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FENIGSOHN- HARVEY HEYWOOD: An Examination of Tobias Smollett's The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. (1967)  
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My thesis is a critical examination of The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771), the final novel of Tobias George Smollett. In an analysis of both its style and substance, I concentrate on both the form and content of this literary work.

Divided into four chapters, the thesis first examines Smollett's unique fusion of the picaresque mode in an epistolary form. Though acknowledging Smollett's debt to earlier picaresque conventions, I emphasize his special innovation -- the multiplying of the one first-person narrators of his epistolary novel. Here, I assess the psychological advantage and the artistic effect of rendering single events through the subjective impressions of several distinct characters.

In my second chapter, I examine the satiric humor of the novel, showing how Smollett exposes pretention and hypocrisy at every level of eighteenth-century society. I also examine his use of language to effect self-satiric character revelations. In my third chapter, I show how the author employs recurrent images to suggest his major themes. Finally, concluding that Smollett's art has a moral basis, I reveal how he unites narrative, characterization, satire and imagery in an ethical structure. The novel proves to be the account of both a physical and a moral journey.

AN EXAMINATION OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT'S  
THE EXPEDITION OF HUMPHRY CLINKER

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Tobias Smollett was able to combine creative imagination with cognitive reasoning. A good example of this achievement is his final work, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771). Here is a novel where concrete reality is imaginatively transformed into the illusion of a work of art. Yet the novel remains both inductively valid and historically accurate. For Smollett's method is to proceed from actual, physical and particular details in life to reach general moral conclusions about life. In my analysis of character and situation I will show how Smollett arrives at a synthesis of plot and theme. In this thesis I disclose how the artist unites the disparate visions of his characters; how he coalesces their insights into a single moral view. Examining both the form and content of this novel, I analyse Smollett's successful fusion of style and substance. Picaresque episodes, epistolary narrative, idiosyncratic characterizations, satiric humor, symbolic imagery -- all combine in an artistic achievement which this thesis will delineate.

My first chapter will examine Smollett's successful integration of narration and characterization. To fuse smoothly action and actors, Smollett merges the picaresque

tradition with the epistolary form. In his alteration of the picaresque, the episodic travels of a single narrator become the physical and moral journey of several narrators. I investigate the effect of this multiple epistolary in which five characters write letters to social and intellectual equals. The thesis will show how the individual's report of external phenomena exposes his peculiar internal nature. Concentrating on the subjective impressions of the letter writers, I conclude that Smollett emphasizes the relative nature of perception. For the cumulative effect of conflicting views of the same events eventually brings the reader to an enlightened moral perspective.

My second chapter will analyse the satiric humor of the novel. Follies and sins, delusions and hypocrisies are all exposed through Smollett's satire. Moral flaws in the individual and ethical faults of society are attacked. False sciences and equally bogus religions are lambasted in a comedy which is alternately bitter and mild, scornful and whimsical. Political hypocrisies, literary pretensions, social deceptions -- all are the butt of Smollett's condemnatory wit. The excesses and inadequacies of eighteenth-century man are paraded before us. Overcrowded cities, unhygienic sanitary practices, ruthless status-seekers -- none escapes Smollett's censure. Satirizing individuals as well as institutions, the author's humor is linguistic as well as situational. To prove this, I analyse Smollett's

ingenious use of orthographic errors. The suggestibility of their puns, their unconscious malapropisms expose the latent preoccupations of two semi-literate letter writers.

The third chapter of this thesis will consider the symbols and imagery of the novel. Recurring patterns of response and motifs in dynamic opposition lend the necessary thematic unity to a work whose only form is epistolary. For Smollett, a physical fact comes to suggest a moral fact. Characteristic gestures and stylized responses, frequently repeated, become richly allusive. For instance, the major character's constant complaint against human smells soon convinces us that humanity stinks, spiritually. Both literally and figuratively, the motifs of the novel are striking. Youth opposed to old age, sickness opposed to health, misanthropy opposed to benevolence, city opposed to country, pretention opposed to honesty, one man's view opposed to another -- the tension of these oppositions reveals the serious concerns underlying Smollett's comedy.

I have already suggested that Smollett's aesthetic achievement is no less a moral one. My fourth and final chapter will intensify this emphasis, concentrating on the moral goal of Smollett's art. Here I discuss the ethical issues of the novel, including man's search for contentment and his responsibilities to family and friends. I conclude that a major character in the novel, valetudinarian Matthew Bramble, undertakes an expedition in search of a cure for



both his spirit and his body. Analyzing the moral levels of Bramble's character, I determine that Bramble is overtly misanthropic and covertly benevolent. After his travels which take him from a corrupt England to a virtuous Scotland, Bramble is brought to health. In recognizing Humphry Clinker as his true son, in helping his friends and in rediscovering the value of country life, Bramble is physically and spiritually cured. More than an episodic, picaresque or a haphazard travelogue, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker proves to be an aesthetic achievement supported by an ethical structure.

## CHAPTER I

### PICARESQUE AND EPISTOLARY: THE MARRIAGE OF NARRATION AND CHARACTERIZATION

In The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, Smollett brilliantly fuses old picaresque elements in a new epistolary form. The general characteristics of the picaresque are: an episodic tale of adventure, a satiric view of society, a panoramic survey of manners -- all narrated in the first person by a rogue. In his last novel, Smollett imaginatively preserves but amends these picaresque traditions to suit the purposes of his art. Though every picaresque novel has these salient characteristics, the term picaresque has never been completely defined to everyone's satisfaction. However, literary historians do agree that some works, such as Lazarillo de Tormes (1554) and Gil Blas (1715), are prototypes of the picaresque. Let us consider the following definition in comparing Smollett's novel with its more typical picaresque predecessors:

As conceived in Spain and matured in France, the picaresque novel is the comic biography (or more often the autobiography) of an anti-hero who makes his way in the world through the service of masters, satirizing their personal faults, as well as their trades and professions. It possesses, therefore, two poles of interest -- one, the rogue and his tricks,

the other, the manners he pillories.<sup>1</sup>

This definition is perfectly applicable to the French and Spanish prototypes of the genre.

However, the quickest glance at Humphry Clinker reveals that Smollett's novel does not completely fit this definition. Here, the major character is not a rogue. In fact Smollett's novel contains several major characters of almost equal importance. Neither a biography nor an autobiography, the story is told by several narrators. Nevertheless, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker does contain several elements in common with the other general characteristics of the picaresque novel. As one critic has stated:

Insofar as Humphry Clinker represents a series of external adventures, hoaxes, accidents, misunderstandings, predominantly comic, occasionally pathetic, complete in themselves and following in no necessary order, occurring during travel in a variety of places and social circumstances, this novel is typically picaresque.<sup>2</sup>

Only by acknowledging Smollett's debt to such established picaresque technique can we realize how ingeniously he personalized the conventions in his final novel. Indebtedness gives way to inventiveness. We ultimately see The Expedition of Humphry Clinker for what it is -- the original product of a genuine innovator.

Hence let us first see how Smollett adapts several

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<sup>1</sup>Frank W. Chandler, The Literature of Roguery (Burt Franklin Biographical Series, Vol. I. New York: Burt Franklin, 1958), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Robert G. Davis, "Introduction," The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (New York: Rhinehart, 1967).

important picaresque elements to his own uses. For instance, dispensing with the rogue hero, Smollett nevertheless maintains the picaresque tradition of a sweeping satire of many levels of society. In the typical picaresque, the picaro encounters every strata and every institution of society. He meets, at moments not controlled or inhibited by social etiquette, people of all classes -- politicians, bankers, peasants, clergymen, actors, doctors, lawyers, and aristocrats. He is in an excellent position to observe the disparity between what these people actually are and what they wish their image to appear. Their poses, their affectations, their hypocrisies -- all are known to the picaro. He becomes a satirist, and the picaresque becomes a humorous study of manners. As my chapter II reveals, such a panoramic satire is much the same method of Smollett in The Expedition of Humphry Clinker.

Another element common to the picaresque prototypes is an episodic, loosely constructed plot. Failing to develop an organic sequence of action, the early picaresque writers are content to let things happen without developing motivation or explaining cause and effect. The rogue travels, if only to survive. The chaotic movement of a journey is especially appropriate for picaresque episodes. In this sense, too, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker faithfully maintains a picaresque convention. For the novel, as the title suggests, progresses through the episodic movements of a journey. Like much of his earlier fiction, Roderick

Random (1748), Peregrine Pickle (1751) and Ferdinand Count Fathom (1753), Smollett's final novel relates a series of adventures encountered through travel. But unlike Humphry Clinker, these earlier works suffer as art in remaining so constricted by the structures of the picaresque tradition. Under the influence of Le Sage's Gil Blas, Smollett's obvious derivatives hardly match their French prototype. Despite some colorful scenes, the earlier novels are so limitedly picaresque as to be merely an endless series of disconnected, bizarre, and brutal escapades.

Like Humphry Clinker, these novels are replete with gross caricatures, but unlike the final novel, there is little real change or revelation of character in them. In Roderick Random, for instance, the rascal-hero undergoes an enormous variety of happenstances, including a great change of fortune. But more a static, picaresque hero than an alterable human being, Roderick remains completely unenlightened by the experiences of his travels. When Smollett's earlier picaresque works employ fact, such as the realistic details of maritime life in Roderick Random, the factual content, accurate as it may be, is not integrated into the larger moral themes of the novel. For such themes simply are not present as they are in The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. Too often, these earlier picaresque novels are aesthetically unsatisfying because they depict only a physical journey, while Humphry Clinker is more successful as art because, unlike the others, this final novel also

depicts a moral journey. Nevertheless, as in the Spanish and French prototypes, as in his own earlier picaresque copies and in his own travelogue, Travels through France and Italy (1766), Smollett's last novel remains the story of a trip. Hence, we must first examine the factual and fictional details of travel which are so essential to the novel's ethical progress.

Unlike the typical picaresque novel, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker begins and ends at the same place, the Welsh manor of Squire Matthew Bramble. Though none of the action takes place there, Brambleton Hall is in constant focus, a rooted secure home juxtaposed against a rootless, insecure wandering. But even before the beginning of the narrative, the Squire has left Brambleton Hall, embarking on a journey to improve his health. Accompanying him on the tour are his young collegiate nephew, Jerry Melford, his niece, Jerry's sister, Lydia, his own sister, Tabitha Bramble, and a servant woman, Winifred Jenkins. Before returning to Wales, the travellers wind through England and Scotland. They visit fashionable spas, country estates, teeming cities, and isolated hamlets. By the novel's end, we have factually detailed accounts of the agronomy, the geography, the economics, the architecture, the legal systems, the politics, and the intellectual and social life of each country.

Thus, Smollett both preserves part of the picaresque tradition by moving the action through an episodic journey

and alters the tradition by elaborately describing the settings of that journey. However, Humphry Clinker is more than a fact-filled travelogue. For the accounts, though physically detailed, are not those impartial views offered in such earlier compilations as Smollett's Present State of All Nations. For instance, through the course of the novel, Scotland emerges as economically inferior but ethically superior to England. While the Scots are lauded for their hygiene and their hospitality, the English are condemned for lacking both. Such travel vignettes, objectively sketched but subjectively shaded, are all part of Smollett's aesthetic and, ultimately, moral purposes.

If Humphry Clinker were no more than an objective, fact-filled travelogue, Smollett's labor could hardly be given serious consideration as a work of art. In fact, every fiction must create its own reality. Few novels succeed without a supporting milieu, a solid background, a viable setting. Accordingly, I cannot overstress that the world of Humphry Clinker is carefully delineated and precisely variegated. The sights and sounds of the 1760's -- London, Bath, Edinburgh -- are there in abundance. However replete with the details of time and place, Smollett's art does transcend the limitations of a picaresque stage, and the results suggest the range and depth of the cinema. His pen is analogous to a moving camera, continually recording a vivid, colorful landscape. But this novel, if limited to striking details, no matter how lucidly rendered, would be

merely an amusing journal, an historical documentary, had not Smollett ingeniously refined still another picaresque device. He adds the essential ingredient of any human story, whether eighteenth-century novel or technicolor film -- characterization.

For Smollett, content and form are almost inextricably one; his method of narration is simultaneously his method of characterization. To so merge the action and the actors, he fuses the picaresque episodes in an epistolary form, rendering the entire narrative through the letters of five major characters. Smollett quintuples the picaresque's autobiographical point of view, multiplying its single, first-person narrator into five first-person narrators. Through the course of their letters, we gain an insight into each of the five characters as each reveals himself in his unique, internal response to an identical, external situation. Though all are affected by the same stimuli, each character expresses a credibly unique response, for Smollett has so differentiated the personalities of his originals. Through their combined insights, we as readers come to infer our own objective reality as evolved through the multiple subjective impressions of the five letter writers. This technique is, in effect, very like that of such modern novelists as William Faulkner, who narrates most of The Sound and the Fury in several interior monologues: first through the mind of the idiot Benjy, then through the mind of Jason, and later through the mind of Quentin Compson.



The same facts are related, but in that particular chronology and with that distinct emphasis which most impresses the awareness of the individual perceiver, whether Benjy, Jason, or Quentin. In one sense, the reader comes to realize that there are as many stories of the same external happening as there are individuals with minds to perceive uniquely and thoughts to express idiosyncratically.

Repeatedly, the subjectivity of their description, not only emphasizes the psychic attitudes of the characters, but also, in so doing, strikingly exposes the ambivalent, ambiguous and utterly relative nature of what passes for objective experience. Though Smollett may not be arguing for a radical solipsism, he still is most concerned with the unique results of an unavoidably idiosyncratic view from necessarily subjective viewers. Compare, for instance, Bramble's account of Bath with a report on the same spa by his niece. The misogynist, Uncle Matthew, observes:

Instead of that peace, tranquility and ease, so necessary to those who labour under bad health, weak nerves, and irregular spirits, here we have nothing but noise, tumult, and hurry. (p. 35)<sup>3</sup>

He continues, bitterly complaining of the assymetrical architecture, the noxious air, and the polygot society. Ever mindful of neoclassic decorum, Bramble resembles Pope in his rage for a staid order. Critical of buildings and of people when they defy established convention, the Squire,

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<sup>3</sup>Due to the absence of a scholarly, definitive text, all quotations are taken from: The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, ed. and intro. by Robert G. Davis (New York: Rhinehart, 1967).

as an eighteenth-century conservative, is most concerned with unity, balance, and harmony. He proves that the architecture of Bath -- cheaply constructed, poorly ventilated and haphazardly placed -- is injurious to the health of those who come there to improve their health. Then, turning to an analysis of society, he berates Bath's clientele as status-seeking upstarts who threaten his conservative sensibilities:

inconsiderable proportions of genteel people are lost in a mob of impudent plebians, who have neither understanding nor judgment, nor the least idea of propriety and decorum. (p. 39)

After sketching a vivid scene of the infinite variety of humanity collected at Bath, he concludes with an image clearly symbolizing his fierce conception of human bestiality:

the mob is a monster I never could abide, either in its head, tail, midriff, or members: I detest the whole of it as a mass of ignorance, presumption, malice and brutality. (p. 39)

Yet, how different is the same scene to the starved senses of Bramble's niece. Fresh from the monotony of boarding school, she can declare, Miranda-like:

Bath is to me a new world. All is gayety, good humor, and diversion. The eye is continually entertained with the splendor of dress and equipage and the ear with the sound of coaches, chaises, chairs... (p. 41)

Her view of Bath is far from the hell envisioned by the crusty Bramble; she is convinced, "Bath, to be sure, is an earthly paradise" (p. 41). For the very reasons that Bramble finds Bath so objectionable, Lydia finds the resort enchanting:

there you see the highest quality, and the lowest trader folk, jostling each other, without ceremony, hail-fellow well met. (p. 42)

Still another, faithful to his own particular nature, further complicates the reader's conception of what Bath truly is. Jerry, "amazed to find so small a place, so crowded with entertainment and variety" (p. 53), confirms all the breakdown in decorum so reprehensible to his uncle. But the reactions to this disorder from the ebullient nephew strongly conflict with those of the jaded uncle. Jerry says, grateful for the fresh insights gained in viewing a society unmasqueraded:

. . . this chaos is to me a source of infinite amusement. Here a man has daily opportunities of seeing the most remarkable characters of the community. He sees them descended from their pedestals, and divested of their formal draperies, undisguised by art and affectation. Here we have ministers of state, judges, generals, bishops, projectors, philosophers, wits, poets, players, chemists, fiddlers and buffoons. (p. 53)

After his anecdotes describing a society turned upside down, Jerry analyzes his responses. These directly contradict those of the soured uncle:

I cannot account for my being pleased with these incidents, any other way than by saying, they are truly ridiculous in their own nature, and serve to lighten the humour in the farce of life, which I am determined to enjoy as long as I can. (p. 54)

However, for the sensitive Bramble, the foibles of mankind are hardly entertainment:

Hark ye, Lewis, my misanthropy increases every day. The longer I live, I find the folly and fraud of mankind grow more and more intolerable. (p. 51)

Monroe Engle makes several important points in assessing the effect of Smollett's epistolary technique:

It [The Expedition of Humphry Clinker] differs significantly from many epistolary novels, including both Pamela and Clarissa Harlowe, in that the letter writers in this novel all really try to tell the truth as they see it, rather than give partial testimony for purposes of persuasion or self-protection. Each of these correspondents writes to an absolute peer, an equal in age, station and view of life . . . <sup>4</sup>

As Mr. Engle points out, each letter is written to an intellectual and social equal. The Squire writes to his old friend and physician, Dr. Lewis. Jerry Melford confides in his fellow collegian, Phillips. Lydia Melford corresponds with her friend at finishing school, Laetia Willis, addressing only a few letters to her former guardian. Winifred Jenkins writes to another maid, Mary Jones. Only Tabitha, except for one letter to a superior, Dr. Lewis, writes all of her letters to an inferior.

In crediting Smollett's modernity, Engle notes the over-all effect of Smollett's epistolary form:

Each of the writers, with the exception of Tabitha, then is a free, limpid medium for narration, and the resultant varying and overlapping points of view through which the story is told give an effect of multiple truth that we are likely to associate only with more recent experiments in the novel. <sup>5</sup>

Though Mr. Engle rightly notes that Smollett's result is one of "multiple truth," he hardly goes much further in deter-

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<sup>4</sup>Monroe Engle, "Forward," The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. vi.

<sup>5</sup>Engle, p. vi.

mining the author's purposes for eliciting such an effect. Like Engle, other critics have also noted what the letters do:

The letters serve to tell the story, to give different versions of the same visit, and to characterize the writers.<sup>6</sup>

This is a simple answer to the question of how the letters function. But why did Smollett design the epistolary form he did? This question remains unanswered.

To answer such a question is to understand first the philosophy, then the psychology, and finally the ethics underlying Smollett's epistolary art. As I wrote in my introduction, my own chapter IV concludes that Smollett's art takes a distinct moral position. But paradoxically, this firm moral stand is based on a particular epistemology which emphasizes the indistinct and illusory nature of perception. For the clarity of Smollett's vision as a moralist derives from his careful delineation of aberrations of character as these distortions determine perception. In rendering the ambivalences and ambiguities of human nature, this novelist is a psychologist as well as a moral philosopher. He is always aware of the unlimited varieties and infinite nuances of personality; to help us understand what is perceived, he must first educate us in the differing natures of the perceivers. In his insistence, above all, that we realize the necessary relativity of our own views,

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<sup>6</sup>Roger P. McCutcheon, Eighteenth-Century English Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 69.

Smollett most systematically makes his own ethical points; under careful analysis, Smollett's letters prove to be as scientific as they are artful, for his epistolary method is one of logical induction. He proceeds from particular instances to general conclusions. Thus, the author's characters, each one limited to his own particular and subjective view, have together induced for us, by the end of the novel, our own general, more objective moral conclusions.

Hence, if Monroe Engle is right in attributing modern narrative techniques to an eighteenth-century novelist, he does not go far enough in crediting Smollett's genius for characterization. The critic is only dimly illuminating when he says of Smollett's epistolary mediators:

the letter writers in this novel all really try to tell the truth as they see it, rather than give partial testimony for purposes of persuasion or self-protection.<sup>7</sup>

The key words here are, "as they see it." If Mr. Engle maintains that Smollett's letter writers are impartial observers of an objective reality, he must acknowledge that each character is necessarily limited to his own viewpoint. Every letter writer reports a different reality. Since each character reacts differently, the reports necessarily vary to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the differences in personality. Smollett's characters, despite this critic's claim, do "give partial testimony for purposes of persuasion." The characters are only apparently writing to those

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<sup>7</sup>Engle, p. vi.

names on the letterhead.

Actually, they are writing to us, the readers, and they are constantly persuading us as to who they are. From the very first letter, we can begin to understand Smollett's distinctive method of characterization. The first-person immediacy of the picaresque and the confessional quality of an intimate letter are combined. More than an account of external events, the letter is an account of the personality of the letter writer. Consciously and unconsciously, the character expresses himself:

The pills are good for nothing. I might as well swallow snow-balls to cool my veins. I have told you over and over how hard I am to move. . . . I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed I am equally distressed in mind and body -- as if I had not plagues enough of my own, those children of my sister are left me for a perpetual source of vexation -- what business have people to get children to plague their neighbors. [my italics] (p. 1)

Matthew Bramble, whose surname suggests his thorny nature, thus delineates his own character. His pain is as much psychological as it is physical. Ironically the irascible valetudinarian has not only defined himself. In the words I have italicized, Bramble has unknowingly indicted himself, since, as the novel will reveal, Bramble is himself guilty of fathering a bastard. Just as unwittingly, Bramble cannot disguise his private benevolence, though he tries to wear a mask of public malevolence. He rules his estate with a stern but forgiving hand:

Let Morgan's widow have the Alderney cow, and forty shillings to clothe her children: but

don't say a syllable of the matter to any living soul. I'll make her pay when she is able. [my italics] (p. 2)

Furthermore, the contradictory nature of human personality is revealed as we learn about a character, not merely by what he consciously or unconsciously exposes or hides in his own letters, but also by what others write about him. For instance, Jery Melford, in writing to his mentor, Sir Watkins Phillips at Jesus College, tells us about his relationship with Uncle Matthew:

The truth is, his [Bramble's] disposition and mine, which like oil and vinegar, repelled one another at first, have now begun to mix by dint of being beat up together. I was once apt to believe him a complete cynic: and that nothing but the necessity of his occasions could compel him to get within the pale of society. I am now of another opinion. I think his peevishness arises partly from bodily pain, and partly from a natural excess of mental sensibility, for I suppose, the mind as well as the body, is in some cases endued with a morbid excess of sensation. (p. 15)

Hence Bramble's crusty petulance will gradually be unmasked to reveal that hyper-sensitive sentimentalist, the eighteenth-century man of feeling. Jery soon penetrates the surface irritability of his uncle, well assessing the emotional nuances of Bramble's personality:

His singularities afford a rich mine of entertainment; his understanding, so far as I can judge, is well cultivated; his observations on life are equally just, pertinent and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart which is tender, even to a degree of weakness. This delicacy of feeling, or soreness of the mind, makes him timorous and fearful; but then he is afraid of nothing so much as of dishonour; and although he is exceedingly cautious of giving offence,



he will fire at the least hint of insolence or ill breeding. (p. 28)

Here and elsewhere, Smollett exploits a crucial psychological fact, that what a man reveals about others is a revelation of the man himself. For instance, Jerry Melford, in describing Lydia, his sister, and Bramble, in describing Lydia, his niece, reveal not only the girl spoken of, but the men speaking as well. Brother and uncle emerge as both world-weary and world-wary. Melford, the man-about-town, is highly concerned with his sister's virginity, precisely because, as a rake himself, he is most aware of the maiden's vulnerability:

I found her a fine tall girl, of seventeen, with an agreeable person; but remarkably simple and quite ignorant of the world. This disposition and want of experience, had exposed her . . . (p. 4)

Bramble, in his view of his niece, will also reveal his own cynical awareness of the effect of the world on those untutored in its ways:

Liddy had been so long cooped up in a boarding-school, which next to a nunnery, is the worst kind of seminary that ever was contrived for young women, that she became as inflammable as torch wood . . . truly she has got a languishing eye and reads romances. (p. 9)

Nevertheless, if we are inclined to believe Lydia naive, on the evidence of letters by others, it is her own letters which are most telling. Writing to Mrs. Jermyn, her former governess in Gloucester, Lydia seems unconsciously self-indicting when she writes "to assure her that I never harbored a thought that was otherwise than virtuous"

(p. 6). Since the other letter writers have told us that Lydia and Wilson have been illicitly meeting, we begin to suspect that, at best, Lydia is self-deluded when she writes, "as for familiarities, I do declare, I never once allowed him the favor of a salute." Still, the girl appears honestly willing to forget her sweetheart for the sake of her family, despite her own "valid" reasons for thinking him sincere. Only Lydia and we, the readers, know that Wilson has passionately written her the following:

Good God! I never heard your name mentioned without emotion! . . . I am no player in love. I speak the language of my heart; and have no prompter but nature. (p. 13)

The reader, momentarily baffled, concludes only that Smollett has floated a cloud of doubt over the confirmed judgments of her hardnosed, cynical relatives.

Far from unaware of these seeming inconsistencies, Smollett, the reader soon discovers, has calculatingly perpetuated these apparent ambiguities. Simultaneously both informed and misinformed of the facts in this affair, the reader realizes that deliberate equivocations will be the principle of narration in almost everything that follows. For each letter writer's view is filtered through his own sensibility, which, being subjective, is necessarily relative. No one view is wholly trustworthy. The truth appears translucent and amorphous, deceptively shaded and chameleon-colored, and the burden of objectivity is finally thrust on the reader alone. As suspense is generated in a succession of letters, we realize how limited are the im-

pressions of a single letter writer. We learn to weigh the evidence of each letter writer's version of the expedition. Finally the reader is brought to a state of omniscience which includes every perspective. This wisdom, the ultimate moral purpose of the novel, comes from our having induced the collective import of every letter.

In the case of the mysterious Wilson, for instance, we learn that the earlier letters were only partially informing if not completely deluding. Wilson proves to be worthy of Lydia's affection. He has been honest from the beginning, though only Lydia thought him so. Wilson intentions, as seen in retrospect, were genuine. By the novel's end, he will marry Lydia, cleared of all scandal and ready to support her in the style of her class. Once again, multiple impressions of appearance are resolved into a single expression of reality. The particular and subjective opinions of each character, collected and clarified, become the general and objective knowledge of the reader.

Thus in Humphry Clinker Smollett adapts and modifies such established picaresque conventions as episodic travel adventures and a single first-person narrator. Able to render a colorfully detailed setting, he is equally able to fuse ambiguous narratives and precise characterizations. The novelist's method, the "multiple-epistolary," emphasizes the relative nature of perception, and the cumulative effect of conflicting views of the same events eventually brings the reader to an enlightened moral perspective. As Jerry

Melford learns:

Without all doubt, the greatest advantage acquired in traveling and perusing mankind in the original is that of dispelling those shameful clouds that darken the faculties of the mind preventing it from judging with candour and precision. (p. 390)

In analyzing the various forms of the character of...

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## CHAPTER II

### SATIRE AND COMEDY

In analyzing the satiric humor of The Expedition of Humphry Clinker, we must consider the following distinctions:

Satire is the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, or scorn. It differs from comedy in that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire "derides"; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual, or a type of person, a class, a nation, or even the whole race of man . . . . The distinction between the comic and the satiric, however, is a sharp one only at its extremes . . . Satire has usually been justified by those who practice it as a corrective of human vice and folly. As such, its claim has been to ridicule the failing rather than the individual, and to limit its ridicule to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a man is not responsible.<sup>1</sup>

Smollett's novel contains elements of both satire and comedy as differentiated here. At times, the aim and tone of his art approaches Horatian satire. Undertaking to evoke a smile at the foibles of men, he speaks in the character of a virtuous but tolerant man of the world who is moved to amusement, rather than to indignation, at the spectacle of human folly. As Jerry Melford tells us, after observing the

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<sup>1</sup>M.H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms (New York: Rhinehart, 1957), p. 85.

absurd social life at Bath:

I cannot account for my being pleased with these incidents, any other way than by saying, they are truly ridiculous in their own nature, and serve to heighten the humour in the farce of life which I am determined to enjoy as long as I can. Those follies that move my uncle's spleen, excite my laughter. (p. 53-54)

At other times, the aim of Smollett's art is scathing Juvenilian satire. Evoking contempt and moral indignation at the vices and corruptions of men, the satirist speaks in the character of a serious moralist denouncing vices which are no less dangerous because they are ridiculous. The attitude of Matthew Bramble in an early letter is a good example of Juvenilian indignation:

Hark ye Lewis, my misanthropy increases every day. The longer I live, I find the folly and fraud of mankind grow more and more intolerable. (p. 51)

Overtly a misanthropic malcontent though covertly a benevolent sentimentalist, Bramble is only one of the vehicles of Smollett's satire. The Squire's jaundiced reactions to human depravity are balanced by his nephew's more even-tempered views. Through their frank letters, we learn how the Squire criticizes every level and every phenomenon of English life, from the low quality of bread in London markets to the base intrigues of politics in the court of St. James. From his reactions to the people in the streets at Bath, we first begin to understand that neo-classic standards inform the Squire's critical judgments. In his objection to the indiscriminate mixing of all levels of society as well as in his censuring of the unplanned disorder

of Bath's architecture, the Squire makes a judgment based on a conservative regard for order and proportion, harmony, and balance. These stable norms are constantly offended by the unstable convulsions of a tempestuous century.

The novelist's only recourse is the one also taken by Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson -- satire. Like these fellow defenders of decorum, Smollett exposes the falsities, foibles and vices of his society. Hopefully, the results of the satire are the same as those effected by Holder at Bath (p. 56). As Jery reports, Holder is a prodigal parvenu who offered the ladies of polite society free refreshment "not to be touched till notice was given by the ring of a bell." The ladies became a struggling, angry mob and Holder "ordered his horns to sound a charge, with a view to animate the combatants and inflame the contests." Unwittingly, Holder's order for sounding the horns "produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected"; the same moral effect may also justify the whole of Smollett's satire:

It was a note of reproach that roused them to an immediate sense of their disgraceful situation. They were ashamed of their absurd deportment, and suddenly desisted. They gathered up their caps, ruffles and handkerchiefs; and great part of them retired in silent mortification. (p. 57)

Recalling the distinctions quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we observe that the moral ends of Smollett's satire transcend a merely comic effect which "evokes laughter as an end in itself."

Smollett especially enjoyed following the truth wherever it led him; no opinion, educated or common, was safe from his wit. Bramble derides his doctor friend's advice to drink the water at Hot Well:

. . . the sum of all your medical discoveries amounts to this, that the more you study the less you know . . . the water contains nothing but a little salt, and calcareous earth, mixed in such inconsiderable proportion, as can have very little effect on the animal alchemy. This being the case, I think, the man deserves to be fitted with a cap and bells, who for such a paltry advantage as this spring affords sacrifices his precious time. (p. 23)

The derisive note at Hot Well is continued at Bath: "a national hospital it may be; but one would imagine that none but lunatics are admitted" (p. 35). Outraged at the high prices, oppressive crowds, unhygienic conditions, ostentatious spending, and status-seeking, Bramble is not amused: "every day teems with fresh absurdities, which are too gross to make a thinking man merry" (p. 63).

Though Smollett usually aims the Squire's satire at other targets, the misanthropic valetudinarian is himself hardly invulnerable to satiric ridicule, for Bramble's refined sensibilities make him a variation of the eighteenth-century quixotic hero, the romantic man of feeling, ready to settle an affair of honor at the slightest provocation:

Mr. Bramble is extravagantly delicate in all his sensations, both of soul and body. I was informed by Dr. Lewis, that he once fought a duel with an officer of the horse-guards, for turning aside to the Park wall, on a necessary occasion, when he was passing with a lady under his protection. (p. 74)

Repeatedly, the author's satire makes us aware of



the human capacity for folly. Perhaps the worst of human faults, in Smollett's view, is the stupidity of those who would attempt to be something they are not. In a number of scenes and portraits, both brief and long, he illustrates this theme.

Many examples might be cited, but I will content myself with only a few. Bramble cannot help noting that at Bath the footmen wear gentlemen's clothes. In another vein, Bramble relates the anecdote of his friend Baynard, who suffers near-collapse because his wife insists on conspicuously living beyond their income. Jerry relates the hilarious results of Win Jenkins' affecting the clothes and manners of a gentlewoman. There is also Dutton, Jerry's servant, who acts the fop, "a petit maître. He has got a smattering of French, bows and grins, and shrugs and takes snuff à la mode de France . . ." (p. 177). Thus Smollett makes us constantly aware of both the serious and the ludicrous effects of affectation and pretension, always supporting his general statements with particular examples. Specific details from the contemporary scene support the moralistic conclusions of Smollett's satire; for instance, Bramble writes:

The tide of luxury has swept all the inhabitants from the open country. The poorest squire as well as the richest peer must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics. The plough-boys, cow-herds, and lower kinds, are debauched and seduced by the appearance and discourse of those coxcombs in livery . . . . They desert their dirt and drudgery, and swarm up to London, in hopes of getting into service where they can live luxuriously and wear fine clothes, without being obliged to work; for idleness is

natural to man. [my italics] (p. 99)

At times less moralistic, Smollett strikes at targets closer to himself. In the largest sense, the entire novel is indirectly self-satiric, for Smollett parodies that already hackneyed eighteenth-century literary convention, the publication of travel letters. These accounts of voyages on land or sea, real or imaginary, were by 1771 a Grub Street cliché. They include Smollett's own Travels through France and Italy. He could not help poking fun at those whose labors were often his own -- England's literary hacks. Though the novel was published under his own name, Smollett introduced the letters with an imaginary exchange of correspondence between Jonathan Dustwich, Author, and Mr. Henry Davis, Bookseller; i.e., publisher. Though Smollett is obviously the author, his introduction suggests that either Dustwich has written the letters or that the hack has appropriated them illicitly. In writing to Davis, the pseudo-scholarly Dustwich, desperate for publication, flaunts his Latinisms and priggishly argues:

The Letters in question were not written and sent under the seal of secrecy; that they have no tendency to the mala fama or prejudice of any person whatsoever; but rather to the information and edification of mankind; . . . it becometh a sort of duty to promulgate them in usum publicum . . . if you and I should come to a right understanding, I do declare in verbo sacerdotis, that, in case of any such prosecution, I will take the whole upon my own shoulders, even quoad fine and imprisonment, though I must confess, I should not care to undergo flagellation: Tan ad turpitudinem quam ad anaritudinem poena spectans. (p. xxv)

Thus satirizing the inanities of his fellow authors

from the very beginning, Smollett continues throughout the novel to attack their hypocrisies and affectations. Jerry Melford reports how egotistical and pedantic are a group of writers he visits, all of whom seem "jealous and afraid of one another" (p. 141). More interesting are the pretensions of the second-rate literati, for as Matthew Bramble testifies:

There is seldom any thing extraordinary in the appearance and address of a good writer; whereas a dull author generally distinguishes himself by some oddity or extravagance. For this reason, I fancy that an assembly of Grubs must be very diverting. (p. 141)

Bramble is soon proved correct when his nephew is brought to dine with "S---", Smollett himself. Jerry reports on a collection of hacks who have "oddities originally produced by affectation and afterwards confirmed by habit" (p. 142). Every imaginable artificiality, mental and physical, from affected phobias such as fear of the country to feigned disabilities such as stuttering, are exhibited by the hacks. Hypocrites in person, the literati are just as hypocritical in print:

The sage who labored under the *αἰζοφοβία*, or horror of green fields, had just finished a treatise on practical agriculture, though in fact, he had never seen corn growing in his life, and was so ignorant of grain, that our entertainer, in the face of the whole company, made him own that a plate of hominy was the best rice pudding he had ever eat.

The stutterer had almost finished the travels through Europe and part of Asia, without ever budging beyond the liberties of the King's Bench. . . . (p. 146)

A doctor by training but an author by necessity, Smollett

was familiar with the Grub Street world in which false learning and equally false experiences were exploited for all they were worth.

Facetiously exposing the falsities in English literary life, Smollett also attacks the vices of parliamentary politics. As Jery testifies:

Without all doubt, the fumes of faction not only disturb the faculty of reason, but also pervert the organs of sense. (p. 108)

His uncle agrees:

The spirit of party is risen to a kind of phrenzy, unknown to former ages, or rather degenerated to a total extinction of honesty and candour. (p. 116)

Bramble is equally strident in condemning the injustices resulting from what he thinks is an overly liberal legal system. For instance, he takes issue over the excesses resulting from England's free press:

You know I have observed for some time that the public papers are become the infamous vehicles of the most cruel and perfidious defamation: every rancorous knave -- every desperate incendiary, that can afford to spend half a crown or three shillings, may skulk behind the press of a newsmonger, and have a stab at the first character in the kingdom, without running the least hazard of detection or punishment. (p. 116)

Bramble, relating his meeting with Barton, an M.P., illustrates with several incidents the problems of libel. Barton, in his weak defense of the free press, is hardly convincing:

Whatever mischief they [the libelers in the free press] may do in other respects, they certainly contribute, in one particular, to the advantage of government, for those de-

famatory articles have multiplied papers in such a manner, and augmented their sale to such a degree, that the duty upon stamps and advertisements has made a very considerable addition to the revenue. (p. 117)

This condemnatory spirit, so characteristic of Bramble, is infused with a political conservatism which deeply distrusts the common man. His attacks on the evils of parliamentary government are almost an attack on the system itself. His class bias is obvious as he condemns demagoguery; like many class or racial prejudices, his snobbish reaction is as much a physical as a mental one:

Notwithstanding my contempt for those who flatter a minister, I think there is something still more despicable in flattering a mob. When I see a man of birth, education, and fortune, put himself on a level with the dregs of the people, mingle with low mechanics, feed with them at the same board, and drink with them in the same cup, flatter their prejudices, harrangue in praise of their virtues, expose themselves to the belching of their beer, the fumes of their tobacco, the grossness of their familiarity, and the impertinence of their conversation, I cannot help despising him as a man guilty of the vilest prostitution in order to effect a purpose equally selfish and illiberal. (p. 119)

Even as he discloses literary hypocrisies and political vices, Smollett does not neglect the faults of organized religion. In describing the clients at the fashionable spas, Jery Melford reports:

There is always a great shew of the clergy at Bath: none of your thin, puny, yellow, hectic figures, exhausted with abstinence, and hard study, labouring under the morbi eruditiorum, but great overgrown dignitaries and rectors, with rubicund noses and gouty ancles, or broad bloated faces, dragging along great swag bellies, the emblems of sloth and indigestion. (p. 81)

Indicting both the individual and the institution, Smollett depicts the chronic clerical propensity for the pleasures of the flesh. In another passage, Smollett condemns a large part of Christianity. In Lismahago's report to Tabitha of his adventures in the new world, Smollett makes both Catholic theology and Catholic missionaries appear preposterous. The tragic is rendered comic in a satiric bit of sacrilege:

The lieutenant told her, that while he resided among them [the Indians], two French missionaries arrived, in order to convert them to the catholic religion; but when they talked of mysteries and revelations, which they could neither explain nor authenticate, and called in the evidence of miracles which they believed upon hearsay; when they taught, that the Supreme Creator of Heaven and Earth had allowed his only Son, his own equal in power and glory, to enter the bowels of a woman, to be born as a human creature, to be insulted, flagellated, and even executed as a malefactor; when they pretended to create God himself, to swallow, digest, revive, and multiply him ad infinitum, by the help of a little flour and water, the Indians were shocked at the impiety of their presumption. . . .

. . . the assembly proceeded to try them as impious impostors . . . they were, therefore, convicted of blasphemy and sedition, and condemned to the stake, where they died singing Salve regina, in a rapture of joy, for the crown of martyrdom which they had thus obtained.  
(pp. 226-227)

Not content to attack merely the shortcomings of the literary, political, legal and religious worlds, Smollett also satirizes contemporary medical science. In ridiculing "the famous Dr. L--n, who is come to ply at the Well for Patients" (p. 15), the satirist exposes a quack in a profession he himself once practiced. In so doing, he graphically demonstrates the quackery of the times. At the

Pump Room at Hot Well, Bramble complains of the health danger from the putrid odors of the river at low tide under the window. In disagreement, Dr. L--n, argues positively for the medicinal quality of stench. Jery repeats "a learned investigation of the nature of stink," which was the Doctor's scatological rebuttal:

... he [Dr. L--n] had reason to believe the stercoraceous flavour, condemned by prejudice as a stink, was, in fact, most agreeable to the organs of smelling; for that every person who pretended to nauseate the smell of another's excretions, snuffed up his own with particular complacency; for the truth of which he appealed to all the ladies and gentlemen then present.  
(p. 15)

The Doctor continues this nauseating lecture with such examples as:

the last Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Medicis family, who refined upon sensuality with the spirit of a philosopher, was so delighted with that odour, that he caused the essence of ordure to be extracted, and used it as the most delicious perfume. (p. 16)

If once again Smollett is commenting on the limitations of subjective experience, the novelist hardly desires his reader to be convinced by this shocking argument, not even for a moment. He immediately exposes both proof and prover as being putridly ridiculous. For Jery Melford, tongue-in-cheek, reports the nauseating results of the doctor's practicing what he preaches:

When he happened to be low-spirited or fatigued with business [the doctor] found immediate relief and uncommon satisfaction from hanging over the stale contents of a close-stool, while his servant stirred it about under his nose; nor was this effect to be wondered at, when we consider that his substance abounds with the self

same volatile salts that are so greedily smelled by the most delicate invalids. . . . By this time the company began to hold their noses, but the doctor without taking the least notice of this signal, proceeded to shew, that many fetid substances were not only agreeable but salutary. (p. 16)

Hence, Smollett is careful to have neither Jery, nor society, nor the reader, taken in by these specious rationalizations. And, in the Swiftian tradition, this earthy ribaldry has its justification. There is method in his crudity, for Smollett here satirizes the characteristically eighteenth-century worship of pure reason. The methods of rational empiricism were reduced to an absurdity. In this groundless theorizing logic was stretched to the untenable point of denying physical evidence. The third book of Swift's Gulliver's Travels lampoons that pseudo-science which ignores practical reality to follow the dictates of reason alone.

As we have seen, the satire of both Matthew and Jery is usually externally directed. Relating the bulk of the narration, uncle and nephew deride folly and vice in institutions and in individuals outside of themselves. Conversely, the other characters are interesting because they satirize themselves. Lydia, Tabitha, Win Jenkins and Lismahago are unconsciously self-satiric. As I explained in my first chapter, one of the many advantages of the multiple-epistolary is that the characters speak to us in their own words. Constantly delivering a monologue, each character cannot help exposing his shortcomings. This is generally true of all the characters, including Jery and Matthew, but



such self-indictment is especially characteristic of Tabitha and Winifred. The spelling and grammatical errors of these two women allow the novelist to expose their moral errors. For Smollett is convinced that language, just as much as action, can be a telling revelation of character.

To effect a satire in which orthographic and syntactic weaknesses connote moral weaknesses, Smollett hones the blade of his satire to the sharpest edge. The result is an hilarious argot revealing not only the illiteracy of Win and Tabitha but also their vanity, pretension, and selfishness. For instance, this complaint about her brother's charity is typical of Tabitha:

. . . to give away Alderney [a cow] without my privity and concurrants. What signifies my brother's orders? My brother is little better than Noncumpush. He would give the teeth out of his head . . . ruined the family with his ridiculous character if it had not been for my four quarters . . . I lead the life of an idented slave. (pp. 47-48)

In her own words, Tabitha exposes herself as a termagent, a prig and a Mrs. Malaprop. A demanding shrew, she hardly realizes the scatological impossibility of her orders to her servant at Brambleton Hall:

I desire you'll clap a pad-luck on the wind-sellar and let none of the men have excess to the strong bear -- don't forget to have the gate shit every evening before dark.  
(p. 3)

The shrill Tabitha may be concerned about her dairy, but she salaciously suggests far more than she intends in writing to Dr. Lewis:

Give me leaf to tell you, me thinks you

mought employ your talons better, than to encourage servants to pillage their masters. I find by Gwyllin, that Williams has got my skin, for which he is an impotent rascal. He has not only got my skin but moreover, my butter milk, to fatten his pigs. (p. 88)

Tabitha's unconscious eroticism would please Freud. For instance, though she is seemingly impressed with the spiritual strength of Humphry Clinker, she unwittingly expresses herself in the most sexually suggestive terms. Here, Tabitha tells us how much she values Humphry's extraordinary religious powers:

As for Win Jenkins, she has undergone a perfect metamorphosis, and is become a new creeter from the ammunition of Humphry Clinker, our new footman, a pious young man, who has laboured exceedingly, that she may bring forth fruits of repentance. I make no doubt but he will take the same pains with that pert hussey Mary Jones, and all of you; and that he may have power given to penetrate and instill his goodness, even into your most inward parts, is the fervent prayer of

Your friend in the spirit,  
Tab. Bramble

(p. 320)

Smollett continues the word play with Winfred Jenkins, Tabitha's vain servant. For instance, Win seems preoccupied with her spiritual salvation: "Mr. Clinker assures me that by the new light of grease, I may deify the devil and all his works" (p. 359). Through this malapropism Smollett suggests that Win actually worships the same Satan she would defy. Her letter reveals that Win is much more interested in the material pleasures of this world than in the spiritual rewards of the next. She writes pridefully of her new clothes and fashionable life at Bath:

You know as how, yallow fitts my fizzogmony.  
 God he knows what havock I shall make among  
 the mail sex, when I make my first appear-  
 ance in this killing collar. . . . (p. 46)

More than simple double entendres or facetious puns, Smollett's orthographic innovations are satiric character revelations. Here is a good example of how Smollett combines humor of language and humor of action while making an ironic commentary on a lady's virtue:

Last week I went with mistress to the Tower, to see the crowns and wild beastis; and there was a monstracious lion, with teeth half a quarter long; and a gentleman bid me not go near him, if I wasn't a maid; being as how he would roar, and tear, and play the dickens - Now I had no mind to go near him; for I cannot abide such dangerous honeymils, not I -- but, mistress would go; and the beast kept such a roaring and bouncing, that I tho't he would have broke his cage and devoured us all; and the gentleman tittered forsooth; but I'll go to death upon it, I will, that my lady is as good a firchin, as the child unborn; and, therefore, either the gentleman told a fib, or the lion oft to be set in the stocks for bearing false witness again his neighbour; for the commandment sayeth, Thou shalt not bear false witness again thy neighbour. (p. 123)

Unwittingly poking fun at her mistress, Win hardly realizes that she is satirizing herself in a later letter to Mary. This letter is ironic in several ways. First, Win warns, "O Molly! let not your poor heart be puffed up with vanity." In the very next line, however, she adds:

I had almost forgot to tell you that I have had my hair cut, and peppered, and bolstered, and buckled in the newest fashion by a French freezer. Parlez vow Francez. Wee Madmarsell. I now carries my head hither than arrow private gentlewoman of Vales. Last night, coming huom from the meeting, I was taken by lamp light for an eminent poulterer's daughter, a great

beauty. (p. 124)

After warning others against vanity, when she is herself vain, the illiterate Win, for the second irony, is even more proud of her literacy:

I pray of all love, you will mind your writing and spilling; for craving your pardon, Molly, it made me suet to disseyffer your last scrabble which was delivered by the hind at Bath - O woman! woman! if thou had's't but the least consumption of what pleasure we scullers have, when we can cunster the crabbidst buck off hand, and spell the ethnitch words without lucking at the primer. . . . Remember me to Saul poor sole! it goes to my hart to think she don't yet know her letters - But all in God's good time - It shall go hard, but I will bring her the ABC in gingerbread; and that you nose, will be learning to her taste. (p. 125)

Through their distortions of conventional spelling and syntax, the words equivocally expand sense to result in multiple meanings. These meanings are charged with possibilities, both literal and figurative, intended and unintended, which are equally valid. For instance, infused with the methodism preached by Humphry, it is Win who suggests the symbolic fetters echoed by Clinker's name. To Mary Jones, she writes:

What is life but a veil of affliction? O Mary, the family has been in such a constipation! He was tuck up for a rubbery, and before Gustass Busshard, who made his mittamouse, and the pore youth was sent to prison upon the false oaf of a villain.

The Squire did all in his power, but could not prevent his being put in chains, and confined among common manufactors where he stud like an innocent sheep in the middle of wolves and tygers. Lord knows what might have happened to this pyehouse young man. . . . (p. 178)

Once again, the aware Smollett has the unaware Win Jenkins imply that, because of its mysteries, metaphorically, "life is a veil," as well as the conventional "vale of afflictions," she spells incorrectly. Similarly, "sent to prison upon the false oaf of a villain" is clear in at least two senses. There is the suggestion of someone's having sworn a false oath; there is also the suggestion of the kind of person, an oaf, who would falsely swear. By constantly having Win suggest more than she herself means, the author loads her language with implications striking in the very precision of its ambiguity. Smollett is not above having his characters smear themselves pruriently and unknowingly.

Win complains of being neglected by Dr. Lewis:

... he never had the good manners to take the least notice of my letter; for which reason I shall never favor him with another, though he beshits me on his bended knee.  
(p. 180)

The power of the pun, for Smollett, extends from this lowest physical buffoonery to a more subtly moral satire. For instance, this same Win is constantly praying "for the grease of God." In having Win concerned over the "grease," when she really means the grace of God, Smollett exhibits his virtuosity as a punster. The spiritual implications of that theological concept are graphically satirized. Win prays for an oiled entrance into heaven. No sacred institution is safe from Smollett's wit. Win's last letter, the last of the book, tells of three marriages, Lasmahago to Tabitha, Wilson to Lydia, and herself to Loyd (Humphry

Clinker).

We were yesterday three kuples chined by the grease of God, in the holy bands of matter-money. (p. 413)

In her misspelling, Win has unknowingly exposed her own callously practical conception of marriage -- a matter of money, the economic security of being supported as a wife.

In art, what is literal and explicit is forever being transformed into what is figurative and implicit. The aesthetic success of this metamorphosis often depends on just how subtly surface events and overt facts come to suggest an underlying meaning and a covert import. Especially in literature, we feel that what can be said suggestively and connotatively is often more effective than what can be said directly and denotatively. As a master of language charged with hidden significances, as a coiner of words replete with latent relevancies, Tobias Smollett is a literary artist of the first order.

As I have already suggested, the distinction between comedy and satire is "sharp only at the extremes." More often, these elements are mixed. The most ludicrous characters in the most comical situations may also have a didactic effect; the most scathing moral indictment may also result in high comedy. Jerry Melford's report upon his Uncle Matthew's temperament also describes the bitter-sweet nature of Smollett's satire:

He is as tender as a man without a skin, who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching. What tickles another gives him torment, and yet he has what we call lucid

intervals when he is remarkably facetious - Indeed I never knew a hypochondriac so apt to be infected with good humor. He is the most risible misanthrope I ever met. A lucky joke, or any ludicrous incident will set him a-laughing immoderately, even in one of his most gloomy paroxysms, and when the laugh is over he will curse his own imbecility. (p. 54)

As Bramble can admit after a lengthy tirade against those nay-sayers who find nothing worthy in others, "This is a malignant species of jealousy, of which I stand acquitted in my own conscience." If Smollett is so hyper-sensitive to human foibles and vice that he reacts with raging disdain, he can also react with humoring empathy. Like all satirists, Smollett attempts to evoke moral reform through derisive criticism. He never compromises his standards. But coating the bitter pill with laughter, he knew that his medicine would be far easier to take.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MOTIFS OF THE NOVEL

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker does more than merely denote literal meanings. Rather the novel also connotes figurative suggestions of thematic significance. To observe Smollett organizing his precise details, to observe him projecting them as lucid images, we must ultimately determine the author's major motifs. These motifs, his syntheses, are the results of artful oppositions in both description and plot, in both characterization and action. For Smollett best controls his motifs through a tension of polarities. In this pull of oppositions, we find sickness opposed to health, misanthropy opposed to benevolence, England opposed to Scotland, city opposed to country, bestiality opposed to humanity, pretensions opposed to honesty, youth opposed to old age, one man's view opposed to another's -- all leading to that most significant tension of all, appearance opposed to reality.

These themes, repeated through a variety of situations and characters, finally suggest the reality hidden behind the illusion of Smollett's art. The quest for this wisdom is expressed in almost Sisyphean terms. In traveling, apparently for his physical health, but really for his



mental and spiritual health, Matthew Bramble explains the difficulty of his search:

Shall I attempt the Downs, and fatigue myself to death in climbing up an eternal ascent, without any hopes of reaching the summit? Know then, I have made divers desperate leaps at those upper regions, but always fell backward into this vapour-pit, exhausted and dispirited by those ineffectual efforts, and here we poor valetudinarians pant and struggle like so many Chinese gudgeons gasping in the bottom of a punch bowl. (p. 71)

Bramble's description of his base condition as a valetudinarian may be linked to the dual suggestions in Win's pun, "Life is a veil of affliction" (p. 178). Trapped in a vale, Bramble continually attempts to penetrate the veil, the mist or the "vapour-pit," which impedes his quest for health.

The image of the veil is most important. For the entire narrative is purposely veiled, deliberately clouded by the author. As my first chapter emphasized, this apparent ambiguity is really Smollett's deliberate artistry. The veil lifts as we sift through accounts, either wholly contradictory or slightly at variance, and we make our own judgments in lieu of an omniscient narrator. Hence, varieties of perception play an important role throughout the novel. When Win Jenkins writes, "we servints should see all and say nothing," we readers soon realize that through her special view, Win necessarily sees only part of the "all." But far from saying "nothing," this gossip can hardly refrain from revealing to us her partial self through her partial view. Of course, if Win's perspective is obviously veiled, not all the characters are so thoroughly subjective.

For instance, early in the novel, Lydia Melford has an illuminating insight. After commenting on her uncle's disgust with the same spa she finds so enchanting, Lydia writes, "People of experience and infirmity, my dear Letty, see with very different eyes from those that such as you and I make use of -- ."

Thus, Smollett builds his imagery of perceptual distortions, finding veils not only within the individual but also within the very structure of English society. For instance, in democratic politics, Jery concludes, "the fumes of faction not only disturb the faculty of reason, but also pervert the organs of sense." When Bramble blames urban life for furthering an aberrated sense of values, again perception is impaired:

Most people, I know, are originally seduced by vanity, ambition, and childish curiosity, which cannot be gratified, but in the busy haunts of men; but, in the course of this gratification, their very organs of sense are perverted, and they become habitually lost to every relish of what is genuine and excellent in its own nature. [Smollett's italics] (p. 135)

While uncle and brother are morally more reliable as witnesses, the newly religious Winifred hardly ever inspires our faith in her vision. One anecdote, for example, ironically delineates Win's compromises with perception. From Scotland she writes:

As I was troubled with fits, she [Elspath Ringavey, an "ould vitch"] advised me to bathe in the loff, which was holy water; and so I went in the morning to a private place along with the house maid, and we bathed in our birth-day soot, after the

fashion of the country; and behold, whilst we dappled in the loff, sir George Coon started up with a gun; but we clapt our hands to our faces, and passed by him to the place where we had left our smocks -- a civil gentleman would have turned his head another way. My comfit is, he new not which was which; and as the saying is, all cats inthe dark are grey. [Smollett's italics] (p. 304)

Despite the validity of Win's adage, she cannot bring on darkness merely by covering her eyes. Win is still naked. She has just as unwittingly exposed herself, here, physically, as she has morally exposed herself through the incriminating language of every letter she writes.

If Win Jenkins is scarcely trustworthy in distinguishing between appearance and reality, her mistress, Tabitha Bramble, is no more so. Smollett continues the device of opposing tensions as we learn of Tabitha's inability to differentiate between the apparent misanthropy and the real benevolence in her brother's character. In Tabitha's response to Matthew's act of charity, Smollett shows that her self-seeking morality has destroyed her ability to perceive objectively. Hers is the jaundiced eye which cannot accept a selfless act for what it is, so convinced is she of one of these two possibilities: (1) that the charity will threaten her own welfare, or (2) that the charity, not selfless at all, is actually done for the benefit of the benefactor. Because she is selfish, she views all men as such. This is most evident when Matthew, as was his wont, secretly attempts to aid a poor widow with no thought of gain for himself. But Tabitha, in discovering him, must see this

differently, because she is ever true to her own nature.

Jery writes of the event, mimicking his aunt's jargon and dramatizing the futility of his attempt to make her consider the evidence impartially:

"What! (said she) would you go for to offer, for to arguefy me out of my senses? Didn't I hear him whispering to her to hold her tongue? Didn't I see her in tears? Didn't I see him struggling to throw her upon the couch? Child, child, talk not to me of charity -- Who gives twenty pounds in charity? But you are a stripling -- You know nothing of the world. Besides charity begins at home -- Twenty pounds would buy me a complete suit of flowered silk, trimmings and all."  
[my italics] (p. 22)

His "struggling to throw her upon the couch" was Matthew merely trying to comfort an hysterical woman who was intent upon kissing his feet, so grateful was she for his charity. Jery has witnessed all, but he is unable to make the selfish Tabitha accept his view. From this he makes his own moral judgments on the aunt and uncle:

In short, I quitted the room, my contempt for her and my respect for her brother, being increased in the same proportion.  
(p. 22)

Since there are those who cannot accept the humanity of others, Smollett's imagery suggests that they are themselves inhuman. Writes Bramble in an early letter, "as for that fantastical animal, my sister Tabby, you are no stranger to her qualifications -- I vow to God, she is sometimes so intolerable, that I almost think she's the devil incarnate come to torment me for my sin." And in the same letter he writes of "that wild-cat my sister Tabby." Jery

too is not unaware of the feline qualities of his aunt:

. . . Mrs. Tabitha Bramble is a maiden of forty-five. In her person, she is tall, raw-boned, awkward, flat-chested, and stooping; her complexion is sallow and freckled; her eyes are not grey, but greenish, like those of a cat, and generally inflamed. . . . In her temper, she is proud, stiff, vain, impirious, prying, malicious, greedy, and uncharitable. (p. 67)

With a first name which has become a cliché in the naming of cats, Tabitha, like many indifferent feline pets, has little regard for humanity. Except for her persistent efforts at husband hunting, her deepest regard is, ironically, for another animal, that "filthy cur from Newfoundland," (p. 59), Chowder. Jerry observes that Tabitha favors Chowder because, as animals, their natures are alike:

One would imagine she had distinguished this beast with her favor on account of his ugliness and ill nature; if it was not indeed an instinctive sympathy between his disposition and her own. (p. 69)

While Smollett depicts men, individually, as beasts, he at times depicts mankind, collectively, as a monster. In a bitter tirade, Matthew Bramble criticizes "the fashionable company at Bath" (p. 39), where:

Even the wives and aughters of low trademen, who, like shovel-nosed sharks, prey upon the blubber of those uncouth whales of fortune, are infected with the same rage of displaying their importance. These delicate creatures from Bedfordbury, Butcher-row, Crutched-Friers, and Botolph-lane, cannot breathe in the gross air of the Lower Town, or conform to the vulgar rules of a common lodging house. . . . This I own is a subject on which I cannot write with any degree of patience; for the mob is a monster I never could abide, either in its head, tail, midriff or members: I detest the whole of it as a mass of ignorance,

presumption, malice, and brutality; and in this term of reprobation, I include, without respect of rank, station, or quality, all those of both sexes who affect its manners, and court its society. (p. 39)

As violations of a neo-classic sense of order, man's streets and buildings are just as monstrous as their creators. Bramble writes of the unchecked growth of new architecture at Bath, "contrived without judgment, executed without solidity, and stuck together, with so little regard to plan and propriety. . . ." They look

as if some Gothic devil had stuffed them altogether in a bag, and left them to stand higgledy piggedly, just as chance directed. What sort of monster Bath will become in a few years, with those growing excrescences, may be easily conceived. . . . (p. 38)

The polarities of Smollett's imagery continue their diametrically opposed tensions. If the beast in man contravenes his humanity, Smollett provides still another set of contraries in the opposition of city and country life. In a detailed letter from London, Bramble berates the "busy haunts of men." To Bramble, the noise, the filth, the cost, the ugliness, the hypocrisies of city existence are all an abomination. While the quiet, the cleanliness, the economy, the beauty, the sincerity of country life are, for him, a lost paradise. Bramble regrets having left Brambleton Hall, but feels he is not beyond redemption.

My letter would swell into a treatise, were I to particularize every cause of offal that fills up the measure of my aversion to this, and every other crowded city -- Thank Heaven! From this wild uproar of knavery, folly and impertinence, I shall fly with double relish to the serenity of retirement, the cordial

effusions of unreserved friendship, the hospitality and protection of the rural gods; in a word, the jucunda oblivia vitae, which Horace himself had not taste enough to enjoy. (p. 141)

Though the above passage is full of generalizations, it is the crescendo of a lengthy argument which is supported with particular details of London life. For instance, strawberries and milk may be a delectable dish. But Bramble, in one extended unappetizing sentence, graphically illustrates his argument against the hazards of town life:

I need not dwell upon the pallid, contaminated mash, which they call strawberries; soiled and tossed by greasy paws through twenty baskets crusted with dirt; and then presented with the worst milk, thickened with the worst flour, into a bad likeness of cream: but the milk itself should not pass unanalyzed, the produce of faded cabbage leaves and sour draff, lowered with hot water, frothed with bruised snails, carried through the streets with open pails, exposed to foul rinsings, discharged from doors and windows, spittle snot, and tobacco-quids from foot passengers, overflowings from mud carts, splatterings from coacy-wheels, dirt and trash chucked into it by roguish boys for the joke's sake, the spewing of infants who have slabbered in the tin-measure which is thrown back in that condition among the milk, for the benefit of the next customer; and finally, the vermin that drops from the rags of the nasty drab that vends this precious mixture under the respectable denomination of milk maid. (p. 139)

Appropriately enough, the above passage immediately follows Bramble's idyllic description of the lush, clean abundance of produce he enjoys at Brambleton Hall.

Most significantly, in his comparisons of country and city life, besides Bramble's preference for the rural

quiet, honesty, and economy, the Squire strongly emphasizes the cleanliness of pastoral living. Through Bramble's hyper-sensitivity to matters of cleanliness comes one of the major tensions of the novel -- health opposed to sickness. For just as his apparent search for physical health is really a search for mental well-being, so is Bramble's seeming revulsion at physical filth actually a reaction to moral decadence. Gradually, what seems to be the eccentric whims of a confirmed hypochondriac become the justified responses of the one morally sensitive man in a spiritually insensitive society.

Jery is at least partially illuminating when he analyzes his uncle's irascibility:

... I think his peevishness arises partly from bodily pain, and partly from a natural excess of mental sensibility; for I suppose the mind as well as the body is in some cases endued with a morbid excess of sensation.  
(p. 15)

Change "mental" to moral and we begin to understand Smollett's imagery. For immediately afterwards, in the very next paragraph of this same letter, Jery relates the anecdote of the famous Dr. L--n, "the quack who believes in the curative powers of stink" (p. 15). As I noted in my last chapter, Smollett, like Swift, is here satirizing a tendency of eighteenth-century rationalists to extend their reasoning to ludicrous extremes. But Smollett's scatological humor is also directly relevant to the major issues of the novel. If filthy practices others accept are unacceptable to Matthew Bramble, here is one ludicrous extreme of



filth that no one can accept. In the middle of the Doctor's lecture on the "curative" qualities of filth, the entire "company began to hold their noses." The lecture proved to be disgusting and absurd. Bramble, a more rational, moral man, is simply more sensitive to other less flagrant stenches, both physical and mental.

Thus, it is Bramble who discovers that at Bath the ulcerous condition of others might contaminate the bather's skin by contact through the waters. He discovers, too, that the drinking water is polluted, since the water supply passes through a burial ground. The city well water is also polluted, "defiled with dead dogs, cats, rats and every species of nastiness, which the rascally populace may throw into it" (p. 51). In the middle of a tirade against the inferior liquors "contrived for the destruction of the human species," Bramble interjects, "But what have I to do with the human species? except a very few friends, I care not if the whole was \_\_\_\_\_" (p. 51). Objecting "to the folly and fraud of mankind," Bramble's super-sensitivity to cleanliness extends to a society sick in spirit as well as body:

Snares are laid for our lives in everything we eat or drink: the very air we breathe is contagion. We cannot even sleep, without risque of infection. I say infection.  
(p. 51)

Though Bramble follows this tirade with an objection to sleeping on diseased mattresses, Smollett's imagery of contagion is hardly limited to matters of physical defilement. For example, Bramble's next letter bitterly berates

the ostentatious spending of the parvenus at Bath:

Here is now a mushroom of opulence, who pays a cook seventy guineas a week for furnishing him with one meal a day. This portentous frenzy is become so contagious that the very rabble and refuse of man are infected. (p. 63)

Appropriately enough, the one good, sensitive man, the one who can best distinguish between appearance and reality, suffers the most. Finally, Bramble's acute sensibilities reach a breaking point. He collapses on a crowded dance floor, overwhelmed by the rank grossities of the mob, "my nerves were overpowered, and I dropt senseless upon the floor" (p. 73). Later, recalling the scene, Bramble writes his friend, Dr. Lewis:

. . . I sent for Dr. Ch-, who assured me, I need not be alarmed, for my swooning was entirely occasioned by an accidental impression of fetid effluvia upon nerves of uncommon sensibility. I know not how other people's nerves are constructed; but one would imagine they must be made of very coarse materials to stand the shock of such a horrid assault. It was indeed, a compound of villainous smells, in which the most violent stinks and the most powerful perfumes contended for mastery. Imagine yourself a high exalted essence of mingled odours, arising from putrid gums, imposthumated lungs, sour flatulencies, rank arm pits, sweating feet, running sores and issues, plasters, ointments and embrocations, hungary water, spirit of lavender, assafoetida drops, musk, hartshorn, and sal volatile; besides a thousand frowzy steams, which I could not analyse. Such, O Dick! is the fragrant aesther we breathe in the polite assemblies at Bath. Such is the atmosphere I have exchanged for the pure, elastic air of the Welsh mountains -- O Rus quando te aspician. I wonder what the devil possessed me. (p. 73)

No matter how much man attempts to disguise artificially his natural rankness, the truly sensitive perceiver

distinguishes the difference. Through Smollett's imagery of a Bath society, he pictures urbanized, indoor collective man, crowded together breathing his own diseased and synthetic exhalations. Bramble, the rural, outdoor individual man, yearns for the purified atmosphere of the country. Ironically, men who gather together to take nature's cure -- the Bath waters -- succeed only in polluting themselves. The illusion of natural therapy becomes a reality of communicable infection.

Once again, Smollett establishes a tension of oppositions, this time in characterization. After Bramble's fainting scene, Jery Melford compares himself and his uncle:

he [Bramble] would never desire a stronger proof of our being made of very gross materials, than our having withstood the annoyance, by which he was so much discomposed. For my part, I am very thankful for the coarseness of my organs, being in no danger of ever falling a sacrifice to the delicacy of my nose. Mr. Bramble is extravagantly delicate in all his sensations, both of soul and body. (p. 74)

Uncle and nephew are compared and contrasted in sensibility; the elder is refined and the younger is coarse.

For the sake of our better understanding them, Smollett also juxtaposes other characters. For instance, Jery Melford takes these analogies from the dinner table in contrasting the qualities of his fancy servant, Dutton, with those of his uncle's plain servant, Clinker:

Humphry may be compared to an English pudding, composed of good wholesome flour and suet, and Dutton to a syllabub or iced froth, which though agreeable to the taste has nothing solid or substantial. (p. 242)

This is still another example of how Smollett contrasts his imagery to make a telling moral point.

We see that the strength of Smollett's imagery lies not only in its contradictory implications, but also in the real import hidden beneath its distorted appearances. For instance, as the veil lifts, Bramble's misanthropy proves to obscure a charitable sentimentalism. The reactions of an apparent hypochondriac, really a sensitive moralist, suggest that an unhealthy nation is not only physically but also morally unclean. If individually, man can be an animal and collectively monsters, some men are less bestial and less monstrous than others. Too, if objectivity is necessarily illusory, moral judgments can still be made. Having investigated some of the moral themes in Smollett's imagery, I will in the next chapter more extensively follow their suggestions.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MORAL BASIS OF SMOLLETT'S ART

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker is replete with rapid action, vivid characterization, biting satire, striking language, and lucid imagery. But, effective as each may be, none of these parts can stand alone. Instead, the elements of any novel must come together, functioning as a unity. The haphazard episodes of a tour, comical as they may be, cannot unite themselves. Nor are authentic details, grotesque caricatures, and witty puns capable of binding themselves in an aesthetic whole. However, far from lacking a structure, this novel is more compactly knit than might first appear. By the end of the novel, we learn that The Expedition of Humphry Clinker progresses ethically as well as geographically. Cemented by an ethical theme, Smollett's work gains its coherence through the binding structure of a well-ordered morality.

For art to have a moral basis, its ethics cannot be imposed from without. If a moral structure is merely tacked onto a fiction, the result is polemic, not art. Instead, the morality must grow out of the deepest concerns of the literary work. Infused with the elements of the novel -- the satire, the characterization, and the imagery -- the

ethical substance can determine the shape of its container. This happens in The Expedition of Humphry Clinker because the essential problems of ethics are seldom far removed from the scene. On the contrary, many of the scenes in this novel have an important moral significance, even if some are more subtle than obvious.

The morality in Humphry Clinker is not limited to Christian theology, though Biblical echoes are numerous. Rather, the values of formal religion are questioned. In some cases found wanting, at other times the new Methodism is approved. But penetrating deeper than theological concepts, this novel deals with fundamental human ethics, i.e., with the whole issue of man's humanity or man's inhumanity to man. Under this rubric of morality, the novel deals especially with the question of communal and familial responsibility. In addition, the work confronts the profound spiritual problem of man's search for content, of his quest for peace of mind. Ultimately, only the resolution of these vital problems unites the satire, characterization, and imagery of a travelogue into the coherent structure of a work of art.

To understand this coherence, we must remember that the Bramble tour only seems to be motivated by the hypochondriacal whims of a valetudinarian, seeking to improve his health. As my chapter III has suggested, the Squire is actually pursuing therapy for his spiritual condition. The Squire's hyper-sensitivity to folly and vice, his acute

awareness of both physical and moral defilement reveals that his social order is ailing in both body and spirit. But most significantly, Bramble does not ail merely because his society is contaminated. Rather, the Squire is ill because he is himself defiled in body as well as in mind.

With our retrospective view in having read all reports of the expedition, we note that Bramble ironically indicts himself in the first letter of the novel:

As if I had not plagues enough of my own, those children of my sister left me for a perpetual source of vexation. What business have people to get children to plague their neighbors?  
(p. 1)

Blaming others, Bramble has himself to blame, for he has neglected his own offspring. As later facts reveal, the Squire fathered a son out of wedlock. The simple and pious Humphry Clinker, Bramble's devoted servant, is disclosed to be the Squire's son -- though this essential moral fact remains unknown for most of the journey.

We know only that the Squire is ill, allergic to a culture which is infected both materially and spiritually. Physically, Bramble suffers a variety of ailments, including constipation; mentally, he suffers anxiety:

I have told you over and over how hard I am to move; . . . I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body. (p. 1)

Though Bramble thinks he knows his own nature -- "at this time of day, I ought to know something of my own constitu-

tion" (p. 8) -- he still requests a prescription from Dr. Lewis to cure him of his afflictions. For the Squire is hardly aware of his real illness, either physical or psychological. This lack of self-knowledge helps explain the emotional ambivalence in Bramble's personality.

The haphazard events of a journey supply a perfect frame for Smollett's moral vignettes. We observe the tension in Bramble's character as he reacts to a variety of social situations. Through his reactions, reported by others as well as by himself, we learn that, overtly, the Squire tends to condemn man in the abstract. But covertly he is sympathetic toward particular men. As he tells us at Bath, ". . . what have I to do with the human species? except a very few friends, I care not if the whole was \_\_\_\_" (p. 51). Though Bramble's nature is complex, his character may be divided into three distinct levels. Each level is less apparent and more hidden. My chapters on satire and imagery conclude that on the most obvious first level, an irascible Bramble is continually critical of the faults and vices of collective humanity.

However, Bramble exhibits another pattern of behavior which is less evident but equally pervasive. On this second level, we observe an altruistic Bramble attempting to hide his benevolent gestures toward individual men. If openly misanthropic on the first level, Bramble remains covertly philanthropic on the second level. For instance, writing to Dr. Lewis, Bramble orders his friend to feed and clothe



the poor tenants on his estate, "but don't say a syllable of the matter to any living soul" (p. 2). He can also sympathetically forgive one who is the traditional enemy of the property-owners, the poacher, "he [a poacher] thought he had some right (especially in my absence) to partake of what nature seems to have intended for common use" (p. 12). On more than one occasion, Bramble attempts to aid a deserving stranger secretly. At Bath, he is charitable to a needy widow, at Scarborough the Squire attempts to help Martin, a highwayman, become an honest citizen. Jery's observation of his uncle proves to be valid: "He affects misanthropy in order to conceal the sensitivity of a heart which is tender, even to a degree of weakness" (p. 29).

But penetrating further, to a fact disclosed only near the end of the journey, there emerges a third level of his nature, even more secret; this is Bramble's unadmitted fatherhood, and the resultant anxiety. An important fact of the Squire's past, his fathering of the bastard son, remains suppressed. Though the sowing of wild oats was an accepted convention for a young eighteenth-century gallant, a man of Bramble's uncommon morality could be expected to be more concerned about the results. Early in their travels, Jery recalls that his uncle has advised him to pay a woman who claims Jery has fathered her child, even though the nephew insists the charge is false.

The old gentleman told me last night, with great good humour, that betwixt the age of twenty and forty, he had been obliged to provide for nine bastards sworn to him by

women he had never seen. (p. 28)

The Squire seems to have forgotten his own youthful escapades. Bramble, quick to condemn others, is apparently oblivious to his own guilt, a guilt which comes to haunt him physically and spiritually for almost the entire journey. Though Bramble often reveals that he loves his niece and nephew, and that he is even fond of his sister, the following tirade exposes his preoccupation with both guilt and familial responsibility:

I vow to God, she [Tabitha] is sometimes so intolerable, that I almost think she's the devil incarnate come to torment me for my sins, and yet I am conscious of no sins that ought to entail such family plagues upon me - why the devil should not I shake off these torments at once? I an't married to Tabby, thank Heaven! nor did I beget the other two, let them choose another guardian; for my part I an't in a condition to take care of myself, much less to superintend the conduct of giddy-headed boys and girls. (p. 9)

Fittingly enough, it is Bramble himself who helps us to understand the psychosomatic nature of his afflictions:

I find that my spirits and health affect each other reciprocally -- that is to say -- everything that discomposes my mind produces a correspondent disorder in my body; and my bodily complaints are remarkably mitigated by these considerations that dissipate the clouds of mental chagrin. (p. 177)

Thus the Squire is soothed only when he encounters physical or mental stimuli which satisfy the needs of a sensitive body and of an equally sensitive psyche. The above statement is most telling because it begins and ends with Bramble's emphasis on his mental health. Even as he ails physically, Bramble has also lost his spiritual orientation.

If Bramble is on a journey to recover his faith in humanity, he must recover the self-confidence of a cured pilgrim who is well in both body and spirit. As will be observed later on, Bramble regains his respect for collective man in realizing the virtues of Scotland, but he regains his faith in the individual even sooner. This most personal affirmation comes with Bramble's discovery of his son, Humphry Clinker. Appropriately enough for the order of Smollett's moral structure, Bramble acknowledges Humphry as a ward of his heart months before he learns that Humphry is also the true son of his own loins. For long before he accidentally discovers Humphry's true identity, Bramble has learned to appreciate him as a dependent of inestimable value.

In their first meeting, the impoverished Clinker is so destitute that he hardly has enough clothing to cover his nakedness. Symbolically, the father is confronted with the birth of his son. As Humphry himself says soon afterwards, he is "Innocent as the babe unborn" (p. 96). But always balancing the moral structure of his novel, Smollett first presents us with Tabitha's reactions to Humphry. In keeping with her inhumanity, she is utterly unsympathetic to their newly employed postillion:

. . . such a beggarly rascal that he had never a shirt to his back, and had the impudence to shock her sight by shewing his bare posteriors, for which act of indelicacy he deserves to be set in the stocks. (p. 91)

In Tabitha's system of values, ethical character is based

on the possession of material goods, and poverty equals immorality. Therefore, to her, Humphry is guilty of the sin of impoverishment.

Smollett continues the comedy in this scene, but his treatment is as seriously moral as the Biblical tale of the Good Samaritan. Jerry records Humphry's pathetic explanation of his impoverished condition:

I have no friends, nor relation upon earth to help me out. I have had the fever and agues for these six months. . . . (p. 92)

Tabitha, characteristically rejecting benevolence, finds Humphry "a filthy tatterdamalion," she "bids him begone, observing that he would fill the room full of vermin" (p. 92). On hearing the full story of Clinker, who proves to be "a love begotten babe, brought up in the work house" (p. 92), Bramble becomes openly sympathetic. He is incensed when he hears how inhumanely the landlord has treated the young man. Jerry recalls the Squire's sarcasm:

"You perceive (said the Squire turning to me [Jerry]) our landlord is a Christian of bowels. Who shall presume to censure the morals of the age, when the very publicans exhibit such examples of humanity." (p. 93)

Here the moral implications become explicit. Though Bramble finds Humphry guilty, his judgment, tongue-in-cheek, is as much against conventional material morality as it is against Humphry:

Heark ye, Clinker, you are a most notorious offender. You stand convicted of sickness, hunger, wretchedness and want. But as it does not belong to me to punish criminals, I will take upon me the task of giving you a word of advice. Get a shirt with all

convenient dispatch, that your nakedness may not henceforward give offense to travelling gentlewomen, especially maidens in years.  
(p. 93)

For the first time in the novel, the Squire is overtly charitable. Bramble gives Humphry a guinea; he joins the expedition. Even though Humphry is well clothed, having redeemed his clothes from pawn, Tabitha cannot tolerate the memory of Humphry's initial embarrassment, and she prevails on her brother to dismiss him. But Humphry responds to the Squire's generosity with a selfless and undeviating loyalty. Clinker vows to "follow him [Bramble] to the world's end, and serve him all the days of his life, without fee or reward" (p. 92). The Squire cannot resist this simple but profound devotion. After hearing Humphry's comically rustic qualifications, Bramble makes a statement which is overwhelmingly ironic if we again consider the remark after learning that Humphry is Bramble's son:

"Foregad! thou art a complete fellow, (cried my uncle still laughing) I have a good mind to take thee into my family." (p. 95)

Subsequently, Humphry wins over the hateful Tabitha, though as Bramble wryly notes, "Thou hast given her much offense by shewing her thy naked tail" (p. 95). But later, just when Tabby seems to forgive him for his helplessly exposed humanity, Humphry almost accidentally murders her favorite canine. Once more, Tabitha is incensed and again, Smollett is ironical. Tabby labels Clinker an inferior animal: "Am I to be affronted by every mangy hound that you [Bramble] pick up in the highway?" (p. 96) The irony

continues as Tabitha unknowingly insists that Matthew chose between a sister and a son:

... the world shall see whether you have more regard for your own flesh and blood, or for a beggarly foundling taken from a dunghill.(p. 96)

The irony of this is only revealed later, for unknown to Tabitha, the "flesh and blood" and the "beggarly foundling" are one. In her inhumanity, she has rejected Bramble's son, her own nephew, in favor of her dog.

Humphry proves to be a naturally good man. Though simple-minded, he proves his worth in his undivided devotion to his master. His piety is infectious. Through the sincerity of his religious zeal, Humphry interests all the women, even Tabitha, in the new Methodism. Imprisoned unjustly, once again a victim of circumstances, Humphry converts the prisoners. As Winifred Jenkins testifies, Humphry possesses "the infectual calling" (p. 179). Though Smollett may be partially satiric in treating Humphry's enthusiasm in the new Methodism, the simple but pious servant holds his own in a dialogue with his master:

... may not the new life of God's grace shine upon the poor and the ignorant in their humility as well as upon the wealthy and the philosopher in all his pride of human learning.  
(p. 158)

Convinced of his servant's worth, Bramble expends every resource to free Humphry from the unjust charge that has resulted in his imprisonment. While the chains and fetters of Clinker in Clerkenwell Prison suggest Humphry's last name, Bramble's effort to relieve hastily Clinker from

the errors of circumstances suggests the title of the novel, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. When his servant is finally acquitted, Bramble is noticeably relieved: "The imprisonment of Clinker brought on those symptoms which I mentioned in my last and now they are vanished at his discharge" (p. 177). Hence Bramble's health is at least temporarily improved and he comes to that insight about his psychosomatic nature which is quoted earlier in the chapter. However, the expedition of Clinker is complete only when Bramble is brought to acknowledge Humphry as his natural son. Only then is the essential moral problem of the novel solved. By then Bramble will be both physically and mentally cured and the expedition is complete.

Before Bramble is to find this ultimate repose, however, numerous misadventures plague his tour of England. He suffers the nauseating waters of Harrigate, the inhospitality of Squire Burdock and Mr. Pimpernel, the selfish brutality of Mickelwhimmen, and his own embarrassing "rescue" at Scarborough. These are all in addition to the frustrations he undergoes from the disturbing social and political conditions analyzed in my second chapter. Not cured by anything English, Bramble is resolved to tour Scotland. Just before crossing the border, Bramble encounters the disputacious and paradox-loving Scot, Lismahago, who advocates the qualities of Scotland in comparison with those of England. At first Bramble is hostile to the pedantic lieutenant, but, overwhelmed by his facts and by his reasoning,

the Squire admits of Lismahago:

I shall for some time continue to chew the cud of reflection upon many observations which this original discharged. (p. 239)

In the Bramble-Lismahago dialogue and in the report of the tour north of the Tweed, we have a complete account of the agriculture, education, government, and social institutions of the Scots. Just as Bramble comes to recognize the wisdom of one Scot, the quixotic Lismahago, so does the Squire also come to recognize the qualities of a poor but virtuous Scotland. Though he is still critical of the faults of the nation, he can only be placated by their hospitable attitude. From Edinburgh, Bramble writes home:

I eat like a farmer, sleep from mid-night to eight in the morning without interruption, and enjoy a constant tide of spirits, equally distant from inanition and excess. (p. 254)

Jery Melford reports too:

You cannot imagine how we have been caressed and feasted in the good town of Edinburgh of which we are become free denizens and guild brothers by the special favor of the magistracy. [Smollett's italics] (p. 257)

Repeatedly the Scots are praised by a man who hardly gives praise easily. Bramble writes:

I should be very ungrateful, dear Lewis, if I did not find myself disposed to think and speak favorably of this people, among whom I have met with more kindness, hospitality and rational entertainment, in a few weeks, than ever I received in any other country during the whole course of my life. (p. 268)

Bramble is positive about the virtues of Scotland, where he was negative about the vices of England. He writes, for instance: "Edinburgh is a hot-bed of genius" (p. 270).



"And if I was obliged to lead a town life, Edinburgh would certainly be the headquarters..." (p. 274). Jery tells us, "my Uncle is in raptures with Glasgow" (p. 276). Describing the loveliness of the Highlands, Bramble waxes ecstatic:

This country is justly stiled the Arcadia of Scotland, and I don't doubt it may vie with Arcadia in everything but climate. I am sure it excels it in verdure, wood and water. (p. 289)

In the same letter his imagery suggests that in Scotland Bramble discovers the empyrean reaches he has sought:

I am determined to penetrate at least forty miles into the Highlands, which now appears like a vast fantastic vision in the clouds. (p. 290)

On the return to England, Jery can write, "I never saw my uncle in such health and spirits as he now enjoys" (p. 306). Bramble's approval of Scotland and his physical and mental improvement there would be even more remarkable to Smollett's eighteenth-century English audience. For great prejudice existed, then, against the Scots, though as Smollett suggests, this bias is based on ignorance. Tabitha, for instance, thinks all of Scotland is an island. Jery Melford writes of England's knowledge of its northern neighbor:

What, between want of curiosity, and traditional sarcasms, and the effect of ancient animosity, the people at the other end of the island know as little of Scotland as of Japan. (p. 248)

By the end of his sojourn there, the most sensitive judge of all, Matthew Bramble, discerns the difference between the alleged and the true Scotland. In doing so, he seems

to be cured of both physical and moral disturbances.

Nevertheless, on returning to England, Bramble's psychosomatic troubles reappear. First the Squire is affronted by the boorish inhospitality of Lord Oxmington. Then, he discovers his old friend Baynard is close to financial ruin because of a prodigal wife. Next, the entire company is victimized by the practical joker, Sir Thomas Bullford. Finally, in the most upsetting of all shocks, a carriage accident threatens the Squire with a death by drowning. At this point in the journey, the physical and the moral action coincide to save the Squire from both a physical and a spiritual disintegration. Fittingly enough, it is Humphry Clinker who heroically saves Bramble, his father, from drowning, both literally and figuratively. As a result, Bramble is left alive to take three all-important moral actions: (1) he discovers and acknowledges Clinker as his son; (2) he unites with his old friend Denison and reaffirms the superior virtues of the rural life; (3) he rescues his friend Baynard, consoling him for his wife's death and saving him from financial ruin.

As Smollett renders the happy accident, Humphry's rightful last name is disclosed to be Loyd, as he was the result of Bramble's union with a barmaid. The Squire once used his mother's last name, Loyd, for the sake of her inheritance. At last Bramble comes to realize a responsibility he had never before acknowledged:

in consequence of my changing my name and  
going abroad at that very time, thy poor

mother and thou have been left to want and misery. I am really shocked at the consequence of my own folly. . . . You see gentlemen, how the sins of my youth rise up in judgement against me. . . . the rogue proves to be a crab of my own planting in the days of hot blood and unrestrained libertinism.  
(p. 373)

This scene immediately follows the comically pathetic responses of the family to Matthew's rescue by his servant. Liddy is hysterical, her words in their relieved grief emphasize two of the major themes of the novel -- moral responsibility and appearance opposed to reality.

Are you indeed my uncle. My dear uncle. My best friend! My father. Are you really? or is it an illusion of my poor brain? (pp. 368-369)

Liddy has come to accept Bramble as her father. As for his true son, ever since Bramble befriended him, Humphry has felt this same devotion. None doubts that he would, as he says, "go through fire as well as water" (p. 370), for his master. Indeed, the servant proves this literally. Jerry, too, is deeply affected at Bramble's near loss and describes the moving rescue scene in terms which seem comical, and not tragic, only because Bramble survives. Hence, through the progress of the journey, Bramble has become deeply involved with humanity. In addition to gaining Humphry, Bramble gains Liddy and Jerry as his spiritual offspring.

The Dennison and Baynard episodes have also an ethical import, as telling as any Biblical parable. Through both affairs, Smollett illustrates the value of a rural life in supplying repose and contentment. Eschewing the

ostentations and the competitive life of the city, both Dennison and Baynard learn, like Voltaire's *Candide*, to cultivate their own gardens. Only in the country do Bramble's friends gain physical as well as spiritual sustenance. Because his expedition has led him to such wisdom, Bramble finally admits the advantage of both travel and human contact:

... my health so much improved, that I am disposed to bid defiance to gout and rheumatism. I begin to think I have put myself on the superannuated list too soon, and absurdly sought for health in the retreats of laziness. I am persuaded that all valetudinarians are too sedentary, too regular, and too cautious. We should sometimes increase the motion of the machine, to unclog the wheels of life; and now and then plunge amidst the waves of excess, in order to case-harden the constitution. I have even found a change of company as necessary as a change of air, to promote a vigorous circulation of the spirits, which is the very essence and criterion of good health. [Smollett's italics] (p. 398)

The moral equanimity of the novel is complete, as Bramble, through the exposure of his travels, is cured.

Other characters also undergo changes. Lydia begins to achieve that wary sophistication which comes to the ripened cosmopolite. At first, taken in by the glitter and glamor of the world, she concludes, toward the novel's end:

I long for repose and solitude, where I can enjoy that disinterested friendship which is not to be found among crowds, and enjoy those pleasing reveries that shun the hurry and tumult of fashionable society. (p. 360)

Her brother, Jerry Melford, also changes. For instance, the young playboy has altered his opinion about marriage. Speaking of the happiness of those soon to be married in a

triple ceremony, Jery admits:

These expectants seem to be so happy, that if Mr. Dennison had an agreeable daughter, I believe I should be for making the third couple in this country dance. (p. 391)

Though almost from the beginning Jery understands his uncle's nature, through the events of the expedition he grows to appreciate and to value Bramble's character, despite the difference in their temperaments. Also the superior cynicism of the collegian is humbled when he learns how utterly wrong was his judgment in condemning Lydia's lover Wilson. The suitor, really young Dennison, earns his respect as Jery comes to this moral realization:

I am however mortified to reflect what flagrant injustices we everyday commit and what absurd judgements we form in viewing objects through the falsifying medium of prejudice and passion. (p. 389)

Once again, Smollett is concerned with vision, but at last the view is not obscured.

Thus in Smollett's art, the characterization, the satire, and the imagery all unite to make telling moral points. These suggestions are there from the beginning; they are carried through to the end. Complete with the actual personages, the authentic places, and the exact details of the eighteenth century, the novel succeeds as an imaginative work of art. Though the absurd, the grotesque and the ridiculous are Smollett's forte, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker is far more than an hilarious travelogue. Through the multiple epistolary, a physical journey becomes a moral journey. Truth is extracted from illusion. A good

man is recognized for what he is. A sick man is cured of the ills of both body and spirit. As the letters unfold, both action and language reveal moral character. Though charged with all the signatory power of each letter writer, we can never forget the triumph of the artist of this novel, the ultimate signature of Tobias Smollett.

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