhyme, he has nothing more to do than to read it poetically. Let key,

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[1]Blair, op. cit., p. 431.

[2]Ibid., p. 432.

[3]"Review of Wilkie's Epigoniad," Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 294.

> for instance, be called kee, and then it rhymes with be; and let fool be called fole, and then it answers control in the next line. By this means the poetry, which our author, no doubt, meant for blank verse, may serve for either.[1]

Goldsmith, evidently, kept the Irish pronunciation [ke] instead of the English [ki], but he objected to rhyming [u] in fool with [o] in control. His "fine ear," however, stands him in good stead in his own poems in which all the rhymes are exact.

Goldsmith, who expected good poetry to be characterized by sentiment, description, imagery, concise expression, well modulated versification (preferably the heroic couplet), and exact rhymes, shows his limitations in the types of poetry he enjoyed. It has been pointed out that he maintained the neoclassical belief in the genres;[2] and he strongly expressed himself against the vogue of writing epics, pastorals, funeral elegies, and Pindaric odes. In a light, satirical paragraph the Chinese Philosopher reveals all of Goldsmith's aversions:

> But, for the future, I fear there are many poems of which I shall find spirits to read but the title. In the first place, all odes upon Winter, or Summer, or Autumn--in short, all odes, epodes, and monodies whatever, shall hereafter be deemed too polite, classical, obscure, and refined, to be read, and entirely

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[1] "Review of Marriott's Horace Modernized," Critical Review (July, 1759), Works, IV, 385.

[2] This strict belief in "species of poetry" is held by John Newbery in his The Art of Poetry on a New Plan (London, 1762), I, 54-55. The two volume work is organized by genres with comments on each followed by examples. Percy attributes the work to Goldsmith (Memoir, p. 63), but later critics have found that Goldsmith "corrected and revised" the work for Newbery. See Gibbs, Works, V, 409-410, 412; Charles Welsh, A Bookseller of the Last Century (London, 1885), p. 231.

> above human comprehension. Pastorals are pretty enough for those that like them, but to me Thyrsis is one of the most insipid fellows I ever conversed with; and as for Corydon, I do not choose his company. Elegies and epistles are very fine--to those to whom they are addressed; and as for epic poems, I am generally able to discover the whole plan in reading the first two pages.[1]

Goldsmith does not like the epic, which had been considered the highest form of poetry by Dryden[2] and Addison.[3] Although he makes numerous references to Homer, most of them are biographical. Goldsmith thinks that all of the ancients are greatly overrated, and that the critics praise them merely to show their own taste.[4] In addition, he states that the epic has not succeeded as a poetic genre because the writers have followed too literally the injunction to imitate Homer.

> From the prevalence of this rule, all our works of this nature seem to be cast in the same mould: the muse is invoked, she tells the tale, the episodes are introduced, armour rings against armour, games are described, and sometimes a shield; while all the conduct of the passions, and all the mixture of well-conducted intrigue are entirely left out of the question.[5]

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XCVII (November 7, 1760), Works, III, 358-359.

[2] ". . . an Heroic Poem is certainly the greatest work of human nature." Dryden, "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," op. cit., II, 43. See also Dedication of the AEneis," op. cit., II, 154.

[3] Addison, Spectator, No. 267 (January 5, 1712), IV, 78.

[4] "Review of Barrett's Ovid's Epistles," Critical Review (January, 1759), Works, IV, 325.

[5] "Review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer," Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 13.

Copying manners and customs long antiquated, the poets, with the exception of Virgil, have failed in their endeavours.

Goldsmith does not mention Virgil's AEneid. He does write that if a person is "too dull to relish the beauties of Virgil," reading the commentary of a critic will not enlighten him.[1] Also he states that Virgil's use of the gods was appropriate for the age in which he lived,[2] an instance of the historical approach which we will consider in a later chapter. In Poems for Young Ladies he included Dryden's translation of the "Death of Dido" in the entertaining section of the book. Goldsmith, though he did not really understand or appreciate the significance of the Divine Comedy, admired Dante. Goldsmith criticizes the poem, which he admits is original and follows nature;[3] for it unites "purgatory and the river Styx, St. Peter and Virgil, heaven and hell together," showing "a strange mixture of good sense and absurdity."[4] He, no doubt, objects to a combination of Christian and mythological ideas and symbols; yet a reader cannot be sure what he considered "good sense" and "absurdity."

Goldsmith considers Milton's Paradise Lost superior to the Iliad and Odyssey and to the AEneid.[5] He also, admits

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 473.

[2] Ibid., p. 530.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 512.

[4] Ibid., p. 480.

[5] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 530. Duff calls Milton "an equal to Homer." Op. cit., p. 234.

that Voltaire's Henriade is inferior to Paradise Lost, yet he believes it will secure immortality for the author:

> It must be confessed the Henriade has its faults: its incidents in general do not sufficiently interest or surprise; it seldom rises to the sublime, though it never falls into flatness. The moral reflections return too frequently, and retard that speed which is one of the greatest beauties of narration . . . it sinks infinitely below Milton, yet it will be sufficient to gain the author immortality.[1]

Both Joseph Warton and Goldsmith feel that the poem contains too many didactic passages.[2] Goldsmith thinks the epic needs more incidents to arouse and maintain the attention of the reader.

Goldsmith reviewed William Wilkie's Epigoniad for the Monthly Review.[3] This poem, which purports to be an epic, gave Goldsmith an opportunity to make an analysis, in the method of René le Bossu, followed by Addison in the papers on Paradise Lost, but he does not choose to do so. Instead, he states that the poem is "barren of incident," that the subject afforded "but small satisfaction," and that there was "little to praise with respect to his execution." He does concede that there are "some good lines" in the poem, but he uses two pages to point out the bad lines. He picks out the inexact rhymes and closes with an apology for having "been rather severe upon this author."[4] Holding a rather low

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[1]"Memoirs of M. de Voltaire," Works, IV, 35.

[2]Joseph Warton, op. cit., II, 167.

[3]"Review of Wilkie's Epigoniad," Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 287-296.

[4]Some of the lines were altered in the second edition. See note by Gibbs, Works, IV, 293.

estimate of the epic, Goldsmith does not see the possibility of writing a modern epic unless the poets approach the genre with the intention of changing it as other authors have improved tragedy. Modern authors found the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca "deficient in intrigue; and have consequently given a greater variety of passion and character by improving the sterile plots they have left us."[1] In like manner they might change the concept of the epic. Goldsmith was convinced that the author of an epic could "describe human nature in the highest degree of exaltation and . . . [could] seize our passions in the strongest manner, without the assistance of either machinery or battle."[2] His appeal is for a new concept of the epic, a plea for originality in the long poems that are being written.[3]

Goldsmith not only disliked the epic, but he had an aversion for most of the elegies that were being written. His review of the "Death of Adonis" by Bion shows that Goldsmith liked the classical elegy. The review, which is more nearly a discussion of the classical elegy than a critique of the translation, includes the statement that the "elegy has been least cultivated since the revival of letters" and that the ancients remain without a competitor in this type

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[1]"Review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer," Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 19.

[2]Ibid.

[3]See R. S. Crane, "A Neglected Mid-Eighteenth-Century Plea for Originality and Its Author," PQ, XIII (1934), 21-29.

of poetry.[1] He names the types of elegies, and he calls the form a beautiful species of poetry. "He who would write a perfect elegy" should study "Death of Adonis" with the "closest application." Goldsmith continues:

> He will here perceive beauty in distress borrowing the language of nature and passion, and adapting sentiments to the subject: the thoughts rising, as of their own accord, without being sought after; the verse flowing with various harmony; the whole combined by a concealed connection, yet seemingly without order: in short our idea increasing, by just degrees, to the end of the piece; like those landscapes that rise upon the eye till they seem to touch the skies.[2]

According to modern Greek scholars, this poem is greatly overpraised by Goldsmith.[3] Here is another instance of the pathetic causing his heart to over-rule his head.

Three elegies which Goldsmith admired are placed in Beauties of English Poesy. He calls Tickell's "To the Earl of Warwick on the Death of Mr. Addison" one of the finest elegies in the language and that, after the elegies of Ovid, "one is surprised to see so much novelty in this to strike us, and so much interest to affect."[4] A more controversial elegy is Parnell's "Night Piece on Death." This poem, he writes,

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[1]"Review of Langhorne's Translation of Bion's Death of Adonis," Critical Review (March, 1759), Works, IV, 338.

[2]Ibid., p. 340.

[3]See Wilmer Cave Wright, A Short History of Greek Literature (New York, 1907), p. 438; Alfred Croiset and Maurice Croiset, An Abridged History of Greek Literature (New York, 1904), p. 454.

[4]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 160.

". . . deserves every praise, and I should suppose, with very little amendment, might be made to surpass all those night pieces and churchyard scenes that have since appeared."[1] This pronouncement drew Dr. Johnson's retort, that, by implication, Goldsmith preferred "A Night Piece on Death" to Gray's "Elegy," "but, in my opinion," Johnson states, "Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment."[2] Generations of readers have concurred with Johnson, who, perhaps, did not adequately consider Goldsmith's qualification "with very little amendment" and the further criticism that the form was not appropriate for the content.[3]

Goldsmith also included Gray's "Elegy" in his anthology. He stated that the poem was a good one and that the form suited the content. His only objection to it is that it contained too many epithets:

> This is a very fine poem, but overloaded with epithet. The heroic measure, with alternate rhyme, is very properly adapted to the solemnity of the subject, as

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[1] "Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 176.

[2] Johnson, "Life of Parnell," op. cit., II, 53.

[3] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 158-159.

it is the slowest movement that our language admits of. The latter part is pathetic and interesting.[1]

This short critique shows three of Goldsmith's chief interests in any poem--the expression, the versification, and the emotional power of the poem. Goldsmith adjudges the "Elegy" to be "a very fine poem."[2]

His aversion is for the elegy written by his lesser contemporaries. In form some of them imitated Gray's masterpiece, but many of them were pastoral elegies. In the Citizen of the World he writes a letter on funeral elegies.[3] Goldsmith gives the typical setting for the pastoral elegy which uses the conventional Greek names and fiction of the shepherds.

> The bard is now some pensive youth of science, who sits deploring among the tombs; again, he is Thyrsis, complaining in a circle of harmless sheep. Now Britannia sits upon her own shore, and gives a loose to maternal

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[1] Ibid., p. 155. Cradock relates a delightful incident about Gray's "Elegy": 'Dr. Goldsmith and I never quarrelled; for he was convinced that I had a real regard for him; but a kind of civil sparring continually took place between us. "You are so attached," said he, "to Hurd, Gray, and Mason that you think nothing good can proceed but out of that formal school; now I'll mend Gray's Elegy by leaving out an idle word in every line!" "And, for me, Doctor, completely spoil it."

"The curfew tolls the knell of day,
The lowing herd winds o'er the lea;
The plowman homeward plods his way,
And--"

"Enough, enough, I have no ear for more."' Cradock, op. cit., I, 230.

[2] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 155.

[3] Citizen of the World, Letter CVI (March 4, 1761), Works, III, 382-384.

> tenderness; at another time, Parnassus, even the mountain Parnassus, gives way to sorrow, and is bathed in tears of distress.
>
> But the most usual manner is this; Damon meets Menalcas, who has got a most gloomy countenance. The shepherd asks his friend, whence that look of distress? To which the other replies, that Pollio is no more. "If that be the case then," cries Damon, "let us retire to yonder bower at some distance off, where the cypress and the jessamine add fragrance to the breeze; and let us weep alternately for Pollio, the friend of shepherds, and the patron of every muse."[1]

Lien Chi Altangi then states, "I am quite unaffected in all this distress; the whole is liquid laudanum to my spirits; . . ."[2] Goldsmith does not mention Milton's "Lycidas," but the above critique makes it fairly safe to assume that his reaction would have been similar to that of Dr. Johnson.

The essay closes with a specimen of the conventional elegy, "On the Death of the Right Honorable . . ."[3] This is just one of the burlesque elegies which Goldsmith wrote. Another one occurs in the Vicar of Wakefield. Bill, the youngest son, was asked to play for the family; he inquired,

> Which song do you choose, "The Dying Swan" or the "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog?" "The Elegy, child, by all means," said I, "I never heard that yet; and Deborah, my life, grief you know is dry, let us have a bottle of the best gooseberry wine to keep up our spirits. I have wept so much at all sorts of elegies of late, that without an enlivening glass, I am sure this would overcome me; and Sophy, love, take your guitar, and thrum in with the boy a little."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 383.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 384.

[4] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 139.

Bill then sings "An Elegy: On the Death of a Mad Dog."[1] Although the subject is trivial and the four line stanza has the meter of a jingle, iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimeter, rhyming abab, the Vicar calls it truly "tragical." How ironic, too, for the dog to die after biting a man!

The Vicar then proceeds to point out the defects of the modern writers of elegies: "they are in despair for griefs that give the sensible part of mankind very little pain. A lady loses her muff, her fan, or her lap-dog, and so the silly poet runs home to versify the disaster."[2] Another burlesque elegy was "An Elegy, on That Glory of Her Sex, Mrs. Mary Blaize."[3] It, too, has trivial subject matter, ironic tone, and the jingle of verse. An old French popular song, "Le fameux La Galisse, homme imaginaire,"[4] furnished the meter and stanzaic pattern. Two stanzas will show the method of burlesque:

> Good people all, with one accord,
> Lament for Madam Blaize,
> Who never wanted a good word--
> From those who spoke her praise.
>
> The needy seldom pass'd her door,
> And always found her kind;
> She freely lent to all the poor--
> Who left a pledge behind.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 139-140.

[2] Ibid., p. 140.

[3] Works, II, 81.

[4] See note by Gibbs, Works, II, 89.

These three burlesque elegies reveal Goldsmith's antipathy to the current fad of elegy writing.

Goldsmith, through Moses in The Vicar of Wakefield, pokes fun at the pastorals, which formed a large part of the songs at Ranelagh, the famous recreational park:

> ". . . the Ranelagh songs that come down to us are perfectly familiar, and all cast in the same mould. Colin meets Dolly, and they hold a dialogue together; he gives her a fairing to put in her hair, and she presents him with a nosegay; and then they go together to church, where they give good advice to young nymphs and swains to get married as fast as they can."[1]

Lack of variety and similarity of form, the result of imitation, are sufficient grounds for condemning the type.

Still some pastorals are included in the Beauties of English Poesy. Among them is Gay's "The Shepherd's Week." Goldsmith calls them Gay's "principal performance." He states that originally the poems were a burlesque of Philips' "Pastorals,"[2] but, "without designing it, he has hit the true spirit of pastoral poetry. In fact, he more resembles Theocritus than any other English pastoral writer whatever."[3] This opinion is to be challenged; for Trowbridge shows how the content, form, manner, diction, and glossary of Gay's poem were selected for a burlesque of Philips; consequently, there is much exaggeration in the poem. After Goldsmith's fulsome praise of Bion, whose "Death of Adonis" "shows little

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[1]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, II, 140-141.

[2]Modern critics are still debating the issue. See Hoyt Trowbridge, "Pope, Gay, and The Shepherd's Week," MLQ, V (1944), 79-88.

[3]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 157.

of the vigour and truthfulness of nature characteristic of Theocritus,"[1] a reader wonders how well Goldsmith knew the Sicilian poet. Considering the fact that Gay's poems are burlesque, it is to be doubted that they approach the pastorals of Theocritus in any manner. No doubt Goldsmith's antipathy to the form grew out of the great number of mediocre pastorals published in the current periodicals.

Three other pastorals are included in the Beauties, "A Song" by Rowe, "A Pastoral Ballad: in Four Parts" by Shenstone, and "Phoebe" by John Byrom. Goldsmith states that "Phoebe" is a better pastoral than "A Pastoral Ballad," but he does not give the reason for his preference. He had commended the "simplicity of the thoughts, and the harmony of versification" of "A Pastoral Ballad." Byrom's poem, which is more conventional in form, may have made the greater appeal for this reason alone.[2] The poem uses trite subject matter and is one-fourth the length of Shenstone's pastoral which is divided to show the four emotional stages through which the lover passes--"Absence," "Hope," "Solicitude," and "Disappointment." Goldsmith's evaluation of Rowe's "A Song" is extravagant. He calls it "better than any thing of the kind in our language."[3] Technically, it is not a song, so

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[1]"Bion," Encyclopedia Britannica (11th ed., New York, 1910), III, 956.

[2]"Phoebe" is written in stanzas of eight lines with rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter meter. "Pastoral Ballads," on the other hand, are written in stanzas of eight lines rhyming ababcdcd, in iambic tetrameter meter varied with anapests.

[3]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 161.

that Goldsmith can not be judging it as a lyric. It is a pastoral maintaining the fiction of a love-lorn shepherd and is much the inferior of Shenstone's "A Pastoral Ballad." Goldsmith writes no essay on the pastoral as Johnson had in the Rambler,[1] but neither likes the genre.

Another one of Goldsmith's aversions is the Pindaric ode. Goldsmith reviewed Gray's Odes while he was on the staff of the Monthly Review.[2] He felt that the poems were not written for the public but for a coterie of readers trained in the classics. His advice to Gray was to "study the people" and produce poems for an English audience in the same manner that Pindar had written for a Greek audience. Goldsmith held the opinion of Joseph Warton[3] that the ode was unsuited to the national character of the English:

> . . . several unsuccessful experiments seem to prove that the English cannot have Odes in blank verse; while, on the other hand, a natural imperfection attends those which are composed in irregular rhymes;--the similar sound often recurring where it is not expected, and not being found where it is, creates no small confusion to the reader,--[4]

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[1] Rambler, No. 37 (July 24, 1750), II, 180-185.

[2] "Review of Gray's Odes," Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 296-299.

[3] "The moderns have, perhaps, practiced no species of poetry with so little success, and with such indisputable inferiority to the ancients, as the Ode; which seems owing to the harshness and untunableness of modern languages, abounding in monosyllables, and crowded with consonants." Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 62-63.

[4] "Review of Gray's Odes," op. cit., p. 297.

Goldsmith then states that "such a genius as Mr. Gray might give greater pleasure, . . . if instead of being an imitator, he did justice to his talents, and ventured to be more original."[1] He concedes that the odes have caught the spirit of Pindar, but that they were obscure[2] and contained sudden transitions and "hazardous" epithets. Blair tells his students "Gray is distinguished in some of his odes, both for tenderness and sublimity," but that the Pindaric odes, with a few exceptions, are "so incoherent, as seldom to be intelligible."[3] Although Goldsmith disliked the Pindaric odes, he did not dislike Gray, "one whom the Muse has mark'd for her own;"[4] he did think that Gray should write for the pleasure and instruction of the people, and Gray, in turn, after hearing Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" declares, "This man is a poet."[5]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Walpole writes Lord Lyttleton of the obscurity of the odes. He states that he is no "enthusiast to Mr. Gray: his great lustre hath not dazzled me, as his obscurity seems to have blinded his cotemporaries." He continues that the "Elegy" is the only poem admired by the public but that the "Eton Ode" is a superior poem. Horace Walpole, Letter to Lord Lyttleton, August 25, 1757, Letters, ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee (Oxford, 1903), IV, 87.

[3] Blair, op. cit., p. 446.

[4] "Review of Gray's Odes," op. cit., p. 297.

[5] "He thought Goldsmith a genuine poet. I was with him at Malvern when he received the Deserted Village which he desired me to read to him; he listened with fixed attention, and soon exclaimed, 'This man is a poet.'" Norton Nicholls, "Reminiscences of Gray," Letters of Thomas Gray, ed. Duncan C. Tovey (London, 1904), II, 280.

Goldsmith appears to like some odes. He includes in his Beauties of English Poesy Dryden's "Alexander's Feast; or the Power of Music." He calls the poem a very fine ode that "gives its beauties rather at a third or fourth, than at a first perusal." The poem has been "more applauded, than it has been felt."[1] In his praise he is not so enthusiastic as Joseph Warton who states that the ode is the "most unrivalled" of Dryden's compositions.[2] Goldsmith judges "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" by Pope to be "far inferior" to the ode by Dryden.[3] Both Goldsmith and Warton agree to this opinion.[4] Warton, who analyzes the poem stanza by stanza, liked the first stanza in which the different instruments are described "in numbers that admirably represent and correspond to . . . their different qualities and genius;[5] and he thought the images of the fifth stanza were "picturesque and appropriate,"

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

[2]Joseph Warton, op. cit., II, 19. He adds that this ode "places the British lyric above that of any other nation. . . . The rapidity and yet the perspicuity, of the thoughts, the glow and expressiveness of the images, those certain marks of the first sketch of a master, conspire to corroborate the truth of the fact." Ibid., II, 20.

[3]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

[4]"He [Pope] used to declare, that if Dryden had finished a translation of the Iliad, he would not have attempted one after so great a master; he might have said with more propriety, I will not write a music-ode after Alexander's Feast, which the variety and harmony of its numbers, and the beauty and force of its images, have conspired to place at the head of modern lyric composition." Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 50.

[5]Ibid., pp. 51-52.

but the numbers have "the air of a drinking song at a county election."[1] Goldsmith and Warton prefer Dryden's ode.

With strong aversions for the epic, elegy, pastoral, and Pindaric ode, Goldsmith is limited in the types of poetry he admires. One reason for this limitation is his concept of what a poem is. He had the neo-classical notion that "every poem has, as Aristotle expresses it, a beginning, a middle, and an end, . . ."[2] Confusing the idea of unity in a drama with unity in a poem, and lacking the concept of organic unity or unity of effect, Goldsmith had no ability to appreciate the lyric. He, then, believed the best poetry is narrative or didactic, and he accepted some descriptive poetry.

Many of the poems in the Beauties are narrative. Goldsmith frequently comments on the author's manner of telling the story. Swift's "Cadenus and Vanessa" has as its chief merit "the elegant ease with which a story, but ill-conceived in itself, is told."[3] "Baucis and Philemon" is a "fine poem," superior to Prior's "Ladle,"[4] Thomson's "Palemon and Lavinia" from Autumn illustrates "a story with unusual simplicity."[5] Although this incident from Autumn is placed in both anthologies, Goldsmith rather ungraciously states that its inclusion

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[1]Ibid., p. 54.

[2]"Preface," The Beauties of English Poesy (London, 1767), I, iii.

[3]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 161.

[4]Ibid., p. 160.

[5]Ibid., p. 159.

was due to its "being much admired by the public than by the editor." The sentiment in this poem is not that which affected Goldsmith the strongest. Parental love, love of relatives and of home touch the heart; romantic love, however, must wait for the Romantic poets. Parnell's "The Hermit" contains a "story told with perspicuity and conciseness,"[1] and of "A Fairy Tale" Goldsmith writes, "Never was the old manner of speaking more happily applied, or a tale better told than this."[2] Goldsmith made no comment on the story in "Eloisa to Abelard." He did say that the poem was too long,[3] but he made no suggestions for shortening it. A story told with economy and ease he will always praise.

Other narrative poems included in the Beauties are Edward Moore's fables "The Poet and His Patron," "The Wolf, Sheep, and Lamb," and "The Female Seducers." Poems for Young Ladies contains "The Nightingale and Glow-worm," "Hymen and Death," and "The Wolf, Sheep, and Lamb." All of them are written with facility and grace. Goldsmith comments on Moore's "pleasing manner of expressing" his thoughts.[4] Two salacious poems, both by Prior, "Hans Carvel" and the "Ladle," are in the Beauties. Goldsmith reports that "Hans Carvel" shows how

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[1] Ibid., p. 155. "Mr. Parnell's tale of the Hermit is conspicious throughout the whole of it, for beautiful descriptive narration." Blair, op. cit., p. 454.

[2] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 159.

[3] Ibid., p. 156.

[4] Ibid., p. 159.

"every thing is improved in the hands of a man of genius."[1] Since the content came through La Fontaine from the Italian jest books, what is improved is the manner of telling the story. The reading public called the poem low; and Goldsmith, who condemned obscenity in Sterne's Tristram Shandy and believed in decorum and good taste, surely included the poems on account of the author's art in telling the stories.[2]

The descriptive poems in the anthologies are fewer than the narrative poems. Denham's "Cooper's Hill" appears in Beauties. Goldsmith calls this poem the best descriptive poem that was written up to that time; he states that better descriptive poems have been published since. Addison's "A Letter from Italy" may be called a descriptive poem. Some critics state that Goldsmith took the idea of his "Traveller" from this poem. He is, of course, lavish in his praise of the versification and the original presentation of political ideas,[3] but he does not refer to the description. On the contrary, he is very much impressed with the descriptions of

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Percy attributes the unpopularity of the volumes to Goldsmith's carelessness in including these two poems, but he appears to confuse the two collections and to think that the Beauties was edited for young people. This salacious type of poem had been very popular when men composed the reading public. See Bohn's "Life of Goldsmith," Works, I, 29-30 and Percy's Memoirs, op. cit., I, 84. Johnson did not consider the poems of Prior "low." He says 'There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. . . . No, Sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library.' Boswell, op. cit., Hill-Powell, III, 192.

[3] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 156.

Asiatic "magnificence and manners" in Collins' "Oriental Eclogues,"[1] but these poems are more nearly pastorals than descriptive poems.

The didactic poems in the anthologies may be grouped under three heads--the poems about the art of poetry, the mock-heroics, and the satires. Among the first group is John Sheffield's "Essay upon Poetry," one of those poetic essays in literary criticism to be compared with Wentworth Dillon's "Essay on Translated Verse" and to be superseded by Pope's famous "Essay on Criticism." "Essay on Poetry" discusses poetry from the viewpoint of the art required for each species --song, elegy, ode, satire, drama (the three unities, soliloquies, figures of speech, dialogue). Goldsmith writes that "the precepts are sensible, the poetry not indifferent, but it has been praised more than it deserves."[2] Swift's "On Poetry," a bitter satirical piece on an author's search for recognition, is called "one of the best versified poems in our language and the most masterly production of its author."[3] The first part of the evaluation may be just, but no modern critic would call "On Poetry" superior to "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift" or "The Beast's Confession." The severity of the satire is attributed to Swift's disappointment in not receiving preferment from the Walpole ministry.

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[1] Ibid., p. 158.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

[3] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 157.

Among the mock-heroic poems included in the Beauties is the sixth canto of Garth's "The Dispensary." Goldsmith does not comment on the message of the poem or its distinction as the first mock-epic in English.[1] Instead, he writes that the "versification is negligent, and his plot is now become tedious; . . ."[2] He has more to say about Pope's "Rape of the Lock." He calls it Pope's "most finished production, and . . . perhaps, the most perfect in our language."[3] It displays strong imaginative powers, harmonious verse, and "a greater knowledge of the world than any of this poet's works; This poem, Goldsmith thinks, would be a good one to show foreigners as a specimen of English genius. Joseph Warton, who devotes Section V (I, 200-244) of An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope to the poem states that it "displays more imagination than in his other works taken together."[4] He, too, comments on Pope's knowledge of the world and the excellent poetry in the poem. This appears to be an instance of Goldsmith following Warton's opinion although it is possible

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[1]Clark states that Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" "utilizes for satiric purpose the form of the mock-heroic as established by Boileau, but that "the first complete mock-heroic in English is Garth's "The Dispensary". . . ." Clark, op. cit., p. 158.

[2]A History of England, Works, V, 346.

[3]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 154. Cf. ". . . the "Rape of the Lock" is the best satire extant; . . . it contains the truest and liveliest picture of modern life; and . . . the subject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other heroi-comic poem." Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 241.

[4]Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 243-244.

that Goldsmith reached his conclusions independently. Missing is a statement about the satire directed at the social life of the period or a comment on the creation of the sylphs and gnomes.

Two famous satires are printed in the Beauties. One is Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe." "The severity of this satire, and the excellence of its versification, give it a distinguished rank in this species of composition," is Goldsmith's estimate of the poem. When Goldsmith was writing, Shadwell had lost much of his literary reputation so that Dryden's attack on him appeared "like an eagle stooping to catch flies."[1] Pope's "Of the Use of Riches" draws few comments from Goldsmith who remarks on "the easiness that appears in it," no doubt the easiness of versification. Warton calls it "the justest satire"[2] and compares it with Bacon's "Of Riches." These two works, he thinks, contain all that is to be said about the "use and abuse of riches."[3]

Since most of the comments about individual poems are taken from the introductory paragraphs at the top of each entry in the Beauties, a few other observations may be made about the selections. There are no lyrics in the book, no songs or sonnets. Rowe's "A Song" is technically, not a song but a pastoral. Young's Night Thoughts, I and II, are the only religious poems in the anthology. Goldsmith calls them

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 157.

[2]Joseph Warton, op. cit., II, 152.

[3]Ibid., p. 153.

the best poems of the series of Nights,[1] but he does not give his reason for his conclusion. There is no nature poetry; the selection from Thomson's Seasons develops the courtship of Palemon and Lavinia. The only imitation of a Latin author is Johnson's "London." Goldsmith considers the poem "the best imitation of the original that has appeared in our language; being possessed of all the force and satirical resentment of Juvenal."[2] He continues that imitation gives a "truer idea of the ancients" than translation, an opinion held by Dryden, Pope, and Johnson. The anthology does not contain any translations. Lacking the popularity of Dodsley's Miscellany, the two volume anthology cannot be considered representative of the public taste, but it shows Goldsmith's taste; and his cursory remarks about highly admired English poetry from Dryden to Johnson form the largest body of his practical criticism.

Boswell gives an account of an argument between Goldsmith and Dodsley held in 1762 at Tom Davies' bookshop:

> Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in his age. Dodsley appealed to his own Collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a palace like Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecelia's Day," you had villages composed of very pretty houses; and he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." Johnson. 'I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did; for he acknowledged that there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry.

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[1] "Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 161.

[2] Ibid., p. 155.

> "Hudibras" has a profusion of these; yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. "The Spleen," in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry.'[1]

Goldsmith may have told Dodsley that no poetry was being written during his life time, but he was contradicting an opinion of two years before when the Chinese Philosopher affirms that he saw "several poets in disguise" among the English, "men furnished with that strength of soul, sublimity of sentiment, and grandeur of expression, which constitute the character."[2] Roach, who had dinner with Goldsmith in January, 1768, told Prior that the chief topic of conversation was "literary topics," that Goldsmith approved of Thomson's poetry, and to "Shenstone, Mason, Gray, and other modern writers, he gave a very qualified degree of admiration."[3] The anthologies, as we have seen, contained poems by contemporary authors. Goldsmith's attitude toward such contemporary movements in poetry as primitivism, mediaevalism, and the ballad revival reveal inconsistencies which might be anticipated.

The Ossianic poems did not appeal to Goldsmith. It was Blair who thought Fingal was a genuine piece of Celtic antiquity and supported his belief by writing "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," proving that the work

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[1] Boswell, op. cit., III, 38.

[2] Citizen of the World, Letter XL (May 26, 1760), Works, III, 152.

[3] Prior, op. cit., II, 160.

followed the classical principles of the epic.[1] The only reference to Macpherson in the Works is in the epitaph to Dr. John Douglas in "Retaliation." The line shows that Goldsmith did not consider the material poetry:

> But now he is gone, and we want a detector,
> Our Dodds shall be pious, our Kendricks shall lecture;
> Macpherson write bombast, and call it a style;
> Our Townsend make speeches, and I shall compile:[2]

On the other hand, the author of the Belles Lettres essays calls the attention of his readers to the Celtic fragments which are "certainly replete with poetical merit."[3] Prior refers to the Scotch poets "whose prejudice" Goldsmith "had offended by frequent jokes, and by his known opinions upon Ossian."[4] These statements lead one to believe that Goldsmith did not admire Ossian.

Mallet's Remains of the Mythology and Poetry of the Celtes was the first book Goldsmith reviewed for the Monthly Review.[5] But Goldsmith, who was not an antiquarian, with

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[1]Hugh Blair, "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," Fingal, trans. James Macpherson (2d ed., London, 1762), pp. i-xvi. Walpole, too, believed in Ossian and wrote "all of it has merit." Letter to Sir David Dalrymple, June 20, 1760. op. cit., IV, 398. Duff, also, thought "Ossian composed Fingal and Temora, when none of the Arts, whether liberal or mechanical, were known in his country." Duff, op. cit., p. 264.

[2]"Retaliation," Works, II, 55, ll. 85-88.

[3]"On Poetry," Works, I, 353. But this reference is to the "Fragments" published in 1760 rather than to Ossian which was published in 1762. See note by Gibbs, Works, I, 353.

[4]Prior, op. cit., II, 397.

[5]"Review of Mallet's Remains, Monthly Review (April, 1757), Works, IV, 233-238. Miss Tupper shows that the review is an abridged translation of a review in the Bibliothèque des Science et des Beaux-Arts. See Caroline F. Tupper, "Oliver Goldsmith and 'The Gentleman Who Signs D,'" MLN, XLV (1930), 71-77.

little interest in the mediaeval revival, looked upon the stories as "allegories."[1] He did call them "as extraordinary as an imagination the most fruitful of wonders could possibly conceive, on the formation of the earth, and the creation of man."[2] Although he called the thirty-third and thirty-fourth fables "sublime and picturesque,"[3] he did not point out the poetic qualities of the poems. Instead, he wrote summaries of them, and in the first sentence of the article acknowledged that the subject was "dry."

Goldsmith, on the other hand, was interested in the Rowley poems. At a dinner of the Royal Academy, April 23, 1771, Goldsmith told the members about the collection of Rowley poems found in Bristol and "expressed enthusiastic belief in them."[4] Dr. Johnson, who was present, laughed at his credulity;[5] and Percy and Goldsmith later quarrelled about them.[6] No reference to Chatterton is made in the Works.

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[1] Ibid., p. 235.

[2] Ibid., pp. 235-236.

[3] Ibid., p. 238. Gibbon, who read the book, was interested in the revelation of the religion, geography, government, and history of the Celtes; but he does not speak of the poetry. "Extrait du Journal," July 14, 1764, Miscellaneous Works (London, 1796), II, 305-312.

[4] For full details with Walpole's justification for his treatment of Chatterton, see Letter to William Barret, May 23, 1778, op. cit., X, 244-251.

[5] Ibid., p. 248.

[6] "How frail, alas! are all human friendships! I was witness to an entire separation between Percy and Goldsmith, about Rowley's poems; . . ." Cradock, op. cit., I, 206. Cf. Alice C. C. Gaussen, Percy: Prelate and Poet (London, 1908), pp. 152-153.

The ballad revival elicited Goldsmith's enthusiastic support. As a child he had heard his nurse, Peggy Golden, sing ballads; and he, too, sang them for his sophisticated London friends. His favorites were "Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night," "Barbara Allan,"[1] "Sally Salisbury," and "An Old Woman Tossed in a Blanket Seventeen Times as High as the Moon." While a student at Trinity College he wrote ballads and sold them for five shillings each to a bookseller at the sign of the Rein-deer on Mountrath Street. He is then reported to have strolled the streets at night to hear them sung and to mark "the degree of applause which each received from the auditors."[2] In his novel the parishioners of the Vicar sang ballads for entertainment,[3] and the Primrose children enjoyed Mr. Burchell who "was famous . . . for singing them ballads, . . ."[4]

When Percy was collecting the Reliques, he submitted the manuscript to Goldsmith. To him, Miss Gaussen writes, "Percy owed more than to any literary man of the day."[5] It was in

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[1]"Happiness . . . Dependent on Constitution," Bee, No. II (October 13, 1759), Works, II, 334. See also Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 85.

[2]Prior, op. cit., II, 397.

[3]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 85.

[4]Ibid., p. 91.

[5]"To Oliver Goldsmith, Percy owed more than to any other literary man of his day. His counsel was that of knowledge, for he had supported himself in early life by writing ballads . . ." Gaussen, op. cit., p. 44. See also Prior, op. cit., II, 397.

imitation of the folk ballad, "The Friar of Orders Gray," that Goldsmith wrote his "Edwin and Angelina"[1] for the amusement of the Countess of Northumberland.[2] Prior, who was writing in 1837 when so many literary ballads were being published, considered Goldsmith's poem "the most beautiful ballad in our own, or perhaps in any language."[3] It is his only poem which Goldsmith included in an anthology, in the moral section of Poems for Young Ladies. Percy later regretted his youthful enthusiasm for the ballads[4] and permitted the revised edition to be edited by his nephew, but it is to be doubted whether Goldsmith would have lost his interest in this type of poetry. He did not, however, place any traditional ballads in his anthologies.

Goldsmith's criticism of poetry contains generalizations which are very annoying to a student of his works. An outstanding example of this is his use of the adjective "fine"

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[1] Works, II, 23-30.

[2] Percy, "Memoirs," Works, I, 74-76. See also Prior, op. cit., II, 79.

[3] Prior, op. cit., II, 79-80.

[4] Percy did not want his portrait inserted in an edition of the Reliques. He thought it inappropriate for "such a solemn figure . . . to be prefixed to the sportive subjects of the Reliques--the gay amusements of early youth, of which he is now frequently reproached by his brethren and other serious persons." Letter to Malone [1806-1807], Percy Letters, p. 213.

to describe a poem. Gray's "Elegy" is a "very fine poem."[1] Were the numbers more harmonious, Addison's "A Letter from Italy" would be "incontestably the finest poem in our language."[2] Dryden's ode, "Alexander's Feast," is "a very fine one."[3] "Baucis and Philemon" by Swift "is very fine."[4] Tickell's elegy, "To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison," is "one of the finest in our language."[5] "The Fairy Tale" by Parnell "is incontestably one of the finest pieces in any language."[6]

What is Goldsmith's concept of a "fine poem"? What have these six poems in common? Goldsmith does not show a preference for a type of poetry; for two of the poems are elegies, one is an ode, two are narrative poems, and one is a descriptive poem. One answer can hardly be given. Rather, each genre must excel in the presentation of the distinctive characteristics of the type. The elegy, for example, must move the emotions through the sentiments of pathos and grief. The ode, in its praise of a person or situation, reaches heights of imaginative grandeur. Narrative poems must be told

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 155.

[2]Ibid., p. 156.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 160.

[5]Ibid.

[6]"Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 175.

with economy and variety, while descriptive poems must abound in general descriptive details that will recall the entire object at a flash. All good poems must contain sentiments to affect the heart in addition to displaying striking imagery, effective expression without figures and tropes, and harmonious versification.

A "fine" poem is a complex of the excellencies to be expected in the type it represents. But with the exception of Gray's "Elegy" and Dryden's "Ode," it cannot be said that the poems which impressed Goldsmith as being "fine" have withstood the test of time. In fact, some of the poems are not even included in the period anthologies. Parnell's "The Fairy Tale," for example, does not appear in either Crane's A Collection of English Poems, 1660-1800 or Bredvold, McKillop, and Whitney's Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose. The latter volume does not contain Addison's "A Letter from Italy."

A student, then, might profit from remembering Goldsmith's own statement about the "Introductory Criticisms": "they are rather designed for boys than men; for it will be seen that I declined all refinement, satisfied with being obvious and sincere."[1] Some of the statements are not only obvious but banal, for, without doubt, they were hastily written. Still the judgments passed upon poetry interest us for what they reveal of Goldsmith's concept of poetry.

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[1]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 154.

II. The Novel

". . . one good pudding is worth fifty modern romances,"[1] is the concluding clause of a two sentence review of The Fair Citizen, a novel written by Charlotte Bellmour. The reviewer, who was to publish The Vicar of Wakefield in 1766, consistently maintained his aversion to romances. He had one charge against them; they were untrue; consequently, they gave the wrong ideas about life, about friendship and love.

Goldsmith derides those "indolent readers who turn to an author with the design rather of killing than improving their time . . . who, scared at the serious face of instruction,"[2] read without reflection. Although he is writing about "the indolent readers" of history, he states that history enlightens them "just as much as a romance would have done," for the readers are "equally unconcerned about truth in either."[3] Goldsmith, of course, thought that one should read primarily for instruction. He represents the Chinese Philosopher, in a letter to his son, copying the ideas of another philosopher on books. Altangi writes that every book, "except romances" are of value to a reader:

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[1] "Review of The Fair Citizen," Monthly Review (July, 1757), Works, IV, 275.

[2] "Review of Smollett's History of England," Monthly Review (June, 1757), Works, IV, 255.

[3] Ibid.

> It was a saying of the ancients, that a man never opens a book without reaping some advantage by it. I say with them, that every book can serve to make us more expert, except romances, and these are no better than instruments of debauchery. They are dangerous fictions where love is the ruling passion.[1]

A year earlier, in a letter to his brother, Goldsmith had advised him not to let his son read romances; for they would give him an improper view of life:

> Above all things let him never touch a romance, or novel, those paint beauty in colours more charming than nature, and describe happiness that men never taste. How delusive, how destructive therefore are those pictures of consummate bliss, they teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed, to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave. And in general take my word for it I say that books teach us very little of the world. The greatest merit, and the most consummate virtue that ever grac'd humanity in a state of poverty would only serve to make the possessor ridiculous, they may distress but cannot relieve him.[2]

Specifically, Goldsmith thought that modern romances gave the wrong ideas about friendship and love. In reading romances, young people see love "exalted above its merits"

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[1] *Citizen of the World*, Letter LXXXIII (October 15, 1760), *Works*, III, 311-312. Miss Balderston writes that this passage "is not Goldsmith's own, but a quotation" from Du Halde's *Description of the Empire of China* (London, 1738-41), II, 58. *Letters*, p. 60. H. J. Smith, however, enters both passages in his study. He concludes, "Although Goldsmith quotes the entire essay as being the reflections of a modern philosopher of China, he is taking great liberties in doing so; for, while the general ideas are all to be found in Du Halde, the paraphrase is so free as to make the reflections appear Goldsmith's own." *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

[2] Letter to the Reverend Henry Goldsmith, January 13, 1759, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

and, as a consequence, they "expect more from it than it can give."[1] Also, the romance and novel writers cause youth to expect "too much from friendship."[2] Goldsmith continues, ". . . they persuade us to friendships which we find it impossible to sustain to the last; so that this sweetner of life, under proper regulation, is by their means rendered inaccessible or uneasy."[3]

In answer to the defenders of the novel, he anticipates their rebuttal that romances "represent vice punished, and virtue rewarded."[4] He concedes some of their claims,

> Granted. But will the greater number of readers take notice of these punishments and rewards? Are not their minds carried to something else? Can it be imagined that the heart with which the author inspires the love of virtue, can overcome that crowd of thoughts which sway them to licentiousness? To be able to incalcate virtue by so leaky a vehicle, the author must be a philosopher of the first rank.[5]

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[1]"A True History for the Ladies," British Magazine (July, 1760), Works, IV, 483.

[2]"On Friendship," Universal Magazine (April, 1774), Works, IV, 510.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXIII (October 15, 1760), Works, III, 312. Gibbs writes that this statement looks as if the Chinese Philosopher "had the English Samuel Richardson" in mind. Ibid., p. 312 n. Goldsmith makes no direct reference to Richardson or any of his novels. Since Goldsmith had worked in Richardson's printing office (Prior, op. cit., I, 211-213; Forster, op. cit., p. 61), there is a possibility that he had no admiration for the man or his novels. There were no novels by Richardson in his library; he did own two volumes of Defoe's and twelve volumes of Fielding's works. See Prior, op. cit., II, 581.

[5]Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXIII, op. cit., III, 312.

Goldsmith was not alone in his distrust of the novel. Johnson had mixed feelings about it. He felt that in the novel, "such as exhibit life in its true state,"[1] that care should be taken to present only the best models for the youth who would take the book as "lectures of conduct, and introductions into life."[2] Cradock tells of Johnson's going into Garrick's library where there was a collection of novels which had been given the actor by his admirers. Reading from first one and then the other, Johnson threw the "splendid octavos" on the floor. Garrick, arriving, became angry at Johnson who replied, "I was determined to examine your valuables, which I find consist of three sorts, stuff, trash, and nonsense!"[3] Boswell writes that Dr. Johnson planned a work "to show how small a quantity of REAL FICTION there is in the world, . . ."[4] Mrs. Thrale quotes Johnson as saying, "It is not . . . because they treat . . . about love, but because they treat of nothing, that they are despicable. . . ."[5]

Two other critics were doubtful about the value of the novel. Blair had high praise for Robinson Crusoe, the novels of Fielding, and those of Richardson, especially Clarissa;

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[1] Rambler, No. 4 (March 31, 1750), Works, II, 15. This paper was published after the widespread popularity of Tom Jones and Roderick Random.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Cradock, op. cit., IV, 244.

[4] Boswell, op. cit., IV, 236.

[5] "Anecdotes," Johnsonian Miscellanies, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1897), I, 290.

but he felt that the numerous "Lives, Adventures, and Histories, by anonymous authors" were "insipid" and "trivial."[1] "Romances are a dangerous recreation,"[2] Beattie thought. He cautioned young people against reading romances, for

> A habit of reading them breeds a dislike to history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature, and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities.[3]

Goldsmith, too, feared that the reader of romances, looking for entertainment, would shun both science[4] and history.[5] He states that history cannot be recommended "to the numerous readers of reigning romance, as it is strictly true."[6]

> No events are here to astonish; no unexpected incidents to surprise; no such high-finished pictures as captivate the imagination as have made fiction fashionable. Our reader must be content with the simple exhibition of truth, and consequently of nature; he must be satisfied to see vice triumphant and virtue in distress; to see men punished or rewarded, not as his wishes, but as Providence has thought proper to direct; for all here wears the face of sincerity.[7]

In this paragraph Goldsmith points out what the average reader expected in a novel--wonder, excitement, highly coloured

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[1]Blair, op. cit., p. 420.

[2]Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," Dissertations, II, 320.

[3]Ibid.

[4]"Preface to Brookes' Natural History," Works, V, 74.

[5]"Preface to A Translation of The Memoirs of a Protestant," Works, V, 4.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

incident, and improbabilities. Earlier, he had condemned those "amphibious productions" of the French in which "history wears the face of romance, and romance assumes the appearance of history."[1] He would have disliked the historical novels of Scott, Cooper, Bulwer-Lytton, and modern writers. At no point does Goldsmith consider the novel as vicarious experience; Johnson does,[2] and, thereby, conceives of greater possibilities of the novel as a type of literature than Goldsmith.

Of the novels which Goldsmith reviewed, none of them met his approval. He especially disliked the type of domestic novel that was being written by women. The Mother-in-Law, for instance, is given a short notice in the Monthly Review.[3] After a short summary of the novel and one long, loose sentence as an example of the style, the reviewer leaves the couple "in the full enjoyment of all the felicity that a bounteous author can bestow."[4] In the same issue of the Monthly Review is the two sentence review of The Fair Citizen.[5] Again the reviewer leaves Miss Bellmour and Mr. Frankly to

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[1]"Review of Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon," Monthly Review (July, 1757), Works, IV, 275-276.

[2]Idler, No. 84 (November 24, 1759), Works, IV, 399.

[3]"Review of The Mother-in-Law," Monthly Review (July, 1757), Works, IV, 274-275.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Review of The Fair Citizen," Monthly Review (July, 1757), Works, IV, 275.

their "felicity," but he cautions the author "that one good pudding is worth fifty modern romances."[1]

Jemima and Louisa, reviewed for the Critical Review by Goldsmith, is an epistolary novel with the correspondence carried on between Jemima and Louisa. The first paragraph satirizes lightly, but firmly, the "pretty-fellows, coffee-critics, and dirty-shirted dunces" who pose as female muses. The second paragraph gives the plan of the Jemima part of the novel, and in the third there is the story of Louisa. The critic states that the second story is "no way connected with the former."[2] But at least he is more generous than the critic of the Monthly Review who writes a two sentence review: "A faint imitation of Mr. Richardson's writings. We shall say no more as it is a lady's production."[3]

Letter LI, of the Chinese Letters, published June 30, 1760,[4] in the Public Ledger, concerned two rhetorical figures in English literature that cannot be found in Chinese literature, Bawdy and Pertness. Two years later when the letters

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[1]Ibid. Notices for the Mother-in-Law and The Fair Citizen are carried in the "Register of Books" without comment in the Gentleman's Magazine, XXVII (June, 1757), 291. The novels are listed in the "Catalogue of Books with Remarks," but without remarks, in the London Magazine, XXVI (July, 1757), 368.

[2]"Review of The Fair Citizen," op. cit., p. 275.

[3]"Notice of Jemima and Louisa," Monthly Review, XXI (July, 1759), 82. It is also placed in the "List of Books published; with Remarks," only without remarks in the Gentleman's Magazine, XXIX (July, 1759), 339; and in the London Magazine XXVIII (July, 1759), 400.

[4]Citizen of the World, Letter LIII. See H. J. Smith, op. cit., p. 14.

were republished as The Citizen of the World, Letter LIII carried the title, "The Absurd Taste for Obscene and Pert Novels, such as Tristram Shandy, Ridiculed." Now in 1760 only two volumes of the novel had appeared, but the fact that Goldsmith let the letter stand with little or no revision, no doubt, indicates that this article contained his considered opinion of the first two volumes of Sterne's masterpiece.

Technically, the article is not a review of Tristram Shandy; the name of the novel or the novelist does not appear. Rather, the letter contains a discussion of two characteristics of the modern novel which Goldsmith disliked, obscenity and familiarity with the reader, or Bawdy and Pertness, as he calls them. Through the use of Bawdy a dunce may "obtain the reputation of a wit,"[1] and a "bawdy blockhead often passes for a fellow of smart parts and pretensions."[2] The author who writes in this style will always have an audience of the "very old and impotent among his admirers," the Chinese Philosopher continues.[3] He is much more satirical of the readers of these books than he is of the writers. Steele had stated that no author "ever writ bawdry for any other reason but dearth of invention."[4] Altangi is amazed at the "pretty innocents" who carry around the books openly in their hands

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[1]Ibid. (June 30, 1760), Works, III, 199.

[2]Ibid., p. 200.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Spectator, No. 51 (April 28, 1711), I, 263.

instead of keeping them hid under a cushion.[1] He recognized "bawdy" as a revival of a characteristic of literature once very fashionable in England when Thomas D'Urfey was a favourite of Charles II, but Altangi continued, "the successor of Durfey does not excel him in wit," only in obscenity.[2]

The other characteristic which the Chinese Philosopher decried was pertness, or familiarity with the readers:

> . . . in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for a solution. He must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manners, and what he would be at, and his own importance, and his mother's importance, with the most unpitying prolixity; now and then testifying his contempt for all but himself, smiling without a jest, and without wit professing vivacity.[3]

It appears that Goldsmith objected to any subjective elements in the novel, any references to the author's technique, and any mechanical devices that are used. Sterne made frequent use of dashes, asterisks, the first letter of a word followed by a blank, double entendre, innuendoes, and blank pages for chapters. Goldsmith must have considered this a type of fooling.

The charge of pertness appears original with Goldsmith, for I found no references to it in the contemporary critiques that I read. The first charge of obscenity is expressed throughout much of the contemporary critical opinion. The reviewer of the first two volumes for the Monthly Review does

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[1]Letter LIII, op. cit., III, 200-201.

[2]Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[3]Ibid., pp. 202-203.

not mention obscenity in the novel. He praises the singularity of the characters and the humour of the author:

> On the whole, we will venture to recommend Mr. Tristram Shandy, as a writer infinitely more ingenious and entertaining than any other of the present race of novelists. His characters are striking and singular, his observations shrewd and pertinent; and, making a few exceptions, his humour is easy and genuine.[1]

Earlier in the review this critic had spoken of the author's use of digressions, but, he goes on "we have no reason to think that we shall not be very willing to accompany him to the end of his tale, notwithstanding all his denunciations of prolixity."[2]

But in the review of Volume III and IV, the critic (the same one, for he refers to the former review and repeats the paragraph quoted above) confesses that he "forebore any strictures on the indelicacies" in the book, for he had attributed them "to the warm imagination of some Young Genius in Romance."[3] But now that he knows the author, the critic states "he has deviated from the path of Discretion" and accuses him of "nothing less than Dullness."[4] He recants the statement about the originality of the characters,[5]

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[1]"Review of Tristram Shandy, 2 vols.," Appendix to Monthly Review, XXI (December, 1759), 571.

[2]Ibid., p. 562.

[3]"Review of Tristram Shandy, Vols. III and IV," Monthly Review, XXIV (January, 1761), 101.

[4]Ibid., p. 103.

[5]Ibid., p. 104.

and tells the author that "had he been a master of true wit, he might have been entertaining, without having recourse to obscenity."[1] The critic now expressed Goldsmith's opinion of a year earlier. The critiques of Volumes V and VI represent Sterne as introducing "obscenity as wit," although the reviewer admits these volumes "are not so much interlarded with obscenity as the former; . . ."[2] The last critique is a rather clever dialogue held between the Reviewer and Sterne. The Reviewer begs Sterne to be as decent as he can: "Reviewer. 'I perceive your libidinous imagination is too far gone, to afford even the smallest hope for a cure. But, be intreated! --do, in respect to our wives and daughters, be as decent as you can.'"[3]

The reviewer for the Critical Review writes that in Volumes III and IV "a spirit of petulance, an air of self conceit, and an affectation of learning" are spread through the novel, which is also to be censured "for some gross expressions, impure ideas, and a general want of decorum."[4] In Volumes V and VI he finds the "same unconnected rhapsody, the same rambling digression, the eccentric humour, the

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[1] Ibid., p. 109.

[2] "Review of Tristram Shandy, Vols. V and VI," Monthly Review, XXVI (January, 1762), 32.

[3] "Review of Tristram Shandy, Vols. VII and VIII," Monthly Review, XXXII (February, 1765), 126.

[4] "Review of Tristram Shandy, Vols. III and IV," from the Critical Review, London Chronicle, April 30-May 2, 1761, No. 679, IX, 421b.

peculiar wit, petulance, pruriency and ostentation of learning"[1] that he had found in the earlier volumes. In a vein of satire, the reviewer gives Tristram credit for the blank pages, "the asterisks, dashes, hiatuses, and indented lines" which confuse and perplex the reader. As an example of humour, he points out the passage beginning, "Ptr. . r. . ing - twing - twang - prut - trut - ."[2]

The notices in the London Magazine do not mention the pruriency of the novels. Of Volumes I and II the reviewer states, "all thy characters are excellent, and thy opinions amiable,"[3] and that if all the works abount in the "profitable and pleasant, like these," the author will be read and admired by the "most numerous class of mankind."[4] At the publication of Volumes III and IV, the reviewer comments on the author's "superior genius."[5] In the February issue, he admits that the author "has been pretty severely lash'd by the Criticks and the graver sort of Readers."[6] He includes, then,

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[1]"Review of Tristram Shandy, Vols. V and VI," Critical Review, (January, 1762), 66.

[2]Ibid., p. 67.

[3]"Remarks on The Life and Opinion of Tristram Shandy," London Magazine, XXIX (February, 1760), 111.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Remarks on Tristram Shandy, Vols. III and IV," London Magazine, XXX (January, 1761), 56.

[6]Ibid., London Magazine, XXX (February, 1761), 112.

Sterne's chapter on the critics. The story of Le Fever is carried in the January, 1762, issue.[1] But only a notice appears for Volumes VII and VIII.[2] In the notice for "Tristram Shandy at Ranelagh," the reviewer writes, "If Tristram Shandy had done any mischief, 'tis in raising such a swarm of filthy pamphleteers, to din the ears and poison the eyes of the publick."[3] The magazine also carries an entry for "An Admonitory Letter to Mr. Stern."[4]

Two pamphlets were published about the obscenity of Tristram Shandy: "The Clock-Maker's Outcry against the Author of Tristram Shandy"[5] and "An Admonitory Letter to the Reverend Mr. S_____ upon the Publication of the Fifth and Sixth Volumes of Tristram Shandy."[6] Both were popular enough to be reviewed in the Monthly Review.

The accusation that Goldsmith considered the work obscene has, perhaps, been belaboured; but two of his best biographers, Forster and Gwynn, felt that Goldsmith was lacking in appreciation for Sterne. Forster can forgive Walpole's accusation,

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[1]"Story of Le Fevre," London Magazine, XXXI (January, 1762), 16-21.

[2]London Magazine, XXXIV (February, 1765), 112.

[3]"Tristram Shandy at Ranelagh," London Magazine, XXXIX (June, 1760), 328.

[4]London Magazine, XXXI (January, 1762), 56.

[5]Reviewed in Monthly Review, XXII (May, 1760), 436-437.

[6]Reviewed in Monthly Review, XXV (December, 1761), 505-506.

and he states that Goldsmith rightly protested against "the indecency and affectation, which doubtless had contributed to the so sudden popularity;"[1] still, he continues, Goldsmith should have admitted the "humour and wit" in the book. Gywnn states that "Tristram Shandy is, none too fairly, denounced for obscenity." He continues that "Goldsmith was seldom a lenient judge of his contemporaries, and never a good critic."[2] This is true that Goldsmith's early opinion of Tristram Shandy was that of many of his contemporaries, notably, the reviewers in the Monthly Review and the Critical Review, the writers of two pamphlets, Walpole,[3] Hurd,[4] and

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[1]Forster, op. cit., p. 229. Forster thinks that Goldsmith had Sterne in mind in this passage: "In England, if a bawdy blockhead breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter." Citizen of the World, Letter LXXV (September 17, 1760), Works, III, 285. Perhaps Sterne, too, thought the reference was to him. See his defence of his method in the novel. Lawrence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (Library of English Classics, London, 1911), II, 209.

[2]Gwynn, op. cit., p. 159.

[3]"At present, nothing is talked of, nothing admired, but what I cannot help calling a very insipid and tedious performance: it is a kind of novel, called The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy; the great humour of which consists in the whole narrative going backwards. I can conceive a man saying that it would be droll to write a book in that manner, but have no notion of his persevering in executing it. It makes one smile two or three times at the beginning, but in recompense makes own yawn for two hours. The characters are tolerably kept up, but the humour is for ever attempted and missed. The best thing in it is a sermon, oddly coupled with a good deal of bawdy, and both the composition of a clergyman." Letter to Sir David Dalrymple, April 4, 1760, op. cit., IV, 369.

[4]"It is as violent a transition as any in your Odes to pass at once from Rousseau, to Sterne. Yet in speaking of Romances, I must tell you my mind of his. The 3d Vol. is insufferably dull and even insipid. The 4th is full as humorous as either of the other two. But this broad humour, even at its best, can never be endured in a work of length. Hurd to Mason, March 30, 1761, The Correspondence of Richard Hurd and William Mason, ed. Leonard Whibley (Cambridge, 1932), p. 53.

Johnson.[1] Sterne is not mentioned by Blair or Beattie. On the other hand he was greatly admired in France; Voltaire called him "le second Rabelais de l'Angleterre."[2] In spite of Voltaire's admiration, Goldsmith did not change his opinions of the novelist. On Thursday, April 15, 1773, Boswell reports someone speaking of the lack of hospitality in London. Johnson, in opposition, told of Sterne's numerous dinner engagements. To which Goldsmith retorted, "And a very dull fellow."[3]

From these unfavorable critiques of contemporary novels, one must not conclude that Goldsmith disliked the novel altogether. There are indications to the contrary. Among the modern authors to approach the Fame Machine was Tobias Smollett requesting admittance upon the strength of his history. The coachman, who had never heard of Smollett as a historian, asked whether there was some other work of merit he could show.

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[1]"Mr. Sterne, it may be supposed, was no great favourite with Dr. Johnson, and a lady once ventured to ask the grave doctor, "how he liked Yorick's Sermons."--"I know nothing about them, Madam" was his reply. But sometimes afterwards, forgetting himself, he severely censured them; and the lady very aptly retorted, "I understood you to say, Sir, that you had never read them."--"No, Madam, I did read them, but it was in a stage-coach; I should not have even deigned to have looked at them, had I been at large." Cradock, op. cit., I, 208. Johnson, 'Nothing odd will do long. "Tristram Shandy" did not last.' Boswell, op. cit., II, 449. Johnson accuses Sterne of indecency during a conversation. Ibid., II, 222, n. 2.

[2]Joseph Texte, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme litteraire (Paris, 1895), p. 345.

[3]Boswell, op. cit., II, 222.

> "None," replied the other, "except a romance; but this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention." "You mistake," says the inquisitor, "a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and if you think fit, you may enter."[1]

In 1759 Smollett had not produced Humphrey Clinker (1771), his masterpiece, so that his recognition came from Roderick Random (1748) or Peregrine Pickle (1751) or, perhaps, both.

Then Goldsmith wrote a novel. The Vicar of Wakefield is not one of the great novels of the century, but it is one of the best for its tender picture of family life.[2] It can hardly be said that he was experimenting with the form, for Goldsmith makes no contribution to the technique of the novel; in fact, the many improbabilities in the Vicar have led some critics to state that it shows a regression to romance. He, also, represents characters in his works as novel readers. From her statement about her knowledge of controversy,[3] we know that Olivia has read Robinson Crusoe and Tom Jones, novels in Goldsmith's library, and she was then engaged in reading Religious Courtship. Both Mrs. Hardcastle and Kate read novels. Tony reports that he has seen both of them "cry over

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[1]"A Reverie," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 394.

[2]Gallaway thinks that Goldsmith was writing to counteract the effects of sentimental novels and that the Vicar of Wakefield may be "regarded not as an idyll of simple life in rural England, but as a satire on idealism comparable to The Good-Natured Man,--a satire broken in the end by an indulgence of the novelist to his own heart and to the hearts of a sentimental reading public." "The Sentimentalism of Goldsmith," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 1181.

[3]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 97.

a book for an hour together; and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry."[1]

Goldsmith conceives of a type of novel that is not merely a realistic description of life as it is, but as it might be. This is his idea of the great English novel that should be written:

> Instead, therefore, of romances, which praise young men of spirit, who go through a variety of adventures, and, at last, conclude a life of dissipation, folly, and extravagance, in riches and matrimony, there should be some men of wit employed to compose books that might equally interest the passions of our youth; where such a one might be praised for having resisted allurements when young, and how he, at last, became Lord Mayor--how he was married to a lady of good sense, fortune, and beauty; to be as explicit as possible, the old story of Whittington, were his cat left out, might be more serviceable to the tender minded than either Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, or a hundred others, where frugality is the only good quality the hero is not possessed of.[2]

He concludes that if the schoolmasters had "sense enough" to write such books, they would be of more service to the students than all the "grammars and dictionaries" published during the last ten years. This, certainly, is not the type of novel which Goldsmith wrote.

Goldsmith shows no interest in the technique of the novel as Fielding does in the interchapters of Tom Jones and in some paragraphs of Joseph Andrews. Neither does he make a contribution to the form as Richardson did, or to the manner of telling a story as does Sterne. As a critic of the novel,

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[1] "She Stoops to Conquer," Act II, Works, II, 249.

[2] "On Education," Bee, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Works, II, 405.

Goldsmith is not at all constructive. He states what he dislikes about four modern novels. Three of them are so insignificant that the notices of their publication are not even entered in the London Chronicle.[1] The fourth, popular today as an early example of "stream-of-consciousness" technique, is admitted to contain ribald passages; but Goldsmith appears to have closed his mind against the other appeals of the work. He, then, in his criticism of the novel, fails to give an adequate view of the novel as an art form or to prove that "one good pudding is worth fifty modern romances."

III. The Drama

Goldsmith's best known criticism is of the drama. Forster calls the dramatic criticism in the Bee "competent."[2] Black thinks Goldsmith's "chance criticism on dramatic and poetical literature" both "incisive and just."[3] Dobson, too, states that Goldsmith had expressed his ideas upon the theatre with the knowledge "if not of a dramatist, at least of a

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[1]In the section of the London Chronicle called "Books Published This Day" are to be found notices of six books reviewed by Goldsmith: Voltaire's Universal History (June 28-30, 1757); Gray's Odes (July 12-14, 1757); an abstract of Burke's Enquiry (July 14-16, 1757); Butler's Remains in Verse and Prose (June 21-23, 1759); Smollett's History of England (June 21-23, 1759); and Sterne's Tristram Shandy, January 8-10, 1760); "Anecdotes of a Fashionable Author, in a Letter to Ladies Magazine" (May 3-6, 1760); and the review of Volumes III and IV of Tristram Shandy taken from the Critical Review (April 30-May 2, 1761).

[2]Forster, op. cit., p. 194.

[3]Black, op. cit., p. 78.

shrewd and common sense critic."[1] Gray, who made a study of theatrical criticism in London, considers Goldsmith "capable of fresh and vigorous criticism."[2]

Perhaps, though, a distinction should be made between Goldsmith's "dramatic" criticism and his "theatrical" criticism. By dramatic criticism is meant that evaluation of a play or playwright based on a performance or reading of a play; while theatrical criticism, on the other hand, deals with the conditions of the presentation--the acting, stage business, and conditions in the English theatre. When this contrast is made, Goldsmith appears to be more interested in the theatre than in drama.[3] At least he writes more articles on the theatre than on the drama. It is the purpose of this section to collect Goldsmith's statements on the drama as a literary genre and to survey his opinions on modern tragedies and sentimental comedies.

Goldsmith had an avid interest in the theatre. One rumour about him was that at one time he had acted in low comedy.[4] He had seen plays performed in England and on the continent; and in his library he possessed a large collection of plays from Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, and English authors. He owned, among other works, the plays of Euripides, Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Corneille, Avis,

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[1]Dobson, Life of Goldsmith, p. 130.

[2]Charles Harold Gray, Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795 (New York, 1931), p. 151.

[3]See Appendix B.

[4]Prior, op. cit., I, 202.

Balzac, La Chaussée, Cibber, and Davenant.[1] Notably missing are the works of Shakespeare which makes it easy for a reader to believe that Goldsmith based most of his adverse opinions of this dramatist on the numerous revisions which were presented by Garrick.

The drama as an art form he discusses only cursorily. There are no essays like Addison's papers on tragedy,[2] or Johnson's essays on "Samson Agonistes," and Macbeth[3] or Hume's "Of Tragedy,"[4] nor a discussion of tragedy, if merely a summary of accepted ideas, as Newbery has in The Art of Poetry,[5] nor even an account of the origin of comedy and tragedy as it is given in the Belles Lettres essays.[6] But a reading of the works will show that Goldsmith made comments about the plot, characters, dialogue, and diction.

The plot, Goldsmith would agree, is an imitation of the action of men. It must be probable. Further, the plot must be filled with incident. One excellence of Murphy, in his Orphan of China, was that he developed "a barren plot" which

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[1]See catalogue of books in Goldsmith's library. Ibid., II, 578-584.

[2]Spectator, Nos. 39, 40, 42, 44 (April 14, 16, 18, 20, 1711), I, 199-209, 215-218, 225-232.

[3]Rambler, Nos. 139, 140, (July 16, 20, 1751), III, 157-168; "Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth," V, 55-94.

[4]David Hume, "Of Tragedy," op. cit., I, 244-254.

[5]Newbery, "Tragedy," op. cit., II, 165-170.

[6]"The Origin of Poetry," Works, I, 346-347.

he took from Voltaire's L'Orpheline de la Chine;[1] Townley's "High Life below Stairs" suffered from "barrenness of incident" which the author could have prevented.[2] Home's Douglas lacked incident which was needed to create suspense and prepare the audience for the catastrophe.[3]

It is through the arrangement of incidents in the plot that the author is able to produce the emotions which are to be felt by the audience. Of special interest to Goldsmith was the manner of securing pathos. This emotion, he thought, was best produced by contrast. Moses, in the Vicar of Wakefield, commends Ovid who "understands the use of contrast. . . [for] upon that figure artfully managed, all strength in the pathetic depends."[4] Contrast is well utilized by Shakespeare, Otway, and Rowe in producing pathos in their tragedies:

> Othello, therefore, meets the mistress he must soon kill, in all the extasy of a happy lover. Acasto surveys the felicity of his family with the most unreserved degree of rapture; and the father of the Fair Penitent, who soon is to be wretched indeed, begins in a strain of exultation, that forces us almost to envy his felicity.[5]

Having made their appearance in joy and good fortune, the characters who suffer become more pathetic. Goldsmith thinks

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[1]"Review of Murphy's Orphan of China," Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 352.

[2]"A Word or Two on . . . High Life below Stairs," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 395.

[3]"Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 251.

[4]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 98.

[5]"Review of Murphy's Orphan of China," Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 352.

that "the great excite our pity by their fall";[1] consequently, this change in fortune must be marked, for ". . . we are apt to pity the sufferings of mankind, in proportion as they have fallen from former happiness."[2] Murphy's chief error was his failure to prepare for the pathos by a proper introduction of incidents.[3]

Further, the emotion of pity is painful; it cannot be endured over a long period. The dramatist must manage his plot so that he will not make impossible demands upon the feelings of his audience. When Lien Chi Altangi went to see his first English play, presumably Home's Douglas which was presented at Covent Garden,[4] he was surprised to see the characters "in as much distress in the first act as the last." He wondered how it was possible to feel pity through the course of the entire play.

> Pity is but a short lived passion . . . Neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes, affect me, unless there be cause; after I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater; if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion, in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he

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[1]"Essay on the Theatre," Westminster Magazine (January, 1773), Works, I, 399.

[2]"Review of Murphy's Orphan of China," op. cit., p. 352.

[3]Ibid.

[4]See note by Gibbs, Works, III, 76-77.

> anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause.[1]

Only very skilful dramatists have been able to produce pathos without having it descend into bathos. Next to Shakespeare, Goldsmith places Otway as the "greatest genius England ever produced in tragedy;"[2] he knew how to secure pathos: "His excellencies lay in painting directly from nature, in catching every emotion just as it rises from the soul, and in all the powers of the moving and pathetic."[3] This ability to move the heart, no doubt, led Goldsmith to overrate Otway. Addison, too, had praised Otway for excelling in portraying the passionate and pathetic.[4] In a later work, Goldsmith writes that "Rowe was only outdone by Shakespeare and Otway as a tragic writer: he has fewer absurdities than either, and is, perhaps, as pathetic as they. . ."[5] Goldsmith liked the way Rowe managed the pathos in Jane Shore;

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XXI (March 21, 1760), Works, III, 81.

[2] "An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 446. A modern student of Otway has chosen Next to Shakespeare for the title of her study of the stage history of Venice Preserved and The Orphan. She admits that today Otway's fame is academic and that he no longer shares honors with Shakespeare. Aline Mackenzie Taylor, Next to Shakespeare (Durham, 1950), p. 270. For an account of a difference of opinion between Johnson and Goldsmith over Otway's Venice Preserved, see Northcote, op. cit., I, 288.

[3] "An Account of the Augustan Age of England," op. cit., p. 446.

[4] Spectator, No. 39 (April 14, 1711), I, 203.

[5] A History of England, Works, V, 346.

and as the pathetic always affected Goldsmith, he tended to make extravagant statements about dramatists who were able to make that appeal. Warton did not share this enthusiasm for Rowe's plays; he called them pleasing poems, but "inactive and unmoving tragedies."[1]

Not the plot but the characters received the most emphasis in late eighteenth century criticism. One possible explanation for this shift in interest is that it may have resulted from the vast body of Shakespearean criticism being written. The apologists of Shakespeare were forced to admit that the bard did not follow the unities, but that he created excellent characters. After Johnson published his edition of Shakespeare, most of the criticism dealt with the characters in the plays. Goldsmith did not write any essays on Shakespearan characters as had Johnson or William Richardson ("Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters," 1774),[2] but he shows more interest in characterization than in the plot.

In the "Preface" to the Good-Natured Man, Goldsmith writes, "to delineate character" is the chief aim of the dramatist. His implication is that of Arthur Murphy, who, writing in the Gray's Inn Journal, states, "But fable is but

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[1]Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 268.

[2]Saintsbury thinks "it is enough to draw iron tears down the critic's cheek" that Goldsmith did not "write a literary parallel to the magnificent Reverie." This I take to be "A Reverie at the Boar's-Head Tavern in Eastcheap," British Magazine (February, March, April, 1760), Works, I, 275-290. Goldsmith writes an historical account of the tavern instead of writing a critique of Falstaff or Prince Hal. See Saintsbury, op. cit., II, 498.

a secondary beauty; the exhibition of character, and the excitement of the passions, justly claiming the precedence."[1] In another paper he expresses the same idea. He is giving the relation of the plot to the characters: "A well-constructed fable, especially if it be, as it ought, subservient to the production of characters, affords me the most exquisite entertainment."[2] In the review of The Orphan of China Goldsmith does not praise Murphy for his creation of characters. The reason may have been that he was writing about Orientals, people that he did not know well.

On the other hand, Goldsmith greatly admires Norval and Glenalvon in Home's Douglas.[3] He states that Home was successful in retaining Norval's "native innocence." The character of Glenalvon was strongly marked, reminding Goldsmith of Shakespeare's Richard III. The characters in Townley's High Life below Stairs were not sharply differentiated.[4] Goldsmith places Vanbrugh second to Congreve, for his characters were "more new."[5] Although he considered Farquhar more entertaining than his contemporaries, he "seldom strikes

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[1]Arthur Murphy, Gray's Inn Journal, No. XLI (July 28, 1753), Works (London, 1786), V, 356.

[2]Ibid., No. LXIX (February 9, 1754), VI, 150.

[3]"Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 252.

[4]Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 395.

[5]History of England, Works, V, 345.

his characters with the proper force or originality,"[1] Goldsmith writes. Most critics of the period stated that the characters should be "characteristical;" that is, the doctrine of decorum required the characters to act appropriately for their age, occupation, and social rank. Goldsmith appears not to have applied this doctrine in any of his criticism.

One way of judging character is by what the person says, and the character's speech should be the language of life. As a result of this belief, Goldsmith had some comments on dialogue. In the farce, High Life below Stairs, the servants talked too much alike. The author "sacrificed all the vivacity of the dialogue to nature; and though he makes his characters talk like servants, they are seldom absurd enough, or lively enough, . . ."[2] In this case Goldsmith demands more than a realistic representation of the conversation of servants in the dialogue of a play. Mr. Roach reports Goldsmith as preferring the comedies of Farquhar to those of his contemporaries, for his plays were "truer to nature" and possessed more of the comic spirit; "because people were rarely so witty in their dialogue as Congreve makes them, . . ."[3] Although Goldsmith may have preferred the humour in Farquhar's comedies to the wit and intellect in Congreve's comedies, he

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 395.

[3] Prior, op. cit., II, 160.

is honest and just in his estimate that Congreve is "justly allowed the foremost in that species of dramatic poesy: . . ."[1]

Diction, the means of expression, came up for discussion in connection with poetry. The language of the dialogue assumes great importance in drama, for the audience must depend upon the spoken word for all of their information about the plot, characters, and thought. Goldsmith praises Nathaniel Lee for his "great command of language, and vast force of expression."[2] Addison, too, had great respect for Lee, but he felt that Lee had not sufficiently restrained his expression; "His thoughts are wonderfully suited to tragedy, but frequently lost in such a cloud of words that it is hard to see the beauty of them."[3] A similar idea is held by the author of the Belles Lettres essays who writes of the "rant of Lee."[4]

Goldsmith remarks that Dryden and Otway "gave strength and propriety to the language."[5] Free from provincialisms and coarse expressions, their diction raised the tone of their dialogue. The language owes a great debt to Dryden, who "first gave it regular harmony and discovered its latent

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[1] History of England, Works, V, 345.

[2] "An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 446.

[3] Spectator, No. 39 (April 14, 1711), I, 203.

[4] "Upon Taste," Works, I, 330.

[5] History of England, Works, V, 334.

powers."[1] Goldsmith felt that Steele's relationship with Addison was not a good one, for Steele imitated his companion; "This emulation destroyed that genuine flow of diction which is discoverable in all his former compositions."[2] Most critics would account for the differences between the works, diction even, of the two men in terms of their temperament, training, and interest. Goldsmith was quite pleased with the way Home handled the diction of the shepherd Norval:

> The native innocence of the shepherd Norval is happily expressed; it requires some art to dress the thoughts and phrases of the common people, without letting them swell into bombast, or sink into vulgarity: a fault generally charged upon the English authors, who are remarked by their neighbours of the continent to write too much above, or too much below, every subject they undertake to treat upon.[3]

Distinctive yet appropriate, the diction characterized the shepherd without being coarse and ungrammatical. Dialect, of course, could not be tolerated. Goldsmith objects to Gay's use of it in "The Shepherd's Week."[4] He praises Murphy's Orphan of China for its "propriety of diction."[5] Propriety, or a sense of the appropriate in the choice of language, forms a large part of Goldsmith's interest in expression.

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[1]"An Account of the Augustan Age of England," op. cit., p. 445.

[2]Ibid., p. 449.

[3]"Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 252.

[4]"Introductory Criticisms," Works, V, 157.

[5]"Review of Murphy's Orphan of China," Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 353.

Goldsmith's opinion of the rules for the drama, especially the unities of time, place, and action, shows that he felt good plays need not follow the rules. Goldsmith states that the rules were invented by Greek tragedians, not Aristotle, but that Shakespeare and other English dramatists have written well without knowing them.[1] He does not discuss them as impressively as Johnson does in his "Preface to Shakespeare,"[2] but in the review of Home's Douglas, Goldsmith makes a firm pronouncement on the rules:

> A mechanically exact adherence to all the rules of the drama is more the business of industry than of genius. Theatrical lawgivers rather teach the ignorant where to censure, than the poet how to write. If sublimity, sentiment, and passion, give warmth and life and expression to the whole, we can the more easily dispense with the rules of the Stagyrite, but if languor, affectation, and the false sublime, are substituted for these, an observance of all the precepts of the ancients will prove but a poor compensation.[3]

The belief that an observance of the rules will not in itself make a work excellent is to be found throughout Goldsmith's criticism. The rules do not teach one how to write a play; neither can an observance of the rules be substituted for emotions, ideas, and adequate expression. He criticizes Home's Douglas for its strict adherence to the rules.[4]

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[1] "Review of the works of the Reverend Mr. Hawkins," Critical Review (August, 1759), Works, IV, 396.

[2] Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," V, 118-123.

[3] "Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 251.

[4] Ibid.

Townley's High Life below Stairs suffers from conforming to the rules of the critics.[1]

In the Memoirs of M. de Voltaire, Goldsmith translates Voltaire's defence of the drama against the attacks made by La Motte in his "Premier Discours sur la Tragedie." Goldsmith calls Voltaire's answer a "fine piece of criticism."[2] Voltaire defends the rules of classical drama. He expresses his approval of the unities of time, place, and action. The time of the action and the representation should be equal. Continuing, Voltaire states that the best writers, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Addison, Congreve, and Maffei, have all observed the rules. Dramatists like Shakespeare and Lopez de Vega who have not followed the rules, have been admired, but they have not been imitated.[3] Even though Goldsmith raises no objections to any of the points, a reader may presume too much if he concludes that Goldsmith endorses them.[4]

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[1]Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 395.

[2]Ibid., pp. 14-17.

[3]Ibid., pp. 14-17.

[4]Dr. Farr tells of Goldsmith reading some scenes from a tragedy which he was writing. It was, presumably, never completed. It is interesting to speculate upon its nature. Since Goldsmith was an admirer of Voltaire, it would be easy to expect the English dramatist to imitate him like Murphy in the Orphan of China or Cradock in Zobeide. Only he hated imitation. Goldsmith might follow the unities, although the time of action need not be the time of representation. He would write in rhyme, since he despised blank verse. But Goldsmith's genius lay in the direction of comedy, so that we could not expect the tragedy to be successful. It would be genial and graceful, but disappointing to the author like Johnson's Irene. See Prior, op. cit., I, 212-213; Forster, op. cit., p. 62; Gibbs, Works, III, 538 n.

Voltaire favors rhyme as the preferred medium of expression in tragedy. He defends its use on the basis of its antiquity; and he observes, "the return of similar sounds is so natural to mankind" that rhymes are to be found among the uncultivated.[1] At no time does Goldsmith state that tragedies should be written in rhyme. In fact, he calls Murphy's The Orphan of China, written in blank verse, "entirely poetical."[2]

During the third quarter of the century, the English drama may be said to have reached the nadir of its course. With the exception of a few bourgeoise tragedies, like Moore's The Gamester (1753), tragedy had lost its role as a vital form of expression. Speaking through the mouth of the Chinese Philosopher, Goldsmith criticizes the tragedies being produced. Amazed at the preparations for opening the new season, Lien Chi Altangi states that nothing is more easy than to write for the English stage since all the requirements are to know when to introduce thunder and lightning, use trap-doors, present a wire-walker, or capitalize on each actor's specialty whether it is an exclamation, start, groan, or a smile.[3] He then states the secret of writing tragedies; one must have a "perfect acquaintance with theatrical "ah"'s and "oh"'s."[4]

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[1]"Memoirs of M. de Voltaire," Works, IV, 17.

[2]Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 352.

[3]Citizen of the World, Letter LXXIX (September 30, 1760), Works, III, 296-297.

[4]Ibid., p. 297.

Further, the formula includes oaths dispersed at intervals, whining scenes, and opportunities for contortions. Every tragedy must include an act in which two actors are to enter

> with wild looks and outspread arms: there is no necessity for speaking, they are only to groan at each other; they must vary the tones of exclamation and despair through the whole theatrical gamut, wring their figures into every shape of distress, and when their calamities have drawn a proper quantity of tears from the sympathetic spectators, they may go off in dumb solemnity at different doors, clasping their hands or slapping their pocket-holes:[1]

To show how the variety show, which was usurping the boards of the theatre, was changing the popular idea of what a tragedy should be, Goldsmith writes his satire.

He was equally contemptuous of the sober moral tone that was prevading some of the modern tragedies. In a revealing paragraph he satirizes the didacticism of some of them:

> Tragedies, however, as they are now made, are good instructive moral sermons enough; and it would be a fault not to be pleased with good things. There I learn several great truths; as, that it is impossible to see into the ways of futurity; that punishment always attends the villain; that love is the fond soother of the human breast; that we should not resist Heaven's will,--for in resisting Heaven's will, Heaven's will is resisted; with several other sentiments equally new, delicate, and striking. Every new tragedy, therefore, I shall go to see; for reflections of this kind make a tolerable harmony, when mixed up with a proper quantity of drum, trumpet, thunder, lightning, or the scene-shifter's whistle.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Citizen of the World, Letter XCVII (November 7, 1760), Works, III, 359. See Appendix B.

Not only does Goldsmith satirize the trite moralistic themes of many of the plays, but he shows how distracting the stage business can be.

Goldsmith best reveals his attitude toward the drama in the review of Douglas, a Tragedy; as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden.[1] The review opens with a statement that when the town has long awaited a performance, the desire is to praise it. The critic states his function, "to direct the taste and conduct the poet up to perfection,"[2] and he condemns a strict adherence to the rules of the drama. His chief criticism lies in this paragraph:

> Suffice it, then, if we only add that this tragedy's want of moral, which should be the ground-work of every fable; the unfolding a material part of the plot in soliloquy; the preposterous distress of a married lady for a former husband, who had been dead near twenty years; the want of incidents to raise that fluctuation of hope and fear which interest us in the catastrophe, are all faults we could easily pardon, did poetic fire, elegance, or the heightening of pathetic distress, afford adequate compensation: but these are dealt to us with a sparing hand.[3]

Although Goldsmith is critical of the unfolding of the plot, the lack of moral, the management of the pathos, he admires the descriptions of nature and the characterization of Norval and Glenalvon. He quotes some of the good passages in the review.

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[1] "Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 249-253.

[2] Ibid., p. 250.

[3] Ibid., p. 251.

The review is quite fair, and Goldsmith's verdict has been sustained by posterity. Garrick had rejected the play, for he thought the "plot was too simple and undramatic."[1] Thomas Davies, friend of Goldsmith and Johnson and biographer of Garrick, doubted whether the play showed the "true ends of tragedy," but he felt that Garrick erred in failing to produce it. Arthur Murphy was of the same opinion, but he writes that Garrick did not think "the part of Young Norval adequate to his superior powers."[2] Walpole, who saw the play, thought that Home had talent for "painting genuine nature and the manners of his country," but he was not enthusiastic about Douglas, even though he called it the author's best play.[3] Blair, on the other hand, thought the denouement of the play a "masterpiece of the kind,"[4] but he may have been showing some chauvinism.

Another review, equally revealing of Goldsmith's opinion of the drama is of Arthur Murphy's The Orphan of China; a Tragedy, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.[5] Opening the review with a comment on the current rage

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[1]Thomas Davies, Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick (3d ed., London, 1781), I, 221-222.

[2]Arthur Murphy, The Life of David Garrick (London, 1801), I, 315-316.

[3]Letter to Sir David Dalrymple, April 4, 1760, op. cit., IV, 369.

[4]Blair, op. cit., p. 515.

[5]"Review of Murphy's Orphan of China," Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 350-355.

for things Chinese, Goldsmith writes that "in proportion as the plot has become more European, it has become more perfect,"[1] and that Murphy has written a play, "if not truly Chinese, at least entirely poetical."[2] The chief error of the plot was lack of variety; the dramatist introduces the pathos too early and is unable to sustain the emotion or raise it to a climax during the course of the play. In contrast, Goldsmith shows how Shakespeare, Otway, and Rowe utilized pity in their tragedies.

The reaction of the audience to the production on the opening night led Goldsmith to write:

> The whole house seemed pleased, highly and justly pleased; but it was not with the luxury of woe they seemed affected; the nervous sentiment, the glowing imagery, the well-conducted scenery, seemed the sources of the pleasure: their judgment could not avoid approving the conduct of the drama, yet few of the situations were capable of getting within the soul, or exciting a single tear; in short, it was quickly seen, that all the faults of the performance proceeded from vicious imitation, and all its beauties were the poet's own.[3]

With his aversion for imitation, Goldsmith would, naturally, comment on the resemblances between Murphy's play and Voltaire's. He willingly accedes that the beauties were original with Murphy; and he was, also, willing to balance one original scene against the defects in the play. It is at this point

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[1] Ibid., p. 351.

[2] Ibid., pp. 351-352.

[3] Ibid., pp. 352-353.

that he makes his famous statement about judging works from the beauties in them: "Works of genius are not to be judged from the faults to be met with in them, but by the beauties in which they abound."[1] After presenting one of the scenes between Mandane and Zamti, Goldsmith points out the "strength of thought, a propriety of diction, and a perfect acquaintance with the stage" to be found in the scene. At the end of the review, the critic refers to the letter which Murphy wrote Voltaire, a letter which Goldsmith thinks should have been suppressed.

The review shows an appreciation for a modern tragedy that had been written by a contemporary. The play had its imperfections, but it was good theatre. Garrick had not considered it a good play and refused to produce it[2] even after it had been highly recommended by such persons as William Whitehead, the poet laureate,[3] Horace Walpole, and Henry Fox.[4] Thomas Davies, who saw the play too, writes that the Orphan of China was "universally approved, and acted many nights with the greatest approbation and applause."[5]

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[1]Ibid., p. 353.

[2]Davies, op. cit., I, 221.

[3]Ibid., p. 228.

[4]For full account of the rejection see Murphy, op. cit., I, 330-338.

[5]Davies, op. cit., I, 231. Even though Goldsmith recognized the worth of the play, he would not permit the author to be carried to the Temple of Fame by the Fame Machine. [In the article the person is unnamed. It is Bohn who writes

Both of the reviews show a proper appreciation for two modern tragedies that were good theatre, but not excellent plays. Time has sustained Goldsmith's opinion, for today both plays are museum pieces read only by students of the period in which they were written.

With the production of Colley Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1696), sentimental comedy was formally introduced on the English stage. After fluctuating in its popularity, sentimental comedy received a new impetus in the 1760's. Throughout the decade such playwrights as Hugh Kelly, Sir Richard Cumberland, William Whitehead, and Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith capitalized on the interest in the sentimental, over-refined characters and situations which the audience so greatly admired. It is in opposition to this type of play that Goldsmith writes the "Good-Natured Man" which was produced by Colman at the Covent Garden Theatre, January 29, 1768. Dobson considers this play to be Goldsmith's "practical and individual protest against the existing order of things."[1]

(continued) "probably Mr. Murphy." See Gibbs, Works, II, 391 n.] Murphy, upon the presentation of "some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions," is told by the coachman that there is no place for him at present, but that he might anticipate a place in the future. "What!" replied the disappointed poet, "shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue!--" "Follow nature," returned the other, "and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity." "A Reverie," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 392.

[1]Austin Dobson, "Introduction," The Good-Natured Man (Boston, 1903), xv.

The preface to the play contains Goldsmith's opinion of comedy. He states that he "was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them."[1] By the "last age" Goldsmith meant the Elizabethan period rather than the Restoration,[2] for he does not imitate the wit of the Restoration dramatists. Instead, he depends upon the incongruity of situation and incident to provoke the laughter which he thinks comedy should produce. His thesis is that nature and humour should be the aim of the playwright and the delineation of character his principal duty. To Goldsmith, humour was not "low." He deplored the taste for "genteel comedy" which praised the virtues of domestic life instead of satirizing the vices; he warned that the English stage may follow the example of the French which, in banishing humour from the stage, also banished the spectators.[3]

The early stage history of the Good-Natured Man shows the prevailing taste for comedy. Garrick (perhaps for personal reasons) would not produce it; Colman, who was persuaded to present it, produced the play very late in the season, allowing Garrick to open Hugh Kelly's False Delicacy a week

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[1]"Preface to the Good-Natured Man," Works, II, 145.

[2]See Allardyce Nicoll, A History of the Eighteenth Century Drama (Cambridge, 1927), p. 158; also, David Macmillan and Howard M. Jones, ed. Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (New York, 1931), p. 289.

[3]"Preface to the Good-Natured Man," Works, II, 146.

earlier as a rival offering. William Cooke writes that the play did not please "equal to its merits," for, "Sentimental writing had then got possession of the stage, and nothing but morality and sententious writing lifted upon stilts, could meet the vitiated taste of the audience."[1] After the first showing the bailiff scene had to be removed, for it was hissed; "the predominant cry of the prejudiced and illiterate part of the pit was 'it was low--it was d__mn'd wulgar, &c.'"[2] Northcote, too, writes that the audience's "delicacy was so much hurt" upon hearing the words, "That's all my eye,"[3] that if the scene had not been changed the play would have been driven from the theatre.[4] The scene was replaced "in deference also to the judgment of a few friends" when the play was printed; and in 1773, it was restored to the acting version of the play. Dr. Johnson called it the best comedy which had appeared since Vanbrugh's The Provoked Husband (1728).

Three modern critics have shown some disagreement in their interpretation of the Good-Natured Man. Bernbaum

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[1]William Cooke, "Table Talk," European Magazine, XXIV (August, 1793), 94.

[2]Ibid.

[3]The Good-Natured Man, Act III, Works, II, 179.

[4]Northcote, op. cit., I, 168.

feels that the play made concessions to the public taste. He writes: "To make a successful revolt against the dominance of the drama of sensibility, it did not suffice to write a sentimental comedy with sprightly comic passages; one must exclude the sentimental entirely."[1] This step, Bernbaum continues, Goldsmith had not taken in this play. Sherburn agrees with Bernbaum that the play makes a "partial concession" to his auditors by combining in Honeywood "both sentiment and criticism of sentiment."[2] But his evaluation that Goldsmith here preaches a "prudent benevolism" approaches that of the third critic, Gallaway, who states, "The title of the play indicates that Goldsmith's fundamental purpose was to ridicule extravagance disguised as generosity and gullibility masked as universal benevolence."[3] He thinks that the play is a satire designed to show that virtue must be checked by prudence.

It is true that the speech of Sir William to Honeywood, in which the moral of the play is stated, makes rather obvious the purpose of the play:

> . . . I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw, with indignation, the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition which, though inclined to the

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[1] Ernest Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility (Cambridge [Mass.], 1925), p. 228.

[2] Sherburn, op. cit., p. 1041.

[3] W. F. Gallaway, "The Sentimentalism of Goldsmith," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 1167-1181.

> right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw, with regret, those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty; your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship, but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms; but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution.[1]

The satire is laughing and good-natured. It is probable that it was missed by the majority of the theatre-goers who identified themselves with Miss Richland, the forgiving heroine who felt that Honeywood's "tenderness, his humanity, and his universal friendship" atoned for his faults. The mere fact that the play is capable of two interpretations reveals Goldsmith's weakness in resolving the conflicting issues in the plot.

Five years later, Goldsmith published an "Essay On the Theatre; or a comparison between Sentimental and Laughing Comedy."[2] This essay, which presents Goldsmith in his most urbane manner, opens with a statement on the present fashions of the theatre which have displaced the "natural portrait of human folly and frailty."[3] He states the need for keeping

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[1] The Good-Natured Man, Act V, Works, II, 212.

[2] Westminster Magazine (January, 1773), Works, I, 398-402. Adams and Hathaway refuse to consider the essay an attack on sentimental comedy. They feel that Goldsmith would not "attack the basic idea of sentimentalism, that human nature is fundamentally good." Dramatic Essays of the Neo-Classic Age, ed. Henry Hitch Adams and Baxter Hathaway (New York, 1950), p. 381.

[3] "Essay on the Theatre," op. cit., p. 398.

the genres apart by giving Aristotle's distinction between comedy and tragedy.[1] At this point he asks whether comedy which exhibits the follies of mankind is not to be preferred to the "species of bastard tragedy" then in vogue. He mentions Boileau who states that "comedy will not admit of tragic distress"[2] and Voltaire who laughs at "tradesman's tragedy."

Goldsmith characterizes sentimental comedy "in which the virtues of private life are exhibited rather than the vices exposed; and distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece."[3] Instead of presenting humour, the plays contain sentiment and feeling, and each man is flattered" in his favourite foible" or forgiven instead of being corrected. The present comedies are a type of "mulish production, with all the defects of its opposite parents, and marked with sterility."[4] If comedy causes tears, then tragedy will produce laughter. Becoming satirical, Goldsmith states that the person who "can hammer out a novel" can write a sentimental comedy; all that is needed is to

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[1]Aristotle's definition: ". . . comedy is an imitation of those who are worse than ourselves, yet not in every sort of evil but only in that business of which the ridiculous is a species." Poetics, trans. Allan Gilbert, op. cit., p. 74.

[2]Boileau, L'Art Poétique, III, 401-402.

[3]"Essay on the Theatre," op. cit., p. 400.

[4]Ibid., p. 401.

> . . . raise the characters a little; to deck out the hero with a ribband, or give the heroine a title; then to put an insipid dialogue, without character or humour, into their mouths, give them mighty good hearts, very fine clothes, furnish a new set of scenes, make a pathetic scene or two, with a sprinkling of tender melancholy conversation through the whole, and there is no doubt but all the ladies will cry, and all the gentlemen applaud.[1]

"Humour," Goldsmith concludes, "at present seems to be departing from the stage, . . ." and it is left to the audience whether the comic art will be retrieved.

"Essay on the Theatre", which raised the same objections to sentimental comedy which Voltaire had made against the comédie larymoyante of Nivelle de la Chaussée,[2] appeared two months before Colman presented She Stoops to Conquer, March 15, 1773, Goldsmith's masterpiece of nature and humour. The play became an immediate success.[3] In the "Dedication" to Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith thanks him for his partiality to the play. He continues, "The undertaking a comedy, not merely sentimental, was very dangerous; and Mr. Colman, who saw the piece in its various stages, always thought it so."[4] Three contemporary opinions stress the laughter the play provoked. Walpole, who called She Stoops to Conquer "the lowest of all

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Gustave Lanson, Nivelle de la Chaussée et la Comédie Larmoyante (Paris, 1903), pp. 293-295; also, Sells, op. cit., pp. 143-148.

[3] For an account of the first performance, see Richard Cumberland, Memoirs (London, 1806), pp. 152-153.

[4] "Dedication to She Stoops to Conquer," Works, II, 216.

farces," admitted the situations "are well imagined, and make one laugh, . . ."[1] When Goldsmith asked Northcote whether the play made him laugh, Northcote answered, "Exceedingly." "Then," said the Doctor, "that is all I require."[2] And Dr. Johnson told Boswell, "I know no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy--making an audience merry."[3]

Dobson credits the play with giving sentimental comedy "a deadly if not fatal blow,"[4] and Buckland states that "it changed the course of comedy."[5] Bernbaum, however, proves that despite the popularity of the play it "did not give rise to a school of 'laughing comedy'."[6] Nettleton, on the other hand, writes that it is no longer necessary for Goldsmith to ask which type of comedy deserves the preference, "The whirligig of time had brought in his revenge."[7] The reception of the play proved to Goldsmith's satisfaction that his theory that comedy should depict nature and humour and delineate the

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[1]Letter to the Reverend William Mason, March 27, 1773, op. cit., VIII, 260; Letter to the Countess of Upper Ossory, March 27, 1773, Ibid., 261-262.

[2]Northcote, op. cit., I, 286 n.

[3]Boswell, op. cit., II, 233.

[4]Dobson, "Introduction to a Good Natur'd Man," p. xxvii.

[5]Buckland, op. cit., p. 69.

[6]Bernbaum, op. cit., p. 247.

[7]Nettleton, op. cit., p. 290.

follies of character was right. Unfortunately, he died before he was able to assert further leadership in restoring the comedy of laughter.

This chapter has shown that Goldsmith held the neoclassical doctrine of genres. Instead of giving principles for the genres or stating the effects which each should produce, he discussed the genres in terms of his aversions. He disliked the modern epic, elegy, pastoral, and Pindaric ode. By inference and by his practice, a reader can conclude that Goldsmith preferred descriptive, narrative, and didactic poetry.

Although he wrote a novel, he did not regard the form very highly. He made no distinction between the novel and romance, and he had no suggestions for improving the technique or broadening the subject matter.

He objected to most of the plays that were being written. The authors of tragedy did not know how to depict the incidents which should arouse pity. The writers of comedy, no longer satirizing human foibles, were mixing the genres and creating "mulish productions." By writing two comedies in which humour and character predominated, he showed that laughing comedy could be successful. With the exception of his statement about the epic, Goldsmith presents a rather traditional attitude toward poetry, the novel, and drama.

V. GOLDSMITH'S CONCEPT OF THE AUTHOR, AUDIENCE, CRITICISM AND THE CRITIC

During the second half of the century a large reading public, avid for newspapers, magazines, and books, had developed.[1] Numerous booksellers undertook to supply the demand by engaging professional writers to contribute essays, reviews, compilations, summaries, and original works. As a consequence, the author who made his living solely by his pen was just coming into existence. This author was not subsidized by a political party nor given favors by the rich. Patronage was becoming a thing of the past, for it was now possible for an author to make a respectable living and maintain his independence.

Both Johnson and Goldsmith maintained their independence as writers of integrity and free choice.[2] In 1762 the Tory minister granted Johnson a pension of three hundred pounds a year "solely as the reward of his literary merit;"[3] thereby, he was relieved from the necessity of earning a livelihood by his pen. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that his friend, Goldsmith, became the next author to rise to prominence entirely dependent upon the income from his writing.

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[1] A. S. Collins, The Profession of Letters (London, 1928), pp. 17-27.

[2] "No man [said Johnson] who ever lived by literature, has lived more independently than I have done." Boswell, op. cit., I, 443.

[3] Ibid., I, 373.

Since Goldsmith was a professional author and critic, his opinions are of historical value in depicting the literary practices in England between 1757-1774. It is the purpose of this chapter to state his concept of actual practices in England: 1) to describe the position of the professional author; 2) to depict the new reading public; and 3) to discuss criticism and the critic of the period.

I

In his first major work, An Enquiry into the State of Learning (1759), Goldsmith inveighs against the position of the author in England. The "link between patronage and learning" is now broken, and the "man of wit," neglected by the great, is despised by the public.[1]

> He is called an author, and all know that an author is a thing only to be laughed at. His person, not his jest, becomes the mirth of the company. At his approach, the most fat unthinking face brightens into malicious meaning. Even aldermen laugh, and revenge on him the ridicule which was lavished on their forefathers.[2]

The author must first "combat contempt before he can arrive at glory;" he must expect calumny from society "before he can hope for the applause of the judicious."

Goldsmith, then, quotes from Voltaire's letter to A. M. Le Fĕvre on the hardships attached to the professional author.

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[1] Enquiry, Works, I, 503-504.

[2] Ibid., p. 504.

Voltaire points out the dilemma in which an author finds himself whether he is successful or unsuccessful. Goldsmith seems to be most sensitive to the treatment given the artist by "men of the first eminence" who should admire his endeavours. Not only the author's low social position but his poverty is reviled by the public.

> The poet's poverty is a standing topic of contempt. His writing for bread is an unpardonable offence. Perhaps of all mankind an author in these times is used most hardly. We keep him poor, and yet revile his poverty. Like angry parents who correct their children till they cry, and then correct them for crying, we reproach him for living by his wit, and yet allow him no other means to live.[1]

About this situation Goldsmith feels keenly, for he knows that the artist does not live in garrets and cellars by choice. Poverty is not the fault of the author. He, too, "knows how to prefer a bottle of champaign to the nectar of the neighbouring alehouse, or a venison pasty to a plate of potatoes."[2] Goldsmith thinks that writing for money is not only proper but desirable. Wit may be the "only property a man sometime has." In that case, "we must not underrate him who uses it for subsistence."[3]

This idea is restated by the Chinese Philosopher. He was amazed that in England "all seem convinced, that a book written by vulgar hands can neither instruct nor improve;"

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[1] Ibid., p. 507.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

none but titled authors write with any degree of success. He was shocked at the lack of respect for the professional author. "Hunger," he thought, had a "most amazing faculty of sharpening the genius." He continued that if he wanted a hat he would not go to a hose maker; is he desired shoes he would not visit his tailor; consequently, in his selection of authors he would not choose the dilettante but the writer.

> It is so with regard to wit: did I, for my life desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it. You smile at the oddity of my opinion; but, be assured, my friend, that wit is, in some measure, mechanical; and that a man, long habituated to catch at even its resemblance, will at last be happy enough to possess the substance. By a long habit of writing he acquires a justness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holyday writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal.[1]

Goldsmith not only defends the professional author for writing for money, but he points out the responsibility of this author and the responsibility of the public to him. He feels that the author should not prostitute his talents and write merely for money. He believes, "The author who draws his quill merely to take a purse, no more deserves success than he who presents a pistol."[2] The author is a teacher and reformer. He serves the public through his works by ridiculing folly and laughing the reader into thinking.

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter XCIII (January 7, 1761), Works, III, 347-348.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 503.

> An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature. He acts, not by punishing crimes, but preventing them. However virtuous the present age, there may be still growing employment for ridicule or reproof, for persuasion, or satire. If the author be therefore still so necessary among us, let us treat him with proper consideration, as a child of the public, not a rent charge on the community.[1]

A similar idea is expressed with regard to the dramatic poet, who is a "firm champion in the cause of virtue, detects all the new machinations of vice, levels his satire at the rising structures of folly, or drives her from behind the retrenchments of fashion."[2] The professional author, then, is a substantial citizen in the community with a definite function to perform. In return, since he is a "child of the public," he should be treated with respect. The public should not add neglect to the author's "natural inconveniences." Suffice it to state that the public is to be condemned for the neglect of the genius of the age.[3]

One of the letters in the Citizen of the World has for its title, "The Anecdotes of Several Poets, Who Lived and Died in Circumstances of Wretchedness." Among the neglected poets named are Homer, Tasso, Cervantes, Vauglas, Cassander, and in England, Spenser, Otway, Butler, and Dryden. At the end of the essay, Goldsmith writes that now conditions have

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[1] Ibid., 507-508.

[2] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 537.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 508.

changed. Authors no longer depend upon "the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public collectively considered, is a good and generous master."[1] The closing paragraph states the case for the author of talent.

> A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret, might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune; and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence.[2]

This declaration of the author's independence was written when Goldsmith was receiving a guinea for each essay contributed to the Public Ledger. He was, in 1761, exceedingly optimistic; and in truth, the years bore out his opinion. Had he not been so improvident, he could have lived comfortably on his earnings, for he received £ 400 for the Good-Natured Man and £ 150 for the copyright, £ 500 for his History of England, one hundred guineas for each volume of the Natural History, and £ 800 for She Stoops to Conquer. Moore

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXIV (October 17, 1760), Works, III, 316.

[2] Ibid.

estimates that Goldsmith's earnings for 1773 (the year before he died) "must have been little short of twelve hundred pounds,"[1] and one year he earned eighteen hundred pounds.[2] Goldsmith, at times, felt neglected by the age, for he found it necessary to do hack work when he might have made further contributions to the literature of the period.

Goldsmith's opinions of the professional author in England are shared by other writers of the period, notably by James Ralph who, a year earlier in 1758, had published The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade, Stated with Regard to Booksellers, the Stage, and the Public.[3] Ralph and Goldsmith had worked together on the staff of the Monthly Review, and it is possible that the two men had discussed the condition of the professional author,[4] since both of them present similar ideas in their works.

Ralph had stated that the author by profession was condemned for writing for money. A man might marry for money, preach or pray for money, or fight for money without accusation, but if he writes for money

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[1]Moore, op. cit., p. 429.

[2]A. S. Collins, The Profession of Letters, p. 23.

[3]James Ralph, The Case of Authors (London, 1758), pp. 1-68.

[4]See Robert W. Kenny, "Ralph's Case of Authors: Its Influence on Goldsmith and Isaac D'Israeli," PMLA, LII (1937), 109.

> the Man of Touch, in the Right of Midas his great Ancestor, enters his Caveat against him as a Man of Taste; declares the two Provinces to be incompatible; that he who aims at Praise ought to be starved; and that there ought to be so much drawback upon Character for every Acquisition in Coin.[1]

Ralph also pointed out the difficulties of the author who had no preference but to write for booksellers, the stage, or for faction. Of the three, he thought writing for the booksellers was to be preferred, for the bookseller was "a perfect Maecenas compared with the Manager." But this choice made it necessary for the author to write what the public desired. Writing for the stage was precarious, for the managers, Garrick and Rich, were difficult to deal with;[2] and writing for a faction may be lucrative but, then, it involved many risks.[3] This forthright exposal of the condition of the author by profession is restated by Goldsmith.

Goldsmith dislikes the social and economic insecurity from which the professional author suffered. Although he enjoys the independence of the author, he wavers in his opinion of the booksellers. At one time he pokes fun at them[4] or attacks them and gives the withdrawal of patronage as one

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[1]Ralph, op. cit., p. 2.

[2]Ibid., p. 24.

[3]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[4]Citizen of the World, Letter LI (June 23, 1760), Works, III, 191-195. See Kent, op. cit., pp. 1-9.

reason for the decline of literature;[1] at another he calls them his "best friends."[2] He does not, however, share Johnson's opinion that they "are generous liberal-minded men;"[3] consequently, Goldsmith acknowledges the importance of the audience, the purchasers of the booksellers' wares.

II

". . . we write in order to be read"[4] is the revealing statement Goldsmith makes in one of his reviews, for he is very conscious of the audience and the "figure we shall one day make among posterity."[5] He was also cognizant of the change that was being made in the audience. Readers were no longer the aristocrats and the republic of letters but the public. In light of this realization, he advised Gray to "study the people" and write for an English audience just as Pindar had written for a Greek audience.[6] One thing that impressed Goldsmith so much in the preaching of the

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 503-504.

[2] Hawkins, op. cit., p. 419.

[3] Boswell, op. cit., I, 304.

[4] "Review of the Works of the Reverend William Hawkins," Critical Review (March, 1760), Works, IV, 399.

[5] "Review of Barrett's Translation of Ovid's Epistles," Critical Review (January, 1760), Works, IV, 399.

[6] "Review of Gray's Odes," Monthly Review (August, 1757), Works, IV, 296.

Methodists was that the ministers adapted their discourse to the audience. This audience, composed chiefly of the poor, was addressed "not by studied periods, or cold disquisitions; not by the labours of the head, but the honest spontaneous dictates of the heart."[1]

Goldsmith thought that the English public was quite capable of judging a work of art. At least they knew what they liked, for they had been exposed to more reading material than the people on the continent.

> In England, where there are as many new books published as in all of the rest of Europe together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people: they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men.[2]

A public that can "think like men" must be taken into consideration by both writer and bookseller. Goldsmith stated that the public is a fairer judge of literary performance than the critic:

> The public, in general, set the whole piece in the proper point of view; the critic lays his eye close to all its minuteness, and condemns or approves in detail. And this may be the reason why so many writers at present are apt to appeal from the tribunal of criticism to that of the people.[3]

If there is a proper stance for judging a piece of art, the public, according to Goldsmith, take the proper one. As a

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[1]"Of Eloquence," Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, IV, 425.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter LXXV (September 17, 1760), Works, III, 285.

[3]Enquiry, Works, III, 513.

consequence, the author should listen to the voice of the people rather than the whinings of the critic.

This same attitude regarding the public's ability to judge is to be found in a discussion of the drama. The Oriental Philosopher had commented on the rivalry existing between the players of the two theaters and the prominence of acting as a profession. He continues that with regard "to their abilities in other respects, I would leave that entirely to the public, who are certainly in this case the properest judges--whether they despise them or no."[1] Again in the controversy over sentimental comedy, Goldsmith was quite willing to leave the issue to the public: "It depends upon the audience whether they will actually drive those poor merry creatures from the stage, or sit at a play as gloomy as at the tabernacle."[2] Obviously, Goldsmith had great respect for the English public. He thought that the author should write for the instruction and pleasure of the public and that the public was quite capable of judging what it liked.

Both Ralph[3] and Goldsmith strongly expressed themselves because the managers of the theaters were usurping the

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[1]Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXV (October 21, 1760), Works, III, 320.

[2]"Essay on the Theatre," Westminister Magazine (January, 1773), Works, I, 401-402.

[3]Ralph, op. cit., pp. 23-29.

privileges of the public and presenting only those plays which would bring in large box-office receipts.[1] Goldsmith claims that the stage no longer serves the public but is "made subservient to the interests of avarice."[2] He remembers the time "when the town, and not the managers of our theatres were constituted judges of literary merit. . . ."[3] Each season as many as a half dozen new plays were presented at which "the town presided as judges." Now that the audience no longer has this "opportunity of chusing," it approves every play as long as it is new. That is one reason why Home's Douglas, an inferior play, was so highly acclaimed by the audience.[4] Goldsmith thinks that the time has arrived when the public should demand their prerogatives, and he takes it upon himself to "assert the claims of the public" in the Enquiry.[5]

The audience "have a right to demand respect,"[6] and the continued presentation of revivals does not show the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 518. See also pp. 519-521.

[3] "On the Present State of Our Theatres," Weekly Magazine, No. III (January 12, 1760), 62.

[4] "Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 249-250.

[5] Works, III, 521 n.

[6] Ibid., p. 520.

proper deference to the public. It is, nevertheless, important for the poet to consider the public since he now has no patron but it.

> At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favours; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance, indeed, may be forced for a time into reputation, but destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success, till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.[1]

He thinks, with other critics, that posterity is the best judge of good literature. Still, the contemporary public is not to be easily fooled; and, on the whole, it rewards an author according to his merit.

The article, "New Fashions in Learning", reveals the added importance of the public. The poet must now endeavor "to please the multitude, since they may be properly considered as the dispensers of rewards."[2] It is they who purchase the works of the author and make it possible for him to have priority ratings with the booksellers. The reading public is now large enough to support the professional author.

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXIV (October 17, 1760), Works, III, 315-316.

[2] "New Fashions in Learning," Public Ledger (August 22, 1761), New Essays, p. 62.

> I know no country but this where readers of learning are sufficiently numerous to give every kind of literary excellence adequate encouragement. On whatever subject the philosopher happens to treat, he may be sure of finding an audience numerous enough to reward, and sensible enough to discern his excellence.[1]

The demands of the public are strong enough to determine what the poet should write, although the reading public is so large that an author can usually find an audience, though small, for whatever he writes.

Two other critics who express their respect for the reading public are Johnson and Blair. Tory that he is, Dr. Johnson shows that he, too, feels that the author should pay attention to the opinion of the people. In evaluating Gray's Elegy, he writes.

> . . . I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtility and the dogmatism of learning must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours.[2]

He acknowledges that the fame of the poet depends upon the common reader. In another work he admits further that "the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose, deserves regard."[3] Windham recounts a conversation with Dr. Johnson who makes the claim that a good work should please

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[1] Ibid., p. 61.

[2] Johnson, "Life of Gray," op. cit., III, 441.

[3] Johnson, "Life of Edmund Smith," op. cit., II, 16.

the public.[1] Blair is of a similar opinion; ". . . The public is the supreme judge to whom the last appeal must be made in every work of taste; as the standard of taste is founded on sentiments that are natural and common to all men."[2] Goldsmith, who is not an advocate of the uniformity of taste, would object to the last part of the statement, but he would approve of the first clause.

Although Goldsmith respects the English public and thinks that it is able to judge what it likes, he is also critical of it. He represents an inhabitant of Burgos, Spain, who is asked what the public thinks of the mutual compliments passed between two authors, Mogusius and Brandellius, as stating, "The public are a parcel of blockheads, . . ."[3] Also, in relating his experiences as a player, George Primrose tells his family that he was warned "that the public was a many-headed monster, and that only such as had very good heads

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[1]"Baretti had told him [Dr. Johnson] of some Italian author, who said that a good work of art must be that with which the vulgar were pleased, and of which the learned could tell why it pleased--that it must be able to employ the learned, and detain the idle. Chevy Chase pleased the vulgar, but did not satisfy the learned; it did not fill a mind capable of thinking strongly. The merit of Shakespeare was such as the ignorant could take in, and the learned add nothing to." "Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham," Letters, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1892), II, 440.

[2]Blair, op. cit., p. 28.

[3]"Review of Dunkin's Epistle to Lord Chesterfield," Critical Review (March, 1760), Works, IV, 406.

could please it: . . ."[1] These views are much more extreme than those usually held by Goldsmith.

He did level his critical opinion at both the readers and the theatre-goers of the period. He had discovered that the public go to the theatre "merely for their own amusement,"[2] not their edification so that their conduct at the theatre is reprehensible. In addition, these theatre-goers no longer enjoy the witty comedy of Congreve or Vanbrugh; they like Harlequin and the variety shows.

> The audience now sit uneasy at the sprightly sallies of Vanbrugh or Congreve, and with impatience desire only to see the Invasion or the Fair. These are the scenes that charm; to see the stage crowded with figures, to hear trumpets, crackers, and tempests, these are what lift our souls into greatness, and even, for a while, steal us from ourselves.[3]

The same condemnation of modern theatre-goers is to be found in the Vicar of Wakefield. When the Vicar walked along with a player, the two conversed about the theatre. The Vicar was surprised to learn that the plays of Fletcher, Shakespeare, and Jonson were the most popular in the repertoire.

> "Sir," returned my companion, "the public think nothing about dialect, or humour, or character; for that is none of their business: they only go to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomine, under the sanction of Jonson's or Shakspeare's name. . . No, Sir, the works of Congreve and Farquhar have too much wit in them for

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[1]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 167.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter XXI (March 21, 1760), Works, III, 78.

[3]"The Present State of Our Theatres," Weekly Magazine, No. III (January 12, 1761), 61-62.

> the present taste; our modern dialect is much more natural."[1]

The public go to the theatre merely for amusement, and they do not require an imitation of nature; "it is not the composition of a piece, but the number of starts and attitudes that may be introduced that elicits applause."[2]

Readers, equally, show poor taste. Most of them read to be idle; they do not read for instruction.

> . . . most readers now take up books merely to be idle; men of this complexion must be met with smiles, instead of the severity of thoughtfulness. As long as the writer continues to divert, so long will they permit him to instruct them; but if he offers to become too concise for their indolence, he then becomes unintelligible: to what purpose, then, should a writer think deeply, when those whom he addresses will not be at the pains of thinking?[3]

If the author becomes too profound, the reader gets bored and casts aside the book. Goldsmith would object to the modern concept of reading as a leisure time activity, for he is critical of those "indolent readers who turn to an author with the design rather of killing than improving their time. . . who, scared at the serious face of instruction,"[4] read without reflection.

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[1] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 146-147.

[2] Ibid., p. 147.

[3] "Review of Butler's Remains," Critical Review (September, 1759), Works, IV, 378. Cf. "On the Uncertainty of Literary Success," Bee, No. IV (October 27, 1759), Works, II 364-365.

[4] "Review of Smollett's History of England," Monthly Review (June, 1757), Works, II, 397.

Goldsmith has found that as readers have become numerous, they have become more indolent; most of them desire information with the least effort.[1] Some of them are turning to statuary and painting, for "no science or art offers its instruction and amusement in so obvious a manner" as these arts.[2] Others "fly from the scholar to the compiler"[3] who has already digested the material for them. Still others, who are fond of having wisdom without thinking, have become interested in music.[4] In this way they "might indulge in a happy vacancy, and yet still have pretentions to delicacy and taste. . . ." Perhaps there is more humour than truth in the above statements, but they indicate Goldsmith's concept of the reigning taste of the nouveaux riches during the period.

It is largely on account of the bad taste of the public that the genius of the age is neglected. One chapter in the Enquiry, "Of Rewarding Genius in England,"[5] condemns the age

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[1]"Upon Unfortunate Merit," Bee, No. V (November 3, 1759), Works, II, 397.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Enquiry, Works, III, 499.

[4]Citizen of the World, Letter XXXIV (May 6, 1760), Works, III, 129-130.

[5]Works, III, 500-510.

for disregarding the professional author and mentions George Sale, Edward Moore, and William Collins as neglected authors.[1] A similar accusation is brought against the public in an article that appeared in the Bee. But in this article Goldsmith cannot decide whether the public or the poet is to be blamed for a lack of appreciation of poetry. He states the failings of both:

> The poet, either dryly didactic, gives us rules which might appear abstruse even in a system of ethics, or, triflingly volatile, writes upon the most unworthy subjects; content, if he can paint to the imagination without any desires or endeavours to affect: the public, therefore, with justice, discard such empty sound, which has nothing but jingle, or, what is worse, the unmusical flow of blank verse to recommend it.[2]

Perhaps the poet should share the blame for the poor taste of the public. It has become the responsibility of the author to "illuminate the nation,"[3] and Goldsmith recommends the essay as the type of literature best suited to bring knowledge to society. The public needs the instruction which the poet is able to bring to it, and it must not be forgotten that the merit of the poet depends in large measure upon the opinion of the public.

But the public is not entirely free from blame. Respecting the public as he does, Goldsmith names Posterity

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[1]At the time of writing, March, 1759, Collins was insane. His Odes had not been well received by the public.

[2]"An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 451.

[3]"New Fashions in Learning," Public Ledger (August 22, 1761), New Essays, p. 63.

as the best audience and makes many appeals to it to vindicate his name. One appeal in the Bee reechoes a similar passage written a year earlier in a letter to Robert Bryanton:[1]

> If the present generation will not hear my voice, hearken, O Posterity, to you I call, and from you I expect redress! What rapture will it not give to have the Scaligers, Daciers, and Warburtons of future times, commenting with admiration upon every line I now write, working away those ignorant creatures who offer to arraign my merit, with all the virulence of learned reproach. Ay, my friends, let them feel it: call names, never spare them; they deserve it all, and ten times more. . . and I shall be perfectly content if those who criticize me are only clapped in the pillory, kept fifteen days upon bread and water, and obliged to run the gantlope through Pater-noster Row. The truth is, I can expect happiness from Posterity either way. If I write ill, happy in being forgotten; if well, happy in being remembered with respect.[2]

Goldsmith believes that after his writing has been winnowed by time that some of it will be preserved to be enjoyed by Posterity. Evidently, he feels that Posterity will have a set of values different from that of his age. Still, he is not to be taken too seriously, for he names relatively minor Italian, French, and English critics as symbols of his defenders.

Later, in 1765, when Goldsmith published a selected edition of his essays, he stated that he had no complaint to make against the public; for if he had written "dull

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[1]Letter to Robert Bryanton, August 14, 1758, op. cit., pp. 38-40. Playful and light, yet containing some of his most repeated ideas, this passage expresses the belief that posterity "will bewail the times that suffered so much genius to lie neglected."

[2]"On the Uncertainty of Literary Success," Bee, No. IV (October 27, 1759), Works, II, 363-364.

Essays," they have treated them as "dull Essays."[1] Instead of trying to impress the public, he is willing to leave the verdict to Posterity:

> Instead, therefore, of attempting to establish a credit amongst them, it will perhaps be wiser to apply to some more distant correspondent; and as my drafts are in some danger of being protested at home, it may not be imprudent, upon this occasion, to draw my bills upon Posterity. --Mr. Posterity,-- Sir,--Nine hundred and ninety-nine years after sight hereof, pay the bearer, or order, a thousand pounds worth of praise, free from all deductions whatsoever, it being a commodity that will then be very serviceable to him, and place it to the account of, &c.[2]

In the letter to Robert Bryanton, Goldsmith calls on posterity "a couple of hundred years" from then,[3] but in the "Preface" he asks for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. It is to his credit that Posterity has acclaimed him one of the good writers of the century. Goldsmith's belief in the sound judgment of posterity is shared by Dr. Johnson who writes to Mrs. Thrale, "If our correspondence were printed, I am sure posterity, for posterity is always the authour's favourite, would say that I am a good writer too."[4]

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[1] "Preface to the Essays," Works, I, 246.

[2] Ibid., p. 247.

[3] The Yale University Library exhibited the works of Goldsmith in connection with the bicentenary of his birth (1928) and published a list of the first editions (56) of his works in the holdings of the Library. See "An Exhibition," op. cit., pp. 1-7.

[4] Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Thrale, October 27, 1777, Letters, II, 51-52.

Both Goldsmith and Johnson were willing to let Posterity judge the value of their work rather than abide by the judgment of the critics.

III

Since Addison's time, the reading public had become so large that booksellers and printers were busily employed supplying the demand for reading material. Journals and newspapers steadily poured from the press.[1] Many were short-lived, but those that attained popularity reached a substantial number of readers. Johnson, in commenting on the "peculiar character" of the age, called the period, "The Age of Authors";[2] Goldsmith would have more nearly labelled it "The Age of Critics," marking a decline in original literary works.[3]

By the third quarter of the century a literary public had grown large enough to support a review which was established by the shrewd business man Ralph Griffiths.[4] In May, 1749, he published the first issue of the Monthly Review. Since the editor was Whig in politics and

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[1]Walter James Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York, 1930), pp. 161-226. See also A. S. Collins, Authorship in the Days of Johnson (London, 1927), pp. 232-259.

[2]Johnson, Adventurer, No. 115 (December 11, 1753), IV, 109.

[3]Enquiry, Works, III, 475.

[4]For an account of Goldsmith's dealings with Griffiths, see Kent, op. cit., pp. 10-32; Prior, op. cit., I, 220-225; Forster, op. cit., 78-80.

dissenting in religion,[1] the magazine soon had as a rival the Critical Review, established in 1756[2] by Archibald Hamilton and Tobias Smollett, with Tory and Church patronage. The Critical had for its motto, "Nothing extenuate, nor set down in malice"; and its aim was "To exhibit a succinct plan of every performance; to point out the most striking beauties and glaring defects; to illustrate the remarks in such a manner as might best conduce to the entertainment of the public."[3] These reviews gave not only abstracts and summaries of the latest non-technical books, but the authors (anonymous) of the articles often passed critical judgments upon the contents and style of the work. Criticism, then, became a major literary type.

A

By 1759 when Goldsmith published An Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning, he had served as critic for both the Monthly Review and the Critical Review. Basing his opinions upon his two years of experience on the staff of these reviews, Goldsmith writes his views of the state of criticism and the critic in England. In the Enquiry, he

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[1]Claude E. Jones, "Smollett and the Critical Review," Smollett Studies, University of California Publications in English, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Berkeley, 1942), p. 79 n, 2.

[2]The first issue appeared for January and February. Ibid., p. 83.

[3]Graham, op. cit., p. 213.

divides ancient learning into three stages, the last of which was the age of critics, marking a deterioration in creative literature: ". . . ancient learning may be distinguished into three periods. Its commencement, or the age of poets; its maturity, or the age of philosophers; and its decline, or the age of critics."[1] In the first stage there were few commentators, but in the last stage, when polite literature had almost vanished, the critics made their "most formidable appearance."[2] Goldsmith observes that poets and writers of genius preceded criticism: "Homer wrote before there were critics in Greece, Virgil before there were any in Rome, and Milton excelled, previous to criticism in England."[3]

Goldsmith, had he given a label to his own age, would more nearly have called it the "Age of Critics" than the "Age of Authors." This was an unhealthy stage, he thought,

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 475.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "The Futility of Criticism," Weekly Magazine, No. 3 (January 12, 1760), p. 60. Addison expresses a similar point of view, yet he credits the rules for the greater correctness of the moderns: ". . . the first race of authors . . . were destitute of all rules and arts of criticism; and for that reason, though they excel later writers in greatness of genius, they fall far short of them in accuracy and correctness. The moderns cannot reach their beauties, but can avoid their imperfection." Spectator, No. 61 (May 10, 1711), I, 317. See also Spectator, No. 592 (September 10, 1714), VIII, 160-161.

for criticism "may properly be called the destroyer of polite learning,"[1] and "an increase in criticism has always portended a decay."[2] He further observes "that wherever the poet was permitted to begin by improving his native language, polite learning flourished; but where the critic undertook the same task, it has never risen to any perfection."[3] This depreciation of criticism was a common theme of neo-classical writers.[4]

Having given the effect of criticism upon literature, Goldsmith shows the effect of criticism upon the author. He thinks the present state of criticism in England is disastrous, for the current methods that newspapers and magazines have "of giving an epitome of every new publication, must greatly damp the writer's genius."[5] The writer finds his work "mixed with the sordid trash of every daily scribbler," and it is so garbled and "mutilated as to render him contemptible." As a result he becomes discouraged, sinks "into oblivion," and "enrolls himself in the lists of dullness and avarice

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 510.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 491.

[4] See "Introduction," Critical Works of John Dennis, II, li-lii.

[5] "An Account of the Augustan Age of England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 451.

for life."[1] If, Goldsmith writes, the author in England is necessary, he should be adequately paid and properly respected.[2] "A great deal of praise" helps a writer to perform his task with dignity.

In the Citizen of the World Goldsmith writes one of his most amusing satires on "the Trade" and criticism. Mr. Fudge, a bookseller, is introduced to the Chinese Philosopher. During the course of the conversation, Mr. Fudge was asked whether he had published any new books; he answers, "Excuse me, Sir, it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer, than I would sell pork in the dog days."[3] He continues that only light reading amuses a summer reader. Further, he admits that instead of directing the people, he lets them determine what books should be published.[4]

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[1] Ibid. Johnson holds a contrary opinion. He writes "No genius was ever blasted by the breath of criticks." Idler, No. 60 (June 9, 1759), IV, 324. In a letter to Mrs. Thrale he repeats the idea: "Never let criticism operate upon your face or your mind; it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his criticks. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket; a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed." Letter to Mrs. Thrale, May 1, 1780, Letters, II, 148.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 508.

[3] Citizen of the World, Letter LI (June 23, 1760), Works, III, 191.

[4] Cf. "The sagacious Bookseller feels the Pulse of the Times, and according to the Stroke prescribes; not to cure, but flatter the Disease: As long as the Patient continues to swallow, he continues to administer; and on the first Symptom of a Nausea, he changes the Dose." Ralph, op. cit., p. 21.

He has drawn up ten new title pages "which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature." The books will then be published "in order to be sold." Having discovered how profitable it is to have a review written for each book, he usually fastens "a criticism upon every selling book that is published." Once he had an author "who never left the least opening for the critics: . . . always very right and very dull." Perceiving that the author's "bent was for criticism," he made of him a critic. "Write how you will," he would show the public the author "could have written better." He would always take a "pluck" at an author to prove him a dunce in spite of his teeth, and "he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk."[1]

This dissatisfaction with the relationship existing between the author, bookseller, and critic occurs frequently in Goldsmith's works.[2] Yet, he recognized the superiority of the bookseller-author relationship to that of the patron-author. But the bookseller was largely responsible for the critical practices of the period. The "republic of letters" was an anarchy rather than a republic; the members lacked rapport:

> . . . each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant in the same pursuit. They caluminate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other; if one writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LI, op. cit., p. 194.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 509.

> pleasure, or should not have been pleased. If one happens to hit upon something new, there are numbers ready to assure the public that all this was no novelty to them or the learned, that Cardanus, or Brunus, or some other author too dull to be generally read, had anticipated the discovery.[1]

The Chinese Philosopher implies that the "republic of letters" in England would profit by following the models of the literary societies in China in which there is co-operation and mutual respect.[2]

Goldsmith's attack upon current critical practices is not unique. Dr. Johnson also objected to the critical methods of his age. He placed criticism "among the subordinate and instrumental arts."[3] Later he called it "a study by which men grow important and formidable at a very small expense."[4] He, too, opposed the notion that "the great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns and the beauties of the ancients."[5] Like Goldsmith, he held some ideals of criticism which we shall later observe.

Critical practices had grown steadily worse, for Addison had shown less bitterness in his opinion of practicing

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[1] *Citizen of the World*, Letter XX(March 20, 1760), *Works*, III, 73-74.

[2] *Citizen of the World*, Letter LVII (July 9, 1760), *Works*, III, 214.

[3] *Rambler*, No. 208 (March 14, 1752), *Works*, III, 465.

[4] *Idler*, No. 60 (June 9, 1759), *Works*, IV, 325.

[5] "Preface to Shakespeare," *Works*, V, 103.

critics. He had commented on the "smatterers in criticism" who "vilify and depreciate every new production that gains applause" in order to prove "that what pass for beauties . . . are faults and errors."[1] He stated that his own method was to point out the "beauties and excellencies" of the writers rather than to mention their "faults and imperfections." In addition, he judged the work "with an impartial eye" and criticized the author rather than the person.[2]

Pope composed his "Essay on Criticism" in an attempt to state what knowledge and skill a critic must possess if he is to discharge his duties to the public.[3] Swift included a scathing denunciation of the so called "True Criticks" in his Tale of the Tub.[4] The Members of the Scriblerus Club early sought to stop the pedantry and affectation of the critics by writing a mock text of poetics, "The Art of Sinking in Poetry."[5] In it they satirized all the conventions of neo-classical criticism and showed how ridiculous most of them were. Criticism, however, continued to flourish, and by Goldsmith's time had become so voluminous that it

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[1]Spectator, No. 592 (September 10, 1714), VIII, 161.

[2]Spectator, No. 262 (December 31, 1711), IV, 55.

[3]Pope, "Essay on Criticism," ll. 1-559.

[4]Jonathan Swift, "A Digression Concerning Criticks," Tale of a Tub, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and David Nichol Smith (Oxford, 1920), pp. 92-104.

[5]Pope, "The Art of Sinking in Poetry," Works, X, 344-409.

appeared in magazines. Goldsmith notes with displeasure the number of critical journals published in Paris, London, and Rome. None of them are constructive; "they are for levelling property, not by increasing their own, but by diminishing that of others."[1]

B

The critics, those who write for these journals, receive their share of disapprobation. Most of them are "destitute of education and genius;" thus, they add "to the sin of ignorance also; whose trade is a bad one, and who are bad workmen in the trade."[2] Goldsmith holds the belief that most of the criticism being written is destructive and that most critics are incapable of passing judgment on the works that come to their desks. The Oriental Philosopher states rather sadly that in England,

> A critic is a being possessed of all the vanity, but not the genius, of a scholar: incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support; makes the sportive sallies on another's imagination his serious employment; pretends to take our feelings under his care; teaches where to condemn, where to lay the emphasis of praise; and may with as much justice be called a man of taste, as the Chinese who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.[3]

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 511. See also p. 514.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Citizen of the World, Letter XX (March 20, 1760), Works, III, 75-76.

Lacking the genius of the author, the critic exploits the author's material and presumes to point out the excellencies and defects of the works. Goldsmith casts some doubt upon the critic's ability to do this, because in the republic of letters there were no special qualifications as there were for law, medicine, and the church, "if any choose to be critics, it is but saying they are critics, and from that time forward, they become invested with full power and authority over every caitiff who aims at their instruction or entertainment."[1] Most critics are like Dick Minim, self-appointed.[2] The author of the Belles Lettres essays also points out the lack of training and experience of many of the critics. He writes, "The spruce 'prentice sets up for a critic, and the puny beau piques himself upon being a connoisseur."[3] In one of the reviews Goldsmith has a character show his disdain of critics by stating, ". . . all blockheads are critics."[4]

Goldsmith believes that the majority of critics in England were disappointed authors. This idea he expresses

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LVII (July 6, 1760), Works, III, 214.

[2] See Idler, No. 60 and 61 (June 9, 16, 1759), IV, 324-332.

[3] "Upon Taste," Works, I, 324.

[4] "Review of Dunkin's Epistle to Lord Chesterfield," Critical Review (March, 1760), Works, IV, 406. Pope calls a poor critic, "The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,/ With loads of learned lumber in his head." "Essay on Criticism," ll. 612-613.

many times, once in the Bee. A man has written a book and upon "being condemned for a dunce, he turns a sort of king's evidence in criticism, and now becomes the terror of every offender."[1] The same opinion is found in the Enquiry; a writer who is unsuccessful becomes "desirous to turn upon others the contempt which is levelled at himself, and being convicted at the bar of literary justice, hopes for pardon by accusing every brother of the same profession."[2] Recounting his experience as a reviewer, George Primrose tells how he "began to associate with none but disappointed authors" who found that "no genius in another could please" them.[3] Goldsmith is contemptuous of those critics who strive for a "reputation of delicacy" by showing that they "cannot be pleased."[4] He pokes fun at the "critics by profession,"

> . . . they read only to **show** the superiority of their own judgment, and prove a man a blockhead in spite of his teeth: They, in short, are prepared to hang, draw, and quarter, and still, to make the allusion stronger, like hangmen they are forced into the trade, for having been themselves condemned as offenders.[5]

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[1] "On the Uncertainty of Literary Success," Bee, No. IV (October 27, 1759), Works, II, 364.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 466.

[3] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 159.

[4] Enquiry, Works, III, 466.

[5] "Futility of Criticism," Weekly Magazine, No. IV (January 12, 1760), 60.

Many disappointed authors become critics in order to appease their own chagrin and vent their ill humour upon rising young authors.

At times Goldsmith will not dignify these writers with the name "critic"; he calls them "answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters and distribute reputation by the sheet; . . ."

> These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce and Scribbler; to praise the dead, and revile the living; to grant a man of confused abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candour; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure.[1]

These men are usually employed by "some mercenary booksellers," like Mr. Fudge, and all that is required of them is "to be very abusive and very dull."[2] Upon associating with the critics in the coffee houses, the Oriental Philosopher heard his favorite authors discussed with inverted fame.[3] These critics engaged in personal criticism; an author was condemned by such terms as "a bad man," a free thinker, or a player.[4]

In addition, the critics were accused of praising established reputations only to show their own good taste.

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[1] *Citizen of the World*, Letter XIII (February 25, 1760), *Works*, III, 50.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] Cf. George Primrose's, "The satisfaction we found in very celebrated writer's attempts was inversely as their merits." *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Works*, I, 159.

[4] *Citizen of the World*, Letter CIX (March 18, 1761), *Works*, III, 394.

This opinion Goldsmith repeats many times. He proves that the critics praise some of the ancients even in their defects:

> . . . to prefer Homer to other writers may indeed be allowable; but to talk of him as faultless, to say that his writings are more serviceable to an imitator than all other works put together; such assertions favours strongly of little judgment, or much pedantic affectation. The praise bestowed on a writer of established reputation, is perhaps more frequently designed as a compliment to ourselves than the author: we only shew the rectitude of our own taste by a standard allowed already to be just: what advantages the public are to gain by praising Homer at this time of day, we know not; . . . .[1]

A similar expression of this idea is to be found in an article published the same month as the review from which the above statement was taken:

> Established reputation is always sure of the critic's indulgence, his greatest antipathy is ever levelled at rising genius; he praises the one to show the rectitude of his taste, and condemns the other to prove the delicacy of his discernment.[2]

Goldsmith repeats the opinion in his review of Ovid's Epistles: "The praise which is every day lavished upon Virgil, Horace, or Ovid, is often no more than an indirect method the critic takes to compliment his own discernment."[3]

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[1]"Review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer," Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 11.

[2]"Futility of Criticism," Weekly Magazine, No. III (January 12, 1760), 61.

[3]Critical Review (January, 1759), Works, IV, 325; also Works, III, 358, Works, V, 154.

Addison had already made a similar observation that the insecure critic was reluctant to pass a judgment upon a contemporary piece of art.

> One great mark, by which you may discover a critic who has neither taste nor learning, is this, that he seldom ventures to praise any passage in an author which has not been before received and applauded by the public, and that his criticism turns wholly upon little faults and errors.[1]

Both Addison and Goldsmith believed that a critic should be more independent in his evaluation of literature, that he should have his own standard of values, and that he should judge a work on the basis of its beauties rather than its faults.

Goldsmith did not approve of the critics' methods. No doubt the partiality and prejudices of the critics resulted from their perspective; "the critic lays his eye close to all its [a literary work] minuteness, and condemns or approves in detail."[2] Goldsmith insists that "Poems, like buildings, have their point of view, and too near a situation gives but a partial conception of the whole."[3] Johnson had made a similar observation. Some critics, he writes, "read with the microscope of criticism, and employ their whole attention upon minute elegance, or faults scarcely visible to

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[1] Spectator, No. 291 (February 2, 1712), IV, 202.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 513.

[3] "Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 251.

common observation."[1] These are to be censured along with the critics who read with a "telescope. They see with great clearness whatever is too remote to be discovered by the rest of mankind, but are totally blind to all that lies immediately before them."[2] Both Johnson and Goldsmith thought that there was a proper viewpoint from which all works of art were to be judged and that the critics did not choose the right one.

But the most serious objection raised by Goldsmith against the critics is that they are faulty in their precepts. The critics no longer judge works of art by the rules established upon nature but by rules founded upon the works of earlier writers. This indictment is found in the Enquiry; Goldsmith has been condemning the critics, grammarians, and rhetoricians who tried to teach by rules the art of poetry to their students. He observes:

> Common sense would be apt to suggest, that the art might be studied to more advantage, rather by imitation then precept. It might suggest that those rules were collected, not from nature, but a copy of nature, and would consequently give us still fainter resemblances of original beauty. It might still suggest. . . that the observations of others are soon forgotten, those made by ourselves are permanent and useful.[3]

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[1] Rambler, No. 176 (November 23, 1751), III, 328.

[2] Ibid., p. 329.

[3] Enquiry, Works, III, 472-473.

He continues that a reader too dull to enjoy the beauties of Virgil cannot be taught appreciation by commentators, that "rules are calculated to make blockheads talk" but are unable to give them feeling.[1] Further, he observes, "Rules render the reader more difficult to be pleased, and abridge the author's power of pleasing."[2] Goldsmith states, "Of all misfortunes, therefore, in the commonwealth of letters, this of judging from rule but not from feeling is the most severe."[3] A sound criticism must be based upon nature, not the rules; and a critic must found his judgment upon his feelings.

Yet, Goldsmith can be humorous and satirical in revealing how most critical opinions are formed. He has found that the opinions of a man with a title will be believed by the majority of readers quicker than those of a professional critic.

> A great man says, at his table, that such a book "is no bad thing." Immediately the praise is carried off by five flatterers, to be dispersed at twelve different coffee houses, from whence it circulates, still improving as it proceeds, through forty-five houses, where cheaper liquors are sold; from whence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fireside, where the applause is eagerly caught up by his wife and children who have been long taught to regard his judgment as the standard of perfection. Thus when we have traced a wide extended reputation up to its original source, we shall find it derived from some great man, who has, perhaps, received all his education and

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[1] Ibid., p. 473.

[2] Ibid., p. 510.

[3] Ibid.

> English from a tutor of Berne, or a dancing master of Picardy.[1]

Rich men, Goldsmith remarks, who had not been bred "in the school of adversity" saw the "world only on one side"; therefore, they were incompetent to judge works that sounded the depths "of the human heart."[2] But, he sarcastically observes, "having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame than having digested Tully."[3] This propensity of the reading public to admire the literary productions of lords is expressed again in Letter XCIII; the Oriental Philosopher has discovered that "not only kings and courtiers, but emperors themselves . . . periodically supply the press,"[4] for the booksellers are convinced "that a book written by vulgar hands can neither instruct nor improve."[5] Goldsmith, as we have seen, thinks that the professional writer is much superior to the dilettante. Writing to him, as to

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LVII (July 9, 1760), Works, III, 214.

[2] Ibid., p. 215.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Citizen of the World, Letter XCIII (January 7, 1761), Works, III, 347.

[5] Ibid. Collins calls "Newbery's device for ushering into the world Goldsmith's History of England in 1763, by which it appeared as a series of letters from a nobleman to his son, was variously attributed by the public to Lords Chesterfield, Orrery and Lyttleton, and in consequence sold remarkably well," a "trick of the trade." Authorship in the Days of Johnson, p. 45.

Johnson,[1] was hard work in which a man engaged for money; and the Chinese Philosopher stated that "all the excellent productions in wit that have appeared here, were purely the offspring of necessity; their Drydens, Butlers, Otways, and Farquhars, were all writers for bread."[2]

Goldsmith makes both the public and the critics responsible for the poor critical practices of the period. Willing to be led by aristocratic dilettantes, the public repeat the critical dicta handed down from one lord to his flatterers without making independent decisions themselves. Meanwhile, the professional critics, who are disappointed authors, judge by the rules instead of by their feelings. The situation is bad, but not hopeless, for Goldsmith envisions a sound method of criticism.

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In spite of the prevailing critical practices, Goldsmith believes that a sound criticism is possible. This criticism

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[1]Johnson. "I look upon this edition of Shakespeare as I did upon the dictionary: it is all work, and my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame, but the want of money, which is the only motive to writing that I know of." Hawkins, op. cit., p. 362. See also "The Author's Motive for Writing," New Essays, pp. 101-102. Goldsmith to Cumberland: "You and I have very different motives for resorting to the stage, I write for money and care little about fame, . . ." Cumberland, op. cit., p. 152. Nichols reports: "The Doctor jocosely observed, 'that it would be better to relinquish the draggle-tail Muses; as, for his part, he found productions in prose even more sought after and better paid for.'" John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1812), III, 153.

[2]Citizen of the World, Letter XCIII, op. cit., p. 347.

must be based on a knowledge of the people and the "nature of the climate and country."[1] Every country should have its own system of criticism; he thinks that nothing is more ridiculous than "rules to direct the taste of one country drawn from the manners of another."[2]

> There may be some general marks in nature, by which all writers are to proceed; these, however, are obvious, and might as well have never been pointed out; but to trace the sources of our passions, to mark the evanescent boundaries between satiety and disgust, and how far elegance differs from finery, requires a thorough knowledge of the people to whom the criticism is directed.[3]

Goldsmith is not a uniformitarian believing in a single taste or single standard of criticism for all people.[4] In fact he states, perhaps more satirically than seriously, that every age has its own critical methods, most of which are faulty:

> Every age has had its modes of thinking in criticism; and those modes have been generally wrong; the critics of the Augustan period, for instance, were all for harmony, short periods and such prose as might be sung as well as spoken; about five hundred years later, jingle and pun was the prevailing taste, at present we have our modes also: alliteration, or the beginning several words in the same line with the same letter; making the sound artificially an echo to the sense, new rhymes, and striking personifications, by which is only meant the representing moral virtues, or

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[1] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 535.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," MP, XXIX (1932), 291-299.

> inanimate beings as rational agents, all these, I say, are the present beauties of our critical age.[1]

These errors in criticism must not divert our attention from the main point which is that "every age has had its modes of thinking in criticism." Some of the thinking had been fallacious, but, perhaps, some of the difficulties came as a result of the work. Dr. Johnson writes an allegory on criticism in which he implies that the literary work, mingled with faults and beauties, made forming a judgment so difficult that Criticism gave up her task and left the earth. In the allegory Criticism is the daughter of Labour and Truth, tutored by Justice and brought up in the Palace of Wisdom. She was appointed the governess of Fancy and accompanied the Muses on their visit to the lower world. In her left hand she carried a torch which could "show everything in its true form, however it might be disguised to common eyes." She held the steady light of truth upon all works which she observed, but after having judged so many works mingled with faults and beauties, she grew weary of her task and withdrew from the earth, leaving the judgment to be made by Time.[2] If the implication stated at the beginning of the above allegory is correct, the task of criticism has become more difficult on account of the nature of the work.

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[1] "The Futility of Criticism," Weekly Magazine, No. III (January 12, 1760), 61.

[2] Rambler, No. 3 (March 27, 1750), II, 11-15.

Still both Johnson and Goldsmith believe that a sound criticism is desirable. Goldsmith states that the purpose of criticism is to assist the author. He doubts whether criticism will teach an author to write well, but it will help him to avoid errors:

> Thus criticism, properly speaking is intended not to assist those parts which are sublime, but those which are naturally mean and humble, which are composed with coolness and caution, and where the orator rather endeavours not to offend, than attempts to please.[1]

Johnson, on the other hand, appears to believe that the function of criticism is to help the audience judge the works of authors by principles established by truth.

> It is, however, the task of criticism to establish principles; to improve opinion into knowledge; and to distinguish those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deductions, from the nameless and inexplicable elegancies which appeal wholly to the fancy, from which we feel delight, but know not how they produce it, and which may well be termed the enchantresses of the soul.[2]

Johnson seems to think that if criticism can establish principles by which works of art are to be judged, that the reader will know exactly the sources of his pleasure.

Two other critics of the period, Blair and Gerard, take practically the same attitude toward criticism that Johnson did; that is, criticism establishes principles by

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[1] "Of Eloquence," Bee, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Works, II, 424.

[2] Rambler, No. 92 (February 2, 1751), Works, II, 432. Cf. ". . . the duty of criticism is neither to depreciate, nor dignify by partial representation, but to hold out the light of reason whatever it may discover; and to promulgate the determinations of truth, whatever she shall dictate." Rambler, No. 93 (February 5, 1751), II, 442.

means of which an audience is enabled to judge a work of art. The attitude is judicial. Blair states:

> True criticism is a liberal and humane art. It is the offspring of good sense and refined taste. It aims at acquiring a just discernment of the real merit of authors. It promotes a lively relish of their beauties, while it preserves us from that blind and implicit veneration which would confound their beauties and faults in our esteem. It teaches us, in a word to admire and to blame with judgment, and not to follow the crowd blindly.[1]

Gerard, in An Essay on Taste, states that it is not enough for the reader to know that he is pleased or displeased by a work of art, he must "ascertain the precise species of either; and refer it to the sentiment or the expression; to the design or the execution; to sublimity or beauty; to wit or humour."[2] He admits that criticism has "fallen into the hands of incapable professors," but he thinks that true criticism will establish uniform standards for judging all works of art:

> Genuine criticism is . . . justly esteemed a faithful transcript of nature. For it investigates those qualities in its objects which, from the invariable principles of human nature, must always please or displease, describes and distinguishes the sentiments which they in fact produce; and impartially regulates its most general conclusions according to real phaenomena.[3]

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[1]Blair, op. cit., p. 13. See a similar definition: "Criticism is an art founded wholly on experience; on the observations of such beauties as have come nearest to the standard which I before established; that is, of such beauties as have been found to please mankind most generally." Ibid., p. 27.

[2]Gerard, An Essay on Taste, p. 172.

[3]Ibid., p. 175.

Gerard, who believes that human nature is uniform, also believes with Reynolds that what has once pleased will continue to please, and that criticism can state these principles. He, also, states that the "chief utility of criticism lies in promoting correctness of taste."[1] Goldsmith, a diversitarian, would take issue with him. In fact, since Goldsmith asserts that criticism is designed primarily to help the artist prevent faults, he might be expected to oppose Johnson, Blair, and Gerard who consider criticism mainly from the point of view of the audience.

Goldsmith, however, does consider the audience when he states the function of the critic. As he is writing in defense of his attitude toward Home's Douglas, we can be reasonably sure that he is utterly sincere:

> To direct our taste and conduct the poet up to perfection has ever been the true critic's province; and though it were to be wished that all who aim at excellence would endeavor to observe the rules he prescribes, yet a failure in this respect alone should never induce us to reject the performance. A mechanically exact adherence to all the rules of the drama is more the business of industry than of genius.[2]

The critic has two responsibilities, one to the audience and another to the artist. The critic should direct the taste of the audience. In this belief Goldsmith is very close to Gerard who states that criticism should promote

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[1] Ibid., p. 132.

[2] "Review of Home's Douglas," Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 250-251.

correctness of taste. But, it must be remembered, the two men hold entirely different attitudes toward taste. The critic's responsibility to the poet is one with the purpose of criticism; the critic should show the author how he can improve his work. Goldsmith states his own practice was to "reprove only with a desire to reform,"[1] and his usual method was to find "something in it to praise, and something to reprove."[2] In still another review he writes that it is more the business of the critic "to exhibit the opinions of the learned, than to controvert them."[3] The critic is more than a fault-finder; he may serve largely as an interpreter of an author to an audience.

Goldsmith conceives of the function of the critic in much the same vein as Addison did. "A true critic," Addison writes, "ought to dwell rather upon excellencies than imperfections, to discover the concealed beauties of a writer, and communicate to the world such things as are worth their observation."[4]

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[1]"Review of Barrett's Translation of Ovid's Epistles," Critical Review (January, 1759), Works, IV, 332.

[2]"Review of Horace Modernized," Critical Review (July, 1759), Works, IV, 382.

[3]"Review of Enquiries Concerning the First Inhabitants . . .," Monthly Review (December, 1758), Works, IV, 312.

[4]Spectator, No. 291 (February 2, 1712), IV, 202. Read Pope's description of a true critic. "Essay on Criticism," ll. 631-642.

This is a higher opinion of the function of the critic than the one held by Fielding who states that "the world have paid too great a compliment to critics, and have imagined them men of greater profundity than they really are." As a consequence, the critics have assumed "dictatorial power" and now "give laws to those authors" from whom they originally received their principles. To him a critic is no more than a secretary whose responsibility is to type a dictated copy:

> The critic, rightly considered, is no more than the clerk whose office it is to transcribe the rules and laws laid down by those great judges whose vast strength of genius hath placed them in the light of legislators, in the several sciences over which they presided. This office was all which the critics of old aspired to; nor did they ever dare to advance a sentence without supporting it by the authority of the judge from whence it was borrowed.[1]

Goldsmith, too, conceives of the critic's function with much greater responsibility to the author and to the public than Fielding did. In fact, it is in this concept of the critic's responsibility that Goldsmith justifies himself as a critic. At the same time he endorses his critical pronouncements so that a reader must respect his judgment if he does not accept it.

Goldsmith's observations of actual literary practices in England, 1757-1774, reveal the tensions of the transitional period when the author was becoming a professional writer. Goldsmith shows that the insecurity of the writer's social and financial position had debilitating effects. He defends the

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[1]Henry Fielding Tom Jones (Modern Library, New York, n. d.), Book V, Chapter I, p. 160.

professional author for selling his wit, but he feels that an author should have a higher purpose than the making of money.

He recognizes the importance of the audience, not merely the leisure class but the new reading public. For their sustenance professional authors must depend upon these new consumers of literature. As a consequence, Goldsmith feels that the author must write to please the public. At the same time, he criticizes the taste of the public. Although he does not say so, he implies that the author can improve the taste of the audience instead of catering to its whims.

Goldsmith finds himself in the position of disliking practicing critics and criticism while he maintains high respect for the function of the critic and of criticism. He opposes the irresponsibility of critics who are untrained and unreliable, prejudiced and incapable of being pleased. He, also, disliked the critical journals. No history of the profession of letters in the eighteenth century can well be written without taking into account the experience of Goldsmith.

VI. CONCLUSION - GOLDSMITH AS A LITERARY CRITIC

After reading a description of Goldsmith's literary views, one may well ask, What kind of a critic was Goldsmith? One very obvious conclusion is that he was not a systematic critic. He lacked an organized set of principles that one finds in such critics as Coleridge, Poe, and Arnold. Goldsmith's critical essays were written in the same manner as most of his other essays, hurriedly and without much plan. In this study some order is imposed upon his ideas in order to show his concept of the position and characteristics of the author, the nature and function of the literary work, and the effect which the literary work should produce upon the normative audience. Otherwise, the critical essays appear without much pattern.

Having imposed a pattern upon Goldsmith's critical ideas, a reader finds some very interesting inconsistencies. In the first place Goldsmith insisted that the author should be original, yet, he denied the author the right to use his imagination in the creative process. By originality Goldsmith meant direct observation of the man imitated rather than an oblique observation of men and manners obtained through the literary works of the ancients. Evidently he never thought that the imagination could be creative and that the artist could represent characters and actions which produce the effects of reality. Instead, Goldsmith remained

skeptical of the imagination, and he denounced those authors who "paint to the imagination" when they should move the emotions.

Similarly, Goldsmith demanded originality, but he did not indicate new content or forms for the author to use. The "follies of mankind," he wrote, continue to supply the writer with subject matter. The satirists had used this subject for years, and in the last half of the century the authors were searching for new materials and new forms. Not only did Goldsmith fail to point out any new subject matter, but he disapproved of the revived forms of poetic expressions which were introduced. He disliked blank verse and considered it a form of pedantry, a mark of degeneracy in English literature. In addition, he expressed his aversion for Pindaric odes by stating that the English were not ready for this form of poem; it was not suited to their temperament.

Goldsmith believed that the literary work should present a blend of instruction and entertainment, yet he was never happy over just the proportion of each in the literary works he discussed. He was critical of sentimental comedy, for it did not cause laughter; it made the spectator sit as gloomy as at the tabernacle. He thought, also, that many of the modern tragedies were too moralistic; he called them "sermons" and wryly remarked that one should be pleased with "good things." At the same time he objected to the "Invasion," the "Fair," and other Harlequin shows that were designed for sheer entertainment. He insisted that one should go to the theatre to be "rationally entertained," but he never appeared

to have found just the right balance between instruction, on the one hand, and amusement, on the other, in any of the plays which he reviewed.

Further inconsistencies are to be found in his attitude toward the audience. At one time Goldsmith stated that the function of the author is to serve as a mediator between the scholar and the man in the street. He added that the essay is the best medium for this purpose, yet he criticized the audience rather harshly for not appreciating the literary work of the author instead of reprimanding the author for not fulfilling the demands of the audience. Again he wrote that the audience read to be idle instead of reading for instruction; they preferred sculpture and painting, which gave their instruction in an "obvious" manner, to literature; they enjoyed music with a "happy vacancy" of expression. Still at other times Goldsmith would state that the English audience thought "like men," and that he would leave it up to them to choose whether laughing comedy should be driven from the theatre.

Another striking inconsistency lies in Goldsmith's attitude toward the novel. He disliked the genre and wrote his brother Henry not to let his son read romances. In his review or The Fair Citizen, he cautioned the lady author that "one good pudding is worth fifty modern romances," yet he wrote a novel, a rather good one in its depiction of family life in the eighteenth century. Although Gallaway thinks that Goldsmith wrote the novel with his tongue in his cheek in order to satirize the sentimental domestic novels

being written, one of the great ironies is that readers of the book have missed Goldsmith's purpose, that is, if it is ironical, as Gallaway believes, with Mr. Burchell the hero instead of the Vicar.

Goldsmith, also, stated the ideal function of criticism and of the critic, but he disliked the current practices of criticism. He observed that the function of criticism is to assist the author and that the critic should "direct our taste and conduct the poet up to perfection." He felt that criticism was not fulfilling its function. Critical observations did not help the author but "damped" his spirits. Further, the great amount of criticism lead to a decline in literature so that he took a dim view of the critical journals published in Rome, Paris, and London.

Although he was a practicing critic contributing to the critical reviews, he disapproved of critics. In An Enquiry and The Citizen of the World he reproached the critics for their methods, their lack of training, and their attitudes toward the pieces of literature which came under their surveillance. He denounced the author "who draws his quill merely to take a purse;" but he defended the "author by profession" who wrote for money and acknowledged that he, too, wrote for money instead of fame.

Other glaring inconsistencies are to be observed in his position as an aesthetic relativist. He believed, in 1759, that there is no standard of criticism, that criticism should be based upon nature and that every country should have its own standard of criticism instead of abiding by the

critical principles of the ancients. In light of this opinion he insisted that the genres should be maintained and that the more nearly they were kept the closer the imitations followed nature. To add to this he showed a preference for some types of poetry over other types. Further, one would not expect a relativist to appeal to Posterity as the best judge of his work; he would abide by the evaluation of his own generation.

These inconsistencies appeared in works that were written almost within a decade, for Goldsmith wrote most of his critical works in the early period of his short career: An Enquiry in 1759; the reviews for the Monthly Review in 1757, for the Critical Review in 1759; the essays for the Bee in 1759, for the Public Ledger, Weekly Magazine, and British Magazine in 1760-1761; the comments in the biographies of Voltaire and Parnell in 1760 and 1770, and the critiques for the Beauties of English Poesy in 1767. Since the inconsistencies are concurrent, it is easy to conclude that Goldsmith was not systematic in his thinking and that he was not a compulsive critic.

The second important observation is that Goldsmith is both a defender and opponent of neo-classical literary traditionalism. As a defender of neo-classical principles he believed in the doctrine of genres. He felt that the genres should be maintained. His chief objection to sentimental comedy was that comedy was encroaching upon the subject matter of tragedy; it was a "mulish production" that made the audience "gloomy." It was the function of comedy to make one

laugh, to present humour and to delineate character.

In addition, he kept the neo-classical distrust of the imagination. He was critical of those writers who "paint to the imagination" instead of affecting the heart. He recognized the importance of the imagination in ordinary affairs, but he remained suspicious of it in the aesthetic experience. It is paradoxical that he should expect the artist to be original while his imagination was restrained by his judgment. Goldsmith kept the neo-classical belief that the judgment should be the author's ruling faculty.

Goldsmith, also, disliked new forms of poetic expression. He did not like the Pindaric odes which Gray wrote. The form was not suited to the English temperament; neither were the English ready for poems written in blank verse, he thought.

He considered blank verse one of the marks of "literary decay" in England. In his anthologies he included very few poems written in blank verse. Although he does not say so, he preferred the heroic couplet, the medium he used for his major works. Most of the poems in his anthologies were written in heroic couplets or octosyllabic couplets. In maintaining the doctrine of genres, in his distrust of the imagination, and in his aversion for new poetic expression, Goldsmith was a traditionalist.

At the same time Goldsmith is an opponent of some aspects of neo-classical literary traditionalism. He lacked the deep respect for the ancients which Dr. Johnson and most neo-classical critics held. He poked fun at Homer, Pindar, and Horace. He considered the quarrel between the ancients

and the moderns "trifling," and he was better read in modern French and English literature than in ancient literature. He edited two anthologies of modern poetry, and he praised many of his contemporaries.

He decried the principle of imitating the ancients. His advice to the author was to imitate nature directly so that his literary work will be an original not a copy. Although he did not stress the "mental individuality" of the author as Young had, Goldsmith insisted that the work should exhibit a "happy singularity" and deviate from the usual channels of expression.

He attacked the rules, for he felt that the ancients could not give rules which the moderns should follow. Anyway, a work should be evaluated by its elements of charm rather than its divergences from the rules which can never create beauties.

Goldsmith disliked the epic, the genre of poetry which the ancients held in the highest esteem. Although he showed no preference for songs and sonnets and did not include any lyrice in his anthologies, he did like ballads. He helped Percy with his edition of the Reliques, and he wrote one well-known literary ballad, "Edwin and Angelina." He liked the Rowley poems and expressed enthusiastic belief in them, but, with Dr. Johnson, he repudiated the poems of Ossian and he called Mallet's Mythology and Poetry of the Celtes "dry."

Goldsmith's interest in the author as a person (especially his social and financial status) betrays more than neo-classical interest. The neo-classical critic usually

subordinated the author to the work and the demands of the audience, but Goldsmith makes the artist more prominent than this. Goldsmith, who is very weak in the theory of criticism, does not say much about the artist's art. He does call the artist a genius, but he does not name his "creator." In one case he appears to prefer the natural genius to academic learning.

Further, Goldsmith believed that the author should rely upon his own taste. He stated that every country needed its own standard of criticism, for every country had its own temperament and humour. He, thereby, expressed his belief in the diversity of human nature rather than in its uniformity. His position is that of an aesthetic relativist. From Goldsmith's position with regard to the ancients, imitation, the rules, the epic, the author as a person, learning, and his individual belief in aesthetic relativism, Goldsmith is an opponent of neo-classical traditionalism.

Even though Goldsmith is not systematic in his criticism and his critical essays show inconsistencies which have been indicated, he follows a method which is worth observation. He did not think of himself as a critic. As early as 1757 he wrote his brother-in-law that he was a poet.[1] He engaged in other types of writing on account of his financial condition.

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[1]Letter to Daniel Hodgson, December 27, 1757, "The Life of Dr. Goldsmith," The Miscellaneous Works, I, 41. Miss Balderston changed the word poet to author, for, she writes, "author fits the lacuna better." The Collected Letters, p. 27, n. 3.

With the exception of An Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning, which did not bear his name on the title page, Goldsmith did not write a major work of criticism. Yet in the many essays and reviews which Goldsmith published in the Monthly Review, Critical Review, Public Ledger, and in the introductions and prefaces to some of the literary works, are to be found both his critical ideas and his critical method.

His critical method has four distinguishing characteristics. First, he is a critic of the "beauties" of a work; that is, he looks for the elements of charm in a work rather than its divergences from the rules.[1] This emphasis upon "beauties" rather than "faults," no doubt, has its source in Longinus who in his The Sublime devotes Section XXXIII to "The Sublime with some faults, is better than what is correct and faultless without being Sublime."[2] He found that "writers of a lofty and tow'ring genius are by no means pure and correct, since whatever is neat and accurate throughout, must be exceedingly liable to flatness."[3] He discovered faults in Homer and some of the other great authors; hence, he concluded:

> I give it as my real opinion, that the great and noble flights, tho' they cannot every where boast an equality of perfection, yet ought to carry off

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[1]Spingarn, op. cit., I, xcviii-xcix.

[2]Longinus, op. cit., pp. 136-140.

[3]Ibid., pp. 136-137.

the prize, by the sole merit of their own intrinsic grandeur.[1]

But the critic who, perhaps, is more responsible for the dissemination of the idea that works which are not mechanically correct may possess a charm and power which make the work effective is Boileau. Although he is remembered largely for his slogan of adherence to the rules, Clark thinks that Boileau's "hatred of the 'froid écrivain' is the dominant note in the Art Poétique rather than the preaching of 'nature methodized.'"[2] Boileau prefers an effective poem to one that is coldly correct:

> Mais un froid écrivain ne sait rien qu'ennuyer.
> J'aime mieux Bergerac et sa burlesque audace
> Que ces vers où Motin se morfond et nous glace.[3]

In England this attitude was adopted by a group of critics, loosely called the School of Taste. This group

> . . . opposed the rules, centred its interest in the various elements of charm in a work of art, that is, in its 'beauties'. Hence arose the distinction between true and 'false beauties' which Pascal owed to Méré; hence developed the natural opposition between the criticism of beauties and that of faults which was to determine the trend of critical opinion for so long a time.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 138.

[2] Clark, op. cit., p. 391.

[3] L'Art Poétique, IV, 38-40.

[4] Spingarn, "Introduction," op. cit., pp. xcviii-xcix. Cf. Now this point of view [preference for an effective poem with errors to one that is frigidly correct] can be applied in two different ways in practical criticism. Applied positively, it gives the "criticism of beauties" as a reaction against the "criticism of faults" (which is based on the "rules--good sense" doctrine); applied negatively, it gives us satirical criticism, which attacks authors, not for their "faults" but for their lack of "beauties." Clark, op. cit., p. 391.

Among the English critics who sought the beauties of a work are Dennis,[1] Addison,[2] and Johnson.[3] It is with this group that Goldsmith is allied. In his criticism he usually found "something to praise and something to reprove."[4] But in opposition to the professional critics whom he lashed in the Enquiry, Goldsmith looked for the "beauties" in the works he criticized.

In his review of the Works of the Reverend Mr. Hawkins, he found "something to praise."[5] Commenting on the need for original compositions, Goldsmith writes, "The way to acquire lasting esteem, is not by the fewness of a writer's faults, but the greatness of his beauties; and our noblest works are generally most replete with both."[6] Critics who judge by

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[1]"For it is much easier to find Faults, than it is to discover Beauties. To do the first requires but common Sence [sic.] but to do the last a Man must have Genius." "A Letter to a Friend, The Impartial Critic," op. cit., I, 13.

[2]Taste is "that Faculty of the Soul, which discerns the Beauties of an Author with Pleasure, and the Imperfections with Dislike." Spectator, No. 409 (June 19, 1712), VI, 49.

[3]"But it is rather natural to a man of learning and genius to apply himself chiefly to the study of writers who have more beauties than faults to be displayed: . . ." Rambler, No. 93 (February 5, 1751), II, 442.

[4]"Review of Horace Modernized," Critical Review (July, 1759), Works, IV, 382.

[5]Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 353.

[6]"The Characteristics of Greatness," Bee, No. IV (October 27, 1759), Works, II, 375.

the rules often disregard beauties for there is "no excellence in writing that such judges may not place among the neighboring defects."[1] After having searched for the famous men of England, the Chinese Philosopher mused upon excellence in morality and books:

> The truly great, possessed of numerous small faults, and shining virtues, preserve a sublime in morals as in writing. They who have attained an excellence in either, commit numberless transgressions, observable to the meanest understanding. The ignorant critic and dull remarker can readily spy blemishes in eloquence or morals, whose sentiments are not sufficiently elevated to observe a beauty. But such are judges neither of books nor of life; they can diminish no solid reputation by their censure, nor bestow a lasting character by their applause.[2]

The review of Murphy's Orphan of China states that "all the faults of the performance proceeded from vicious imitation, and all its beauties were the poet's own." Goldsmith does mention a "fault" of the repetition of the word virtue. But, he concludes, "Works of genius are not to be judged from the faults to be met with in them, but by the beauties in which they abound."[3] A similar idea may be found in the review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations: ". . . the merit of every work is determined, not from the number of its faults, but of its beauties: . . ."[4] Goldsmith continues

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 510.

[2] Citizen of the World, Letter CIX (March 18, 1761), Works, III, 395.

[3] Critical Review (May, 1759), Works, IV, 353.

[4] Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 12.

that where the beauties prevail, faults may be seen in profusion. It is these beauties that make a work "inestimable; its defects are only arguments of humanity, not of weakness."[1]

Commenting on Pope's line, "An honest man is the noblest work of God," Mr. Burchell shows his preference for the beauties in both painting and books:

> I always held that hackneyed maxim of Pope . . . as very unworthy a man of genius and a base desertion of his own superiority. As the reputation of books is raised not by their freedom from defect, but the greatness of their beauties; so should that of men be prized, not for their exemption from fault, but the size of those virtues they are possessed of. The scholar may want prudence, the statesman may have pride, and the champion ferocity; but shall we prefer to these the low mechanic, who laboriously plods on through life without censure or applause? We might as well prefer the tame correct paintings of the Flemish school to the erroneous, but sublime animations of the Roman pencil.[2]

These beauties which Goldsmith sought were intrinsic. He does not look for ornaments, for tropes and figures, and compound epithets; he is not impressed by externals, but by sentiment and subject matter.

Another feature of his criticism is that he is an historical critic; that is, he recognized the influence of time, race, and nationality upon an author.[3] An Enquiry into the State of

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 130.

[3] "Philosophically the historical point of view in literary criticism rests upon the general principles of the organic unity of national or community life and its historical continuity. . . . As factors in this organic unity, we must

Polite Learning in Europe is developed by this method. In it he discusses the literary scene in Europe country by country; thus he shows the effect of nationality upon literature. In pointing out the causes which contributed to the development of literature in Greece and Rome, Goldsmith lists stability of government, leisure, freedom, and the right climate and soil:[1]

> To attain literary excellence also, it is requisite that the soil and climate should, as much as possible, conduce to happiness. The earth must supply man with the necessaries of life, before he has leisure or inclination to pursue more refined enjoyments. The climate, also, must be equally indulgent; for, in too warm a region, the mind is relaxed into languor, and, by the opposite excess, is chilled into torpid inactivity.[2]

In another chapter, "The Polite Learning of English and

(continued) consider, then, not merely inherited racial characteristics, but also the total national environment--physical surroundings, government, social institutions and relations, religion, philosophy, science and art and their causal relations one with the other. . . . The historical attitude is the direct result of the modern scientific spirit, of the desire to understand, to comprehend, to explain the past by cause and effect. The historical spirit, then, when applied in literary study or criticism, calls for a consideration of causes, of origins, and of development as related to causes." Miller, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

[1] Works, III, 469-470. Among the works which show the influence of climate upon man see Citizen of the World, Letter XCI (November 17, 1760), Works, III, 340-343; "The Effect Which Climates Have upon Men, and Other Animals," New Essays, pp. 5-11; An History of the Earth and Animated Nature (London, 1774), I, 324-325; II, 232-238, 362-363.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 470. "It was especially through the critical writings of the Abbé du Bos that the theory received a wider recognition. He thought there was an intimate relationship between genius and climate, and . . . founded his idea of progress on this premise: climatic changes were to him the causes of the alternate periods of growth and decadence of literary production." Bosker, op. cit., p. 56.

France Incapable of Comparison,"[1] he contrasts the prevailing taste of each country and states his belief in the relativity of taste. Similarly, in the review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations, Goldsmith ascribes all the faults of Homer "to the age in which he lived, and all his beauties to himself alone."[2] Further, he states that the "barbarous manners" portrayed by Homer are "not the poet's fault, but that of his country, or the age he lived in."[3] This is the attitude that a historical critic would take.

Goldsmith is not so direct as Hurd, who, in Letters on Chivalry and Romance, states that Grecian and Gothic works have their own rules:

> When an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian rules, he finds nothing but deformity. But the Gothic architecture has it's own rules, by which when it comes to be examined, it is seen to have it's merit, as well as the Grecian. The question is not, which of the two is conducted in the simplest or truest taste: but, whether there be not sense and design in both, when scrutinized by the laws on which each is projected.[4]

Miller believes that the "historical attitude is the direct result of the modern scientific spirit, of the desire to understand, to comprehend, to explain the past by cause

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[1]"Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 530-536.

[2]Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 12.

[3]Ibid., p. 13.

[4]Richard Hurd, Letters on Chivalry and Romance, ed. Edity Morley (London, 1911), p. 118.

and effect."[1] This is one of the paradoxes in Goldsmith. He never thought of himself as a scientist, and he admits that he has "a taste rather classical than scientific;" this statement is made in his preface to Animated Nature, a professed scientific work.[2] Pitman, who made a study of this work states: "It can not be too much emphasized, then that Animated Nature is in no sense, and was never intended to be, a scientific work."[3]

Goldsmith is not deliberately "scientific" in his attitude, even in scientific work. He may have developed the historical point of view from his study of history or from the reading of authors whose point of view was historical. Among them are Montesquieu, du Fresnoy, Voltaire, du Bos, Temple, and Lord Bolingbroke. Goldsmith owned the works of the first five authors,[4] and in his Life of Bolingbroke he notes that the Letters on the Study and Use of History illustrates a "new system of thinking about history."[5]

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[1]Miller, op. cit., 16-17.

[2]"Preface," Animated Nature, Works, V, 188-189.

[3]Pitman, op. cit., p. 16.

[4]Prior, op. cit., II, 578-584.

[5]Works, IV, 217-218.

The historical approach had been accepted in varying degrees by Boileau,[1] Pope,[2] Johnson,[3] Thomas Warton,[4] Joseph Warton,[5] and Hume;[6] and Goldsmith, who is very sensitive to contemporary currents of thought, no doubt, adopted it because he had been convinced by his experiences as a traveller that men were diverse. As early as 1759, before Goldsmith wrote his histories, he applied the historical method to literature.

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[1]Boileau, L'Art Poétique, III, 113-114.

[2]Pope, "Essay on Criticism," ll. 119-120.

[3]Johnson, "Life of Pope," op. cit., III, 238-240.

[4]"In reading the works of a poet who lived in a remote age, it is necessary that we should look back upon the customs and manners which prevailed in that age. We should endeavour to place ourselves in the writer's situation and circumstances. Hence we shall become better enabled to discover how his turn of thinking, and manner of composing, were influenced by familiar appearances and established objects, which are utterly different from those with which we are at present surrounded." Thomas Warton, Observations on the Fairy Queen (London, 1807), II, 71.

[5]Joseph Warton, op. cit., I, 5.

[6]"We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that required by that performance. . . . A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. . . If a work be addressed to persons of a different age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices; but full of the manners of his own times, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated." Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," op. cit., pp. 269-270.

An historical critic who recognizes the racial, national, and epochal influences upon an author may take the next step and become an aesthetic relativist. This step Goldsmith took. An aesthetic relativist is a person who believes that there is a diversity of human nature and of taste in literature rather than a uniformity and that one opinion is as good as another. This belief in the "differentness" of men developed parallel with that of the principle of plentitude in the doctrine of the Chain of Being.[1] Most of the critics of the period believed in uniformity, that reason and nature were the same and that all men who thought alike would have uniform taste. Perhaps the classic statement of the idea was expressed by Johnson who writes that "the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, . . ."[2] Reynolds, too, tells his students that "the internal fabric of our minds" is uniform, and that "what has pleased, and continues to please, is likely to please again."[3] At the same time there was a growing conviction that men were different and their opinions were diverse.

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[1]See Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge [Mass.], 1942), pp. 224-226; 292-299.

[2]Johnson, Rasselas, I, 220-221. Cf. "Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and, therefore, few only can judge how nearly they are copied." "Preface to Shakespeare," Works, V, 105. See also Burke who asserts, ". . . it is probable that the standard both of reason and taste is the same in all human creatures." "On Taste," I, 73.

[3]Reynolds, "Seventh Discourse," p. 189.

It is probable that Goldsmith, who had spent a year on the continent in the formative years of his development, had observed the differences in the customs and manners of the people whom he met.[1] No doubt he discovered that they had different taste in music and literature. Certainly, An Enquiry, his first major work, develops the idea that the standard of taste is relative, that it depends upon time, custom, and nationality.[2] Commenting on the dispute about the superiority of the ancients over the moderns, he decides that the victory cannot be given to either contestant, for both are excellent in different ways; both had different models:

> They have both copied from different originals, described the manners of different ages; have exhibited nature as they found her, and both are excellent in separate imitations. Homer describes his gods as his countrymen believed them. Virgil in a more enlightened age, describes his with a greater degree of respect; and Milton still rises infinitely above either. The machinery of Homer is best adapted to an unenlightened idolator; that of the Roman poet to a more refined heathen; and that of Milton, to a reader illuminated by revelation. Had Homer wrote like Milton, his countrymen would have despised him; had Milton adopted the theology of the ancient bard, he had been truly ridiculous.[3]

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[1] See "The Traveller," Works, II, 6-19; also "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 530-532.

[2] "Goldsmith believes . . . in spite of some orthodoxy, in a relative aesthetic." Bosker, op. cit., p. 134. Among the critics who discussed taste, Hooker does not mention Goldsmith. Edward Niles Hooker, "The Discussion of Taste, from 1750-1770, and the New Trends in Literary Criticism," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 577-592.

[3] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 530.

The material used by a poet is determined by such factors as customs, age, and nationality, perhaps religion. Homer, Virgil, and Milton used different machinery in their epics largely because they represented different cultures.[1] The same idea may be found in the review of Wilkie's Epigoniad.[2]

This opinion of the relativity of taste finds expression in two other works. In the review of Gray's Odes, Goldsmith points out the fallacy of a modern imitating an ancient who wrote appropriately for his milieu. The Greek poet wrote for the Greek people; so should the English poet write for his countrymen, and, like Pindar, choose "the most popular subjects" and make allusion to "customs well known, in his day, to the meanest person."[3] Goldsmith continues:

> How unsuited then to our national character is that species of poetry which rises upon us with unexpected flights; where we must hastily catch the thought, or it flies from us; and in short, where the reader must largely partake of the poet's enthusiasm, in order to taste his beauties. To carry the parallel a little farther: The Greek poet wrote in a language the most proper that can be imagined for this species of composition; lofty, harmonious, and never needing rhyme to heighten the numbers. But, for us, several unsuccessful experiments seem to prove that the English cannot have Odes in blank verse; . . .[4]

The review of Ward's System of Oratory repeats the principle of relativity in more general terms, for the

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[1]Cf. The defects of Homer "proceed wholly from the Nature of the Times he liv'd in." Pope, "Preface to the Iliad," The Prose Works, ed. Norman Ault (Oxford, 1936), p. 239.

[2]Monthly Review (September, 1757), Works, IV, 290.

[3]Ibid., p. 296.

[4]Ibid., p. 297.

topic under consideration is eloquence and the rules governing oratory:

> But if rules in general of this kind are of such inutility, how much more must they lead us astray, when we take the precepts given to the orators of one country to direct the pleadings of another; rules drawn from the ancients to direct a modern barrister, would make him thoroughly ridiculous; . . .[1]

The principle holds good in both literature and oratory; men, who are diverse, may be expected to have varying taste.

The most direct expression of Goldsmith's opposition to the uniformitarianism of the period is to be found in the statement, "Truth is a positive, taste a relative excellence."[2] Goldsmith attempts to meet the argument of the uniformitarians by stating:

> But it may be objected, that this is setting up a particular standard of taste in every country; this is removing that universal one which has hitherto united the armies and enforced the commands of criticism; by this reasoning the critics of one country will not be proper guides to the writers of another; Grecian or Roman rules will not be generally binding in France or England; but the laws designed to improve our taste, by this reasoning, must be adapted to the genius of every people, as much as those enacted to promote morality.[3]

So it is, for if criticism is to be of help to both the author and the audience, its principles must "be taken from among the inhabitants, and adapted to the genius and temper of the country it attempts to refine."[4] Goldsmith feels

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[1] Critical Review (April, 1759), Works, IV, 533.

[2] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, IV, 533.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

that each country has its own customs and humours and that the works which imitated English customs would appear false to a person of another nationality. "Sir John Falstaff," he says, "with all the merry men of Eastcheap, are entirely of England, and please the English alone."[1] He states decisively, "English taste, like English liberty, should be restrained by laws of its own promoting."[2] One function of criticism is to "understand the nature of the climate and country, &c. before it gives rules to direct Taste. In other words, every country should have a national system of criticism."[3] If every country has its own criticism, the critics must undergo a change of attitude. They should, Goldsmith writes, "imitate physicians, and consider every country as having a peculiar constitution, and consequently requiring a peculiar regimen."[4]

What Goldsmith proposes is a standard of criticism based upon the recognition of the diversity of human nature. The

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[1] Ibid., p. 532. Cf. ". . . comedy is not transferred easily from one age or nation to another. A Frenchman or Englishman is not pleased with the Andria of Terence, or Clitia of Machiavel, where the fine lady, upon whom all the play turns, never once appears to the spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes, suitable to the reserved humour of the ancient Greeks and modern Italians." Hume, op. cit., I, 277.

[2] "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 532.

[3] Ibid., p. 535.

[4] Ibid., p. 536.

critic, then, must consider the nationality, natural environment, and customs of the author before he passes a judgment upon the work. It is in this approach to literature, that of an aesthetic relativist, that Goldsmith's critical method is most distinguished.

Finally, we notice that Goldsmith states rather than develops his critical ideas. He does not write a single analytical work that can be compared with Addison's papers on Paradise Lost, Thomas Warton's Observations on the Fairy Queen, Joseph Warton's The Genius and Writing of Pope, or Johnson's Lives of the English Poets. Goldsmith's major critical work, which may be compared with one of the shorter essays in Johnson's Lives, is The Life of Parnell (1770).

The Life of Parnell is a short biographical and critical study of an Irish poet, friend of Pope, and member of the Scriblerus Club.[1] The work is a slender volume comprising only twenty-one pages in the Gibbs' edition. The first two and a half pages are devoted to Parnell's parentage, birth and early education, university training, admittance to the church, and marriage. In a paragraph of apology, Goldsmith comments on the scarcity of material about the life of the man.[2] He then turns to a discussion of the poet's temperament

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[1] Works, IV, 157-178.

[2] Johnson. "Goldsmith's Life of Parnell is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials; for nobody can write the life of a man, but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him." Boswell, op. cit., II, 166.

as he heard it reported by his father and uncle. In order to show how well Parnell was liked by his friends, Goldsmith inserts four interesting letters from Pope and a Round Robin from Gay, Jervas, Arbuthnot, and Pope. Goldsmith notes the poet's participation in the Scriblerus Club. In the last six pages there is a discussion of Parnell as a poet; he copied nature, used pleasing subjects, had good diction. Three of the pages contain general comments on the poems. Since these statements are typical, observe the nature of the criticism:

> 'Hesiod, or the Rise of Woman,' is a very fine illustration of a hint from Hesiod. It is one of the earliest productions, and first appeared in a miscellany published by Tonson.[1]
>
> The 'Fairy Tale' is incontestably one of the finest pieces in any language. The old dialect is not perfectly well preserved; but this is a very slight defect, where all the rest is so excellent.[2]
>
> The 'Night Piece on Death' deserves every praise, and I should suppose, with very little amendment, might be made to surpass all those night pieces and church-yard scenes that have since appeared.[3]

This selection of individual comments on poems shows that Goldsmith does not bring to his reading his set of critical principles in order to make a critical judgment. Instead, his judgments are largely impressionistic and factual. Why does not Goldsmith give an explication of some

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[1] "Life of Parnell," Works, IV, 174.

[2] Ibid., p. 175.

[3] Ibid., p. 176.

of the poems and analyze them on the basis of theme, method of development, mood, style, versification, literary influences?

One explanation may lie in the type of writing Goldsmith did and his consideration for his reading public. For example, in the review of Home's Douglas, he writes:

> With respect to this present tragedy, we could indeed, enter on a particular examen of the beauties or the faults discoverable in the diction, sentiment, plot, or characters; but, in works of this nature, general observation often characterizes more strongly than a particular criticism could do; for it were an easy task to point out these passages in any indifferent author, where he has excelled himself, and yet these comparative beauties, if we may be allowed the expression, may have no real merit at all.[1]

He may have felt that specific criticism was too technical for the common reader, but that a general critique better suited the comprehension of the public.

His concept of the responsibility of the critic to the audience may account for his method; for example, in a preface to a series of essays, published in the Public Ledger, Goldsmith gives as his aim to furnish such "literary news as may contribute to entertain the public." He then states his method:

> In the execution of a task of this nature neither great abilities nor profound learning will be exerted by the writer, and no great discernment or sagacity will be required on the part of the reader. I could wish that we both brought only our common-sense to the business, and that while I write without pedantry and affectation, he may

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[1] Monthly Review (May, 1757), Works, IV, 251.

> read with a desire of being pleased. If by this means we can both harmlessly pass over a splenetic hour the end will be fully answered; to go deeply into the subject is not our design, to please the greatest number we must be superficial: all I intend to offer is a sort of a - - - stage coach account of books, we will leave to scholars the painful erudition of a Dyonysius, or the opposing system of a Bayle.[1]

Since most of Goldsmith's critical articles were written in the early years of his writing career, it is unsafe to speculate upon the type of critic that he would have become had he lived to be as old as Dr. Johnson was when he died. The revised edition of An Enquiry, which came from the press in 1774 after the death of Goldsmith, may indicate the drift of his criticism. It contained many striking revisions and omissions, both of which altered his original position. The omitted portions contained his interpretation of the dispute between the ancients and the moderns, the discussion of taste, and the material on the stage most objectionable to Garrick.[2] By this time taste was no longer one of the important literary issues of the day, and Goldsmith may be excused for deleting the material on the grounds that he was trying to keep his text current. But by omitting the material Goldsmith may indicate his belief in the uniformity of human nature held by Johnson, Reynolds, and some of his other friends. This association may have lead Goldsmith to change his principles which Johnson had stated were

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[1] "A Preface to a Series of Literary Essays," Public Ledger (August 19, 1761), New Essays, pp. 57-58.

[2] These omissions are placed in "Appendix to the Enquiry," Works, III, 529-539, and in the notes which are placed at the bottom of some of the pages of the text.

"loose." If the revised edition of An Enquiry indicates what was happening to Goldsmith as a critic, the verdict would be that he was becoming more neo-classical in his principles than that he was developing in the direction of romantic criticism.

This study of Goldsmith's literary views during the rather crucial years, 1757-1774, when criticism in England was undergoing some evolutionary processes, has shown that Goldsmith participated in the changes. In fact, judging him quantitatively, a reader may well conclude that he opposed more principles held by the neo-classicists than he defended. Because he was not a systematic thinker, his critical theories present some interesting inconsistencies. Still he was a critic with a definite critical method who believed his function was to direct the taste of the audience and lead the author to perfection. On account of this belief in the purpose of criticism, his literary views add to a knowledge of criticism in the eighteenth century.

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON GOLDSMITH'S CANON

One problem facing the student of Goldsmith is his canon, which has not been entirely determined. The first edition of his works was published by some London booksellers in 1801, twenty-seven years after the death of the author.[1] Not all of Goldsmith's known works were included. In 1837 Prior, who had read widely in the magazines to which Goldsmith contributed, sought to collect many of the fugitive pieces on the basis of internal evidence.[2] Cunningham, who doubted the authenticity of the Belles Lettres essays, included them and many of the letters, extracts from Animated Nature, and the translation of Vida's "Game of Chess" in his edition of the Works.[3] Gibbs published all of the works previously edited with a few essays hitherto uncollected.

Some modern scholars have not accepted the canon as it is established by Prior and Gibbs. Among them is Caroline F.

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[1]For Percy's part in the edition see The Percy Letters, pp. 26, 37, 38, 233-234; Letter of Bishop Percy, May 19, 1802, John Nichols, Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1831), II, 583-584; Gibbs Works, I, 2, n. 1; I, 311, 406. See also Gaussens, op. cit., pp. 210-215.

[2]Prior gives a rather general method for making the selections on the basis of style, phrase, allusion, and sentiment. Prior, op. cit., I, 316-317.

[3]The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. Peter Cunningham, 4 vols., London, 1854.

Tupper who proves rather conclusively that the Belles Lettres essays were not written by Goldsmith.[1] These essays, "Upon Taste," "On the Cultivation of Taste," "The Origin of Poetry," "Poetry, as Distinguished from Other Writing," "On Metaphors," "On Hyperbole," and "On Versification," are more widely known than Goldsmith's other criticism. Furthermore, they present ideas which are largely inconsistent with those found in the Enquiry, the reviews, and some of the other essays. By sifting the evidence for their authenticity presented by Gibbs and the objections raised against them by Cunningham and by presenting further evidence of her own, Miss Tupper concludes that the essays were not written by Goldsmith.[2] They have not, therefore, been used in this study as a part of Goldsmith's canon. The references made to them have shown, primarily, differences of opinions held by the two critics.

Ronald S. Crane has made extensive studies of Goldsmith's canon. Basing his claims upon the identity of thought and ideas, Crane has added eighteen essays to the canon.[3] All of these essays were taken from magazines to which Goldsmith had contributed. Since the publication of this collection of

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[1]Caroline F. Tupper, "Essays Erroneously Attributed to Goldsmith," PMLA, XXIX (1924), 325-342.

[2]She thinks that the real author of the Belles Lettres essays is Tobias Smollett. Crane states that Miss Tupper's suggestion that the author was Smollett "is hardly more than a plausible guess." New Essays, p. xix, n. 5.

[3]Ronald S. Crane, New Essays, Chicago, 1927. See pp. xi-xl and the extensive notes for evidence of authenticity.

essays, Crane has identified another article by Goldsmith, a review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer.[1] These essays have been included in this study.

R. W. Seitz, who seriously doubts the attributions of Prior and Gibbs, examined Goldsmith's contribution to the Literary Magazine.[2] Of the eight articles included in the Gibbs' edition, Seitz, who "discredits every bit of evidence, internal or external, that has ever been advanced in support of the attributions,"[3] proves that none of them were written by Goldsmith. Four of the articles, "The Poetical Scale," "Sequel to the Poetical Balance," "Phanor," and "The History of Our Own Language," deal largely with literary criticism, but they have not been used in this study.

Arthur Friedman, in 1938, completed a doctor's dissertation on "Studies in the Canon and Sources of Oliver Goldsmith."[4] On the basis of parallels in thought and expression, Friedman ascribes to Goldsmith some essays in the Weekly Magazine: or Gentleman and Lady's Companion, published by I. Pottinger,

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[1]Critical Review, IX (January, 1760), 11-19. Evidence in support of this attribution is found in "A Neglected Mid-Eighteenth-Century Plea for Originality and Its Author," PQ, XIII (1934), 21-29.

[2]R. W. Seitz, "Goldsmith and the Literary Magazine," RES, V (1929), 410-430.

[3]See note in English Literature, 1660-1800, A Bibliography of Modern Studies, ed. Louis A. Landa et al. (Princeton, 1950), I, 192.

[4]Arthur Friedman, "Studies in the Canon and Sources of Oliver Goldsmith," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1938. See also "Goldsmith and the Weekly Magazine," MP, XXXII (1935), 281-299.

publisher of the Busybody, to which Goldsmith had made contributions. Since it is known that Goldsmith was writing for the Weekly Magazine, Friedman thinks that two essays can be ascribed to him with "a very high degree of probability." These articles are "A Sublime Passage in a French Sermon" and "The Futility of Criticism." In addition to the above essays, Friedman lists seven articles which "suggest the hypothesis of Goldsmith's authorship." Among them is the essay "On the Present State of Our Theatres." In this thesis I accept Mr. Friedman's conclusions and quote from both "The Futility of Criticism" and "On the Present State of Our Theatres."

Friedman also examined the articles in the Critical Review which Prior and Gibbs had attributed to Goldsmith.[1] Friedman concludes that all the articles ascribed to Goldsmith were not written by him; that seventeen of the articles were genuine, that seven needed further evidence, and that eight of the articles should be dropped from the canon. Among those eight which are included in the Gibbs' edition are "Massey's Translation of Ovid's Fasti," "Lawson's Lectures concerning Oratory," "Church's edition of The Faerie Queene," "Young's Conjectures on Original Composition," "Montesquieu's Miscellaneous Pieces," and "Verse Portion of Genuine Remains in Verse and Prose of Mr. Samuel Butler."[2] No reference is made to these articles.

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[1]Arthur Friedman, "Goldsmith's Contributions to the Critical Review," MP, XLIV (1946), 23-52.

[2]Ibid., p. 52.

This study is based on the canon of Gibbs with the omission of the Belles Lettres essays, the essays from the Literary Magazine, and the six articles taken from the contributions to the Critical Review. It also includes the eighteen essays discovered by Crane, the review of Kedington's Critical Dissertations, and the two articles from the Weekly Magazine. On the whole, this material presents a rather definite point of view which has been described in this study.

APPENDIX B

GOLDSMITH'S INTEREST IN THE THEATRE

Judging from the number of articles written on the theatre, one can quickly conclude that Goldsmith was more interested in the theatre than in the drama. Principles of acting, stage business, scenes between the acts, Shakespearean revivals all come up for discussion. Like James Ralph, Goldsmith was very critical of the managers who made it difficult for a playwright to present his play:

> Our poet's performance must undergo a process truly chemical, before it is presented to the public. It must be tried in the manager's fire, strained through a license, suffer from repeated correcting, till it may be a mere caput mortum when it arrives before the public.[1]

The prominence of the actor leads Goldsmith to a very strange point of view that "it would be more for the interests of virtue, if stage performances were read, not acted; made rather our companions in the cabinet than on the theatre."[2] Goldsmith had no moral scruples against the stage, but he felt "that the reader receives more benefit by perusing a well

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[1] Enquiry, Works, III, 517. ". . . Goldsmith talked of a project for having a third Theatre in London, solely for the exhibition of new plays, in order to deliver authours from the supposed tyranny of managers, . . ." Boswell, op. cit., IV, 113.

[2] Enquiry, Works, III, 517.

written play, than by seeing it acted."[1] This attitude reminds a reader of Lamb who preferred reading the plays of Shakespeare to seeing them performed. But Goldsmith is reacting to the general conditions of the English theatre in which there were few good playwrights, a large number of excellent actors, and interested theatre goers. Instead of producing inferior new plays, the managers, Garrick in particular, produced revisions, which one critic called "execrable travesties,"[2] of the plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, and other dramatists.

Most of Goldsmith's adverse criticism of Shakespeare is based upon the acting versions which Garrick produced.[3] In the Enquiry Goldsmith writes that the playgoers are expected to "admire even the absurdities of Shakespear."[4] He adds.

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[1] Ibid., p. 518.

[2] W. J. Lawrence, "The Drama and the Theatre," Johnson's England, ed. Arthur Stanley Tuberville (Oxford, 1933), II, 163. Ralph, too, objected to "stale Performances" which were given in lieu of new productions. Op. cit., p. 25.

[3] Among the revisions were "The Witches," an opera taken from Macbeth; the presentation of the Tempest as an opera; The Fairies based on A Mid-Summer Night's Dream with music by Mr. Smith, a pupil of Handel; "Florizel and Perdita," an after-piece taken from A Winter's Tale; Catherine and Petruchio made out of The Taming of the Shrew; and Romeo and Juliet produced with a changed catastrophe [See Murphy's account of the revivals, op. cit., I, 269, 294-295, 298-299.]. It was these revivals that led Johnson to say that to allow Garrick credit for reviving Shakespeare "would be to lampoon the age. Many of Shakespeare's plays are the worse for being acted: Macbeth for instance." Boswell, op. cit., II, 92. Johnson, too, was merely passing judgment on the conditions of the stage.

[4] Enquiry, Works, III, 519.

that he honors Shakespeare, but he also suspects that much of the praise given the plays is based on the name of the author attached to it rather than the value of the entertainment. The actors, too, give the wrong impression of the author:

> In fact, the revivals of those pieces of forced humour, far-fetched conceit, and unnatural hyperbole, which have been ascribed to Shakespear, is rather gibbeting than raising a statue to his memory; it is rather a trick of the actor, who thinks it safest acting in exaggerated characters, and who, by outstepping nature, chooses to exhibit the ridiculous outré of a harlequin under the sanction of that venerable name.[1]

The "antiquated dialect," "obsolete humour," and "overcharged characters" mentioned by the Vicar as characteristics of Shakespeare's plays, were exaggerated in the revivals.[2] David N. Smith calls the whole passage in the novel "a satire on Garrick and a jibe at Drury Lane,"[3] for it was against the revisions of Shakespeare, rather than the plays of Shakespeare, that Goldsmith raises his voice.

Goldsmith was also interested in acting as an art. In "Remarks on Our Theatres"[4] he compares the principles of acting in an English theatre with those in a French playhouse to the advantage of the latter. "On Our Theatres"[5] describes

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 146.

[3] David Nichol Smith, "Introduction," Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare (Glasgow, 1903), p. xiii.

[4] Bee, No. I (October 6, 1759), Works, II, 309-312.

[5] Bee, No. II (October 13, 1759), Works, II, 338-340.

the acting of the French actress Mademoiselle Clairon. In stating what she does not do, Goldsmith, presumably, tells what English actresses are guilty of. She does not come in staring at the audience; for her eyes are fixed upon the other members of the cast. Her gestures are meaningful; she never has the "ridiculous appearance as if her elbows were pinned to her hips."[1] She never takes notice of the audience nor bows to them in recognition of their applause; instead, she remains in character.

"The Adventures of a Strolling Player"[2] reveals the experiences of a player, a former Merry Andrews in a puppet-show. In giving the player's idea of good acting, Goldsmith satirizes current practices:

> There is one rule by which a strolling player may be ever secure of success; that is, in our theatrical way of expressing it, to make a great deal of the character. To speak and act as in common life, is not playing, nor is it what people come to see: natural speaking, like sweet wine, runs glibly over the palate, and scarce leaves any taste behind it; but being high in a part resembles vinegar, which grates upon the taste, and one feels it while he is drinking. To please in town and country, the way is to cry, wring, cringe into attitudes, mark the emphasis, slap the pockets, and labour like one in the falling sickness: that is the way to work for applause; that is the way to gain it.[3]

Goldsmith objects to the conventional type of acting in which "the actor's business is not so much to adapt himself to the

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[1] Ibid., p. 339.

[2] British Magazine (October, 1760), Works, I, 290-299.

[3] Ibid., p. 295.

poet, as the poet's to adapt himself to the actor."[1] This is a very important principle in Goldsmith's criticism of the theatre. Goldsmith thought that the actor should portray the character who was created by the dramatist. He cared nothing for the "traditional shrugs, which had been on the stage, and only on the stage."[2] In general, he opposed the system of casting--of having a plump actress play the role of the starving Jane Shore, or an old woman take the role of a heroine for whom the hero languishes. He preferred seeing the stage "filled with agreeable objects" that make a few mistakes than "with withered or misshapen figures" however proper their gestures.[3]

A second objection to current theatrical practices was the management of stage business. Goldsmith disliked such devices as spreading a carpet at the beginning of each death scene, having pages who do not participate in the action to carry the trains of the leading tragic actresses, and employing guards who look over the audience instead of keeping their eyes on the stage business.[4] The Oriental Philosopher found

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[1] Citizen of the World, Letter LXXIX (September 30, 1760), Works, III, 297.

[2] Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 167.

[3] "Remarks on Our Theatres," Bee, No. I (October 6, 1759), Works, II, 312.

[4] Ibid., pp. 311-312.

it difficult to follow the play on account of the "scene shifting, trumpet sounding, mobs hallooing, carpet spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane."[1] All of this commotion kept the spectator from discovering how the plot was resolved. Addison, too, had advocated ridding the stage of drums and trumpets, thunder and lightning;[2] but the spectacular continued to draw the crowd a generation later when Goldsmith enters similar complaints.

Goldsmith also objected to the variety shows which were presented between the acts of the play. Lien Chi Antangi, who observes an English play for the first time, is unable to distinguish the relevant action of the tragedy from the skits produced between each act. When he commented on the straw man, balancing a straw on the tip of his nose, as an "unmeaning figure" in the plot, his friend in black informed him that "nothing pleases an audience more than seeing a straw balanced."[3] After the following act, a six year old child "was learning to dance on the stage" to the gratification of the audience. Through the veiled satire of the man in black, Goldsmith's mouthpiece, it is apparent that Goldsmith thought that radical reforms should be made in the

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[1] *Citizen of the World*, Letter XX (March 21, 1760), *Works*, III, 81.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 42 (April 18, 1711), I, 215-218.

[3] *Citizen of the World*, Letter XX (March 21, 1760), *Works*, III, 80.

theatre. He felt that the theatre should be maintained as a place for "men who come to be rationally amused"[1] and that all pantomine and Harlequin acts should be banished to a "third place of entertainment."[2]

A dramatist may be expected to be interested in the theatre, for a play is not a play until it is acted by actors before an audience. Goldsmith, however, was also interested in the related arts of opera and music. He could play a German flute, and he liked to sing. In an article which he contributed to the Bee, he reveals his love for Italian opera and suggests that an opera by Metastasio should be presented.[3] An essay in the British Magazine shows his deep appreciation of Handel whom he called "the head of the English school" of music.[4] One essay in the Citizen of the World shows that Goldsmith did not have much appreciation for painting, and George Primrose's experiences as a connoisseur of painting[5] with his two rules for judging a picture is further proof

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[1]"On the Present State of Our Theatres," Weekly Magazine (January 12, 1760), 63.

[2]Ibid., p. 62.

[3]"Of the Opera in England," Bee, No. VIII (November 24, 1759), Works, II, 453.

[4]"Notes to 'Reply to the Author of the British Magazine'," British Magazine (April, 1760), Works, I, 390 n. See also "On the Different Schools of Music," BM (February, 1760), Works, I, 386-388. Two other articles on music are "A Parallel between Mrs. Vincent and Miss Brent," BM (June, 1760), Works, IV, 479-483; and "Carolan, the Last Irish Bard," BM (July, 1760), Works, I, 392-394.

[5]Vicar of Wakefield, Works, I, 165-166.

that Goldsmith did not understand painting very well. Although he liked to dance, he does not write about dancing as a fine art as Addison had.[1]

The reviews of plays, articles on the theatre, the prologue[2] and epilogue,[3] and the two comedies are sufficient proof that Goldsmith had an abiding interest in the theatre. He was quite dissatisfied with current theatrical practices, and he felt that the plays which were written were ephemeral. By writing two plays in which humour was exhibited in the situations and characters, he proved that laughing comedy could be successful. Goldsmith was not alone in his fight for a reformed theatre, but he was one of the most outspoken.

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[1] Spectator, No. 466 (August 1, 1712), VI, 176-177.

[2] "Prologue to Cradock's Zobiede," Works, II, 95-96.

[3] "Epilogue to the Comedy, The Sister, by Mrs. Lennox," Works, II, 92-93.

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