

The Exalted Heroine and the Triumph of Order:
Class, Women, and Religion in the English Novel 1740-1800

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I declare that I am the sole author
of this thesis, which is the product
of my own research during the past
three years.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a sociological study of Eighteenth-Century English prose-fiction 1740-1800, which presents detailed analyses of seven novels, including works by Samuel Richardson, Sarah Fielding, Henry Fielding, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Graves, Fanny Burney, and Robert Bage. Prior to the consideration of individual texts, there is an introductory discussion of the relation between literature and ideology, a socio-historical chapter on class, women, and religion in Eighteenth-Century England, and a chapter which surveys literary realism, the fiction-reading/purchasing public, and authorial intention and technique during the period.

The purpose of the thesis is to make a sociologically-informed assessment of the presentation of class, women, and religion in fictional prose: to place the works firmly in their social context, and to compare the similarities and discrepancies between socio-historical evidence and literary portrayal. More specifically, attitudes towards women and female emancipation are examined throughout the thesis, as are authorial opinions regarding the social, political, and economic relations between classes, and the role of religion in both public and private life.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to outline the manner in which the texts discussed below have been approached, and to make some preliminary remarks upon eighteenth-century prose-fiction and ideology. No attempt has been made to produce a comprehensive sociology of the novel for, whether or not such a project might be possible, it is clearly beyond the scope of my study.

Essentially, I have sought to make some assessment of how ideology was expressed in novels during the period 1740-1800; the works considered are: Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1740); Sarah Fielding's David Simple (1744); Henry Fielding's Amelia (1751); Oliver Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield (1766); Richard Graves' The Spiritual Quixote (1773); Fanny Burney's Evelina (1778); Robert Bage's Hermsprong (1796). Two of the above novels were produced by men who continue to have considerable stature as writers (Richardson and Fielding), two are by lesser authors (Goldsmith and Burney), whilst the remaining works represent the efforts of decidedly minor novelists. These particular novels were chosen largely because they deal with one or more of the aspects of ideology which I wished to examine in detail, viz, those relating to class, women, and religion; subjects which are evidently salient in the English novel, and likewise of importance to sociological theory generally.

As ideology is the central focus of the study, some explanation of my use of the term is necessary at this point. Therefore, I can state that it will be used throughout to refer to forms of thought, rhetoric and so on which present the interests of a particular group or class as being synonymous with the interests of all, that is, with

'the nation', the 'whole community' or whatever; propositions of this nature will likewise be labelled ideological. As Miliband has suggested, Marx and Engels saw ideology as 'precisely the attempt to "universalize" and give "ideal" form to what are no more than limited, class-bound ideas and interests: it is in this sense that they use the word "ideology" pejoratively, as meaning a false representation of reality'.¹ This is not to say, however, that ideologies are simply cynically constructed and employed by one class as a means of deceiving and manipulating another. On the contrary, it is often the case that members of the class from which an ideology originates are not only the major exponents, but also the most convinced believers of that ideology. Additionally, it must be recognized that although an ideology represents the beliefs and interests of a specific class, it does not follow that all those who accept and support that ideology are necessarily drawn from that same class. Rhetoricians, both paid and unpaid, can usually be found to lend their voices and pens in support of any given ideology, regardless of whether or not that same ideology is in the interests of the class from which they, the ideologists, originate.

As stated above, ideologies offer a 'false representation of reality', but this does not mean that every proposition or claim contained within an ideology, or every aspect of a fictional portrayal markedly influenced by ideology, is wholly and unavoidably false. Some components may be true or partly true; nonetheless, the overall picture put forward by an ideology will definitely be distorted, if only for the fact that it seeks to universalize that which is not truly universal. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that ideologies are not merely absurd fantasies or aggregations of

tendentious lies. Indeed they may, in certain instances, constitute the most enlightened and perceptive understanding of human ideas and activities then attainable; and this is possible because ideologies are always derived from social reality. Rather than being straightforward reflections of reality, however, ideologies are partial and incomplete attempts to apprehend and explain what is real. Thus, an ideology mediates between actual human practices and human understanding of the nature and significance of those practices; it is in the process of trying to perceive, interpret, and represent reality that distortion occurs, sometimes unwittingly, sometimes as a result of prior intention. Clearly, it is a mistake to suppose that ideologies can be viewed as little more than static bodies of beliefs and propositions for, not only are they susceptible to revision and development according to changing social conditions, but additionally, they play a dynamic role in the perceptions of, and relations between, human beings.

Ideologies may be categorized in various ways as, for example, when a particular ideology is referred to as 'sexist', 'political', or 'religious'; whilst this is a useful way of directing attention towards a specific area, however, it must be remembered that all ideologies are ultimately political in character, whatever their apparent sphere of concern may be. The reason for this is that ideologies always serve to promote particular interests and ideas: they are never neutral, nor free from political implications.

Overtly political ideologies typically share certain constant features: there is invariably some attempt to explain the past and present, some sort of blueprint for the future, and a statement of the beliefs and values deemed important by supporters of the ideo-

logy. Such ideologies usually offer more or less comprehensive guidance for action, and seek to draw support and legitimation from all or most members of a given society; the actual content of the ideology being promoted is, it is claimed by ideologues, self-evidently correct, just, and desirable to all reasonable persons. In this way, political ideologues and activists, past and present, have sought to establish the universality of their own perspectives. Other forms of ideological representation may be found in widely differing spheres; in artistic production, for example, one would not expect to find exactly the same materials and presentation associated with openly political tracts. This is not to suggest, of course, that artistic works never contain overtly political ideology; more typically, however, the political content within an artistic work may not be immediately obvious. In part, this is so because the artist's transformation of his/her raw material involves further mediation of the real area of human activity upon which the work is based; how consciously ideology is introduced into an artistic product, must be decided in each particular case, and some discussion of this aspect of artistic endeavour will be included below.

The manner in which ideologies are created and transmitted will obviously vary according to the general conditions pertaining to a given society; suffice to state that the proponents of an ideology will almost certainly seek to utilize whatever means are available in order to propagate, establish, and maintain their own weltanschauung. Some classes are always in a better position to do this than others, hence Marx's claim that 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the

ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force'.² This is not to imply that there are no ideas other than - or opposed to - those of the ruling class, but rather indicates the incomplete yet extensive dominance of ruling-class perceptions, explanations and so on. Moreover, as Marx indicates above, intellectual dominance is based upon material control; it does not arise from some form of reified contest in what the idealists like to refer to as the 'realm of ideas'.

Regarding the novels discussed below, it is my contention that each one puts forward an ideological portrayal of the social relations and conditions existing in England during the time at which it was written. This can be illustrated by reference to the actual socio-political structure of eighteenth-century England; any assessment of the presentation of ideology within literary works must necessarily take account of the wider social context from which the works emerge, and this is what I have tried to do. I do not argue that the novels examined provide a complete and faithful record of social organization during the period, yet it will become clear that, in spite of the many distortions which the works contain, they all draw upon and point towards concrete beliefs and practices considered to be of importance at the time of their writing.

Although I do not wish to claim that the authors included all share exactly the same background and perspective, it is undeniable that there is a considerable convergence between them in their social origins, their general view of society (as displayed via the novels), and the sorts of concerns which are prominent in their texts. All were from bourgeois or gentry families, all subscribed to a greater or lesser extent to largely bourgeois ideals, and all demonstrated

some adherence to, or respect for, Christianity, usually in its Anglican form. Every novelist here makes some criticisms of the aristocracy, mainly through attacks on the supposed lechery of male peers; yet all, with the exception of the Fieldings, go on to display a good deal of admiration for that class in some way or other. The salient concerns of these novels can be summed up by listing the following recurring topics which appear within them: status and social mobility; marriage and female 'virtue'; social order; personal morality; the role of the Anglican Church. The homogeneity of content is hardly surprising, not because literature can be said to reflect society in any unequivocal way, but rather because in addition to the convergences mentioned above, it is easy to see why authors should choose to write about areas deemed relevant by the bourgeoisie, the gentry, and the aristocracy. The former, in particular, constituted a large part of the reading public; this public was eager to read novels which dealt with social issues of contemporary interest. The authors were likely to have shared the interests of their readers and moreover, could not afford to ignore the tastes of potential customers if they wished to sell their own novels. As patronage in the literary sphere had gone into serious decline from the early part of the century, novelistic success became dependent upon the ability of the author to make his or her work appeal to a wider social grouping than had hitherto been influential.³

The fact that writers had to attract readers has implications for the form and content of literature, and thus for the transmission of ideology via the novel; after all, the author was not in the position of, for example, the clergyman, whose sermons and directives were frequently sanctioned by considerable spiritual and secular

authority. The author did not have the captive audience which many, particularly rural, Anglican ministers had as a result of both metaphysical fear on the part of parishioners, and material threats from pro-Anglican members of the ruling class. For this reason, even the most consciously didactic writer such as Richardson had to be able to offer something more than a mere list of instructions and proscriptions. Not that spiritual guidance and religious discussion were unpopular during the period, if the number of religious works published is anything to go by. Watt points out that the majority of books published during the century were of this type, but goes on to add, 'the number of religious publications does not seem to have increased in proportion either to the growth of the population or to the sales of other types of reading matter. Further, the public for religious reading seems to have been rather independent of that for secular literature'.⁴ Indeed, it seems likely that those inclined to purchase sermons and other religiously-oriented works might well be disdainful of prose-fiction, in the same way that the reader of 'romances' would probably not be excited by theological exposition. A didactically-motivated writer of fiction would, assuming his or her didacticism to be based upon genuine convictions, try to influence as many readers as possible, and in particular those most in need of moral guidance. In this instance, the morally-deprived readers would be identified as those who read romances rather than religious works; therefore, the writer who could pursue a didactic purpose and yet still draw readers from this expanding section of the reading public, would stand to achieve success in both moral purpose and commercial terms. Samuel Richardson's Pamela is perhaps the best example of such a success; nevertheless, the attempt to provide some form

of moral or spiritual teaching in a manner which would attract and entertain a large audience, is a common feature of many eighteenth-century novels.

There are several other crucial differences regarding the way in which ideology appears in fiction as opposed to religious teaching. The latter, whether delivered from the pulpit or transcribed in book or pamphlet form, faced certain problems which the novelist could avoid. The Anglican Church had to convey its message to an extremely heterogeneous audience. Teaching pitched at a level of discourse which was readily accessible to all, would almost inevitably be tedious to the educated listener or reader, whilst the ideological nature of its content would tend to be more blatant and thus more obvious, even to those with little formal education. If, on the other hand, religious claims and explanations were stated in accordance with the more rigorous and/or esoteric canons of philosophy, they would undoubtedly be comprehensible to only a comparatively small section of the Church's potential audience. It may be suggested that these obstacles could have been surmounted by providing simplistic sermons for the uneducated, and more sophisticated theological discussion for the cultured via printed matter. To some extent, this tactic was adopted; additionally, an enormous number of religious tracts were produced and distributed (gratis) in an effort to inculcate religiosity amongst the working class.⁵ But there was a further problem for those who would spread the gospel; they were, for a number of reasons (some of which are discussed in chapter one, below), confronted with a fair measure of apathy regarding religious matters. And this lack of interest was not confined to any one class.

The novelist, on the other hand, did not have to produce works which would appeal to such a variety of people. The reading/purchasing public, notwithstanding the socio-economic diversity amongst those who constituted it, was a considerably more homogeneous group in terms of education, economic position, status, and values than the audience envisaged by the Church for its message. This meant that the novelist, whilst having to attract readers, did not have to deal with the problem of 'speaking' to those with little or no education, or to the classically learned. For reasons of finance and education the former, who were in a large majority throughout the country, were outside of the potential reader/purchaser market within which the novelist operated. The latter educationally-elite readers were, with exceptions, little interested in contemporary fictional writing, particularly in the early part of the century. However, the middle class, as the bulk of the reading public, possessed both the economic and educational means necessary for the novel to flourish. The author's task was to attract, entertain, and (particularly after Richardson) instruct this growing section of the public; yet, in contrast to the clergy, the novelist could offer something new in both form and content, and present the whole in a diverting manner.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the presentation of ideology in religion as opposed to fiction is that Anglican teaching was overtly dictatorial (at least as regards the majority of its audience), and designed to inspire obedience both spiritual and secular via the weapon of fear. This tactic, based on religious and civil sanctions - formal and informal - had been successful in the past, but it became increasingly inadequate as the century progressed. And, far from ensuring obedience to the Church and its allies, it con-

tributed to the long-term decline in Anglican influence over the population. Put simply, the Church did not match its ideology and practice to changing social conditions, but merely continued to demand duty, obedience, and respect from reluctant, then antagonistic, and finally, uninterested people. Much fictional prose was essentially supportive towards the religious and secular authority of the day, but it did not usually try to direct its audience in such an uncompromising way. Instead, it might be argued that literary ideologues tried to reinforce certain aspects of the material and spiritual status quo (reserving some criticism for others) by creating the more imaginative and multi-dimensional means of influence exemplified in the novel. For, if religious functionaries could be said to follow the mode of teaching associated with The Book of The Covenant⁶ and other Old Testament writings wherein obedience is demanded and little or no explanation offered, then the didactic Anglican-oriented novelists might be seen as pursuing Christ's parable style of instruction. The parable is a form which implicitly recognizes the need to capture the attention of a voluntary audience as a pre-condition for instruction and explanation and indeed, some of the eighteenth-century English novels resemble nothing so much as contemporary parables greatly expanded and artistically developed.

The most general way in which the social concerns of authors and their readers found their place in eighteenth-century English prose-fiction is displayed by the fact that every one of the novels examined here can be viewed as dealing with the issue of how the individual can be integrated within the society of which he/she is a part. That this should be a constant theme for our authors is understandable, given the advances made by the bourgeois ideology of indivi-

dualism and the varied opportunities for social mobility present during the greater part of the century. The ideology in question had established the allegedly inevitable opposition between the 'individual' and his or her 'society', yet in practice it was clearly felt that integration was both desirable and essential. For our authors, as for others sympathetic to bourgeois ideology, the best kind of integration was achieved through upward mobility and, consequently, this was a common literary solution to the practical problems posed in the eighteenth-century novel.

The specifically bourgeois views which came to be absorbed by the gentry and the aristocracy throughout the century centre around the idea of individualism; this ideology represented beliefs and values which were in sharp contrast to those which had dominated medieval Europe. As noted by Weber and others, the ideology and practice of economic individualism occurred only after the Reformation and the rise of radical-Protestant theology; even then, this development was confined to a handful of countries, the prime example being England.⁷ Tawney contrasts the two differing sets of beliefs when he remarks

The law of nature had been invoked by medieval writers as a moral restraint upon economic self-interest. By the seventeenth century a significant change had taken place. 'Nature' had come to connote, not divine ordinance, but human appetites, and natural rights were invoked by the individualism of the age as a reason why self-interest should be given free play.⁸

That such a qualitative change took place is no longer seriously disputed; Mészáros, concentrating more narrowly upon material factors, argues that the decline of the Aristotelian view of the world and the increasing philosophical preoccupation with individual freedom which preceded the full flowering of economic individualism 'was due...to the dynamic development of the capitalistic relations of production

which required the universal extension of "liberty" to every single individual so that he could enter into "free contractual relations" with other individuals, for the purpose of selling and alienating everything that belongs to him, including his own labour power'.⁹ This is not to deny the importance of particular ideologies such as the 'Protestant ethic' in the process of change, but rather to underline the fact that they were clearly related to material developments. For, as Mészáros points out, 'It is by no means accidental that individual liberty as a political and moral ideal is absent from the ancient world, and appears only with the High Renaissance. When "direct dependence on nature" is a general concern of a particular community, aspirations to a distinct form of individual liberty can only be expressed marginally'.¹⁰

In eighteenth-century England, the most important statement of individualism was that formulated by the philosopher, Locke (1632-1704); his political theory had completely contradicted earlier doctrines for in it, as Tawney notes

Society is not a community of classes with varying functions, united to each other by mutual obligations arising from their relation to a common end. It is a joint-stock company rather than an organism, and the liabilities of the shareholders are strictly limited. They enter it in order to insure the rights already invested in them by the immutable laws of nature. The State, as a matter of convenience, not of supernatural sanctions, exists for the protection of those rights, and fulfils its object in so far as, by maintaining contractual freedom, it secures full scope for their unfettered exercise.¹¹

C.B. Macpherson has termed Locke's theory 'possessive individualism', as it is based on the idea of the individual as a 'proprietor of his own person or capacities'.¹² Clearly, this mode of viewing individuals artificially detaches them from the context within which they become, and exist as, human beings. However, according to Locke et al, this supposed isolation is to be seen as an aspect of freedom;

Macpherson continues, 'The human essence is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession'.¹³

Thus, social relations came to be envisaged in the manner described by Tawney, above.

It is all very well to speak of an individual as 'owning' his or her person, capacities, and whatever else they can acquire by the exercise of those capacities, but this notion implies much that Locke disregarded. For, as Macpherson states, the bourgeois concept of property includes the right to 'dispose of, to exchange, to alienate'.¹⁴ With the proviso that one cannot dispose of one's own life (seen as the property of God), this means that one can alienate one's property by selling one's labour-power.¹⁵ The fact that the majority of individuals in Locke's society were forced to alienate their property by selling their labour-power does not appear to have concerned him; yet, this being the case, how could these wage-labourers be considered free from 'dependence on the wills of others'? Therefore, as Macpherson contends, the process of selling one's labour-power for a bare subsistence wage (all that labourers could ever expect, according to Locke), ensures that wage-labourers necessarily alienate their lives and liberty.¹⁶ Locke's lack of concern on this point becomes less surprising when one considers that he also claimed that unemployment arose from the 'moral depravity' of the unemployed¹⁷: a popular idea amongst those who have no need for employment, even today; that labourers were incapable of any sort of political action except in the most extraordinary circumstances,¹⁸ and that proper administration of the poor did not involve providing them with minimal subsistence, but rather preventing them from suffering so grievously that they might attempt some sort of 'armed revolt'.¹⁹

What is perhaps the most far-reaching implication of Locke's theory (in the present context) is stated by Macpherson as follows: 'If it is labour, a man's absolute property, which justifies appropriation and creates value, the individual right of appropriation overrides any moral claims of the society. The traditional view that property and labour were social functions, and that ownership of property involved social obligations, is thereby undermined'.²⁰

Changing material conditions and the development of the ideas outlined above resulted in the predominance of individualism during the eighteenth century; Stone concludes that by this time, 'complete identification had been made between the pursuit of gratification by the individual and the welfare of the public'.²¹

Marx, in his Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy, discusses the ideological conception of the 'solitary producer', as used in fiction (Defoe's Robinson Crusoe), and later by the economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. He goes on to suggest that the model itself arises from an 'anticipation of "bourgeois society" ', and remarks

The individual in this society of free competition seems to be rid of the natural ties etc. which made him an appurtenance of a particular, limited aggregation of human beings in previous historical epochs. The prophets of the eighteenth century, on whose shoulders Adam Smith and Ricardo were still wholly standing, envisaged this individual - a product of the dissolution of feudal society on the one hand and of the productive forces evolved since the sixteenth century on the other - as an ideal whose existence belongs to the past. They saw this individual not as a historical starting point, but as the starting point of history; not as something evolving in the course of history, but posited by nature, because for them this individual was in keeping with their ideas of human nature. This delusion has been characteristic of every new epoch hitherto.²²

Moreover, as Marx points out, the further back one delves into history the more dependent upon some form of collectivity does the individual appear to be. Therefore, the predominant perception of the

individual and individualism which held sway amongst eighteenth-century ideologists was itself historically conditioned; furthermore, their attempt to understand 'man' by supposing their vision of human characteristics to hold good for any historical period underlines the vanity and the sterility of such ahistorical speculation.

As mentioned above, one consequence of individualism was that eighteenth-century British theorists came to view the individual and society as being in opposition to one another; Mészáros explains the process by which this false dichotomy became established as follows:

The relative liberation of man from his direct dependence on nature is achieved by means of a social action. Nevertheless, because of the reification of the social relations of production, this achievement appears in an alienated form: not as a relative independence from natural necessity but as freedom from the constraints of social ties and relations, as an ever intensifying cult of "individual autonomy". This sort of alienation and reification, by producing the deceiving appearance of the individual's independence, self-sufficiency and autonomy, confers a value per se on the world of the individual, in abstraction from its relationship with society, with the "outside world". Now the fictitious "individual autonomy" represents the positive pole of morality and social relations count only as "interference", as mere negativity. Self-seeking egoistic fulfilment is the straightjacket imposed by capitalist development on man, and the values of "individual autonomy" represent its ethical glorification.²³

So, regardless of eighteenth-century ideology, there is no such thing as society or individuals, if by these terms one means that they are entities which can justifiably be separated from one another; additionally, it should be obvious that no 'society' ever oppresses any 'individual'. Avineri, discussing Marx's view of the matter, sums it up nicely when he writes, 'The phenomenon so described is the domination of some individuals by other individuals, with the latter aided and abetted by ideologies of the "common good" '.²⁴

As the individualism sketched above represented a dominant trend in eighteenth-century English philosophy, one should not be surprised to find some evidence for its penetration into the novel. However,

whilst all of the works examined contain some individualistic influence, they all display a definite concern with the problem of individual-social integration.²⁵ The questions which occur most frequently for our authors are, in this context: what is possible, and what is desirable? None of them favourably portray the sort of extreme individualism which, as Watt suggests, can be found in Defoe's writings.²⁶ Furthermore, there is a marked difference in the degree to which particular authors accept the premises of individualism; Henry Fielding, Graves, and Goldsmith show little of the enthusiasm for an individualistic society that can be detected in some of the other authors, as the former remain influenced by a somewhat organicist conception of social organization.²⁷ We will return to the relation between individualist ideology and specific authors in chapter two, and in the analyses of the novels; at this point, it is enough to state that none of those writers examined endorses the kind of unmitigated individualism advocated by Locke et al, whilst none of them remain completely uninfluenced by individualist ideas.

Prior to a discussion of the socio-historical setting from which the novels emerged, it seems appropriate to make some preliminary remarks upon the way in which individualism - and bourgeois ideology generally - influenced the portrayal of class, women, and religion in eighteenth-century prose fiction.

The term 'class' was little used during the eighteenth century; given the ubiquity of what George has described as 'minute social distinctions', it appears that the social hierarchy was conceived of as one of status differences (based primarily, but not solely, on wealth), and expressed in the notions of 'rank', 'station', 'degree' and so on.²⁸ Reference to social aggregations was conveyed by such

terms as 'the quality', 'the gentry', 'the middling sort', 'the lower orders', and 'the poor'. That there were groups who shared a more or less similar position in English society according to, for example, land ownership, wealth or lack of it etc, was thus undoubtedly recognized. However, the - ultimately superficial - heterogeneity within such groups, when combined with the very real differences that existed, seems to have encouraged an essentially individual-oriented attitude towards the assessment of position within the social hierarchy. Therefore, the manner in which any individual's social standing would be determined by eighteenth-century contemporaries is more individualistic than is consistent with class analysis.

This individualizing tendency finds its way into the novels, which typically present only a narrow range of social types and activity in any detail. In the main, such novels deal with the experiences of the bourgeoisie and, to a lesser extent, the ruling class: that is, with the relations (on an individual and personalized level) existing amongst the bourgeoisie, and between them and the ruling class. Workers, criminals, and the poor do not, with the noteworthy exceptions of Pamela, Moll Flanders et al, play a prominent part in these writings. Likewise, the aristocracy, though often central to a plot as either the representatives of all that is wicked or, alternatively, the epitome of goodness (and the means of upward mobility), receive far less attention than their bourgeois counterparts. Thus the protagonists and scenario of the novel in this period do not usually facilitate considerations of the relations between the ruling class and bourgeoisie to their social inferiors. The 'lower orders' may make an appearance as the object of fear, mirth, or pious exhortation, but their presence is most frequently notable only for

its absence. In short, the middle-class nature of the novel was further illustrated in the fact that it aimed, primarily, to portray the bourgeoisie.

On those occasions where the existence of distinct and competing groups is acknowledged, the 'conservative' bias of the opinions put forward by major characters can be easily demonstrated. However, the most salient assumption regarding 'rank' which can be detected in the novels is that individuals - whatever their social, economic, or political differences - can, should, and invariably do live in harmony as contented members of an unquestionably sound and inevitably hierarchical, well-ordered society. Social conflict is almost always viewed as 'unnatural', 'unnecessary', 'undesirable' and, significantly, transitory. At the root of such troubles there are, so it is proposed, individual trouble-makers and villains who dupe the unwise and intemperate; thus social conflict supposedly stems from those who cannot (or will not) control vicious impulses and 'passions' which result from 'greed', 'envy', and 'malice'. None of these literary conflicts - which we would now rightly identify as representations of class conflict - are ever seen, by literary ideologues, as rational, inevitable, or, God forbid, justifiable.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the feminine ideal employed in English novels showed little variation; heroines of these works are, with very few exceptions, possessed of great physical beauty and good sense, which is combined with chasteness and modesty. Above all, heroines are properly deferential to men, whether father, guardian, lover or husband. Whatever the supposed social origins of the heroine, this ideal always remains the same; thus Pamela, in spite of her humble upbringing, shares virtually the same positive 'feminine'

qualities as Amelia, and Goldsmith's Sophia, who are from gentry and lower-bourgeois families respectively. These characteristics are in turn shared by heroines of aristocratic origin, such as Bage's Caroline, and Burney's Evelina; indeed, the examples can be multiplied. The most notable heroines in eighteenth-century prose fiction who do not conform to this pattern are Moll Flanders and Roxana, but then they are not, as Defoe himself made clear, meant to be viewed as models for imitation or admiration.

Although the dominant ideological picture of women which appears in the novel is drawn from largely bourgeois ideals, this does not mean that there was any great chasm between members of this class and the aristocracy in their respective views of women. It is true that many of the novelists criticize lecherous males belonging to the 'quality', but this in no way proves the existence of a widespread critical attitude on the part of the bourgeoisie, regarding their social superiors. Nor does it stand as evidence that members of the aristocracy were typically engaged in debauchery, and therefore utterly opposed to bourgeois moralizing. For, as Stone suggests

By the end of the eighteenth century a consensus was emerging about the ideal education for women of the landed classes and for the higher ranks of the bourgeoisie. She was neither the frivolous, party-going, neglectful mother and possibly adulterous wife of the aristocracy, nor the middle-class intellectual blue-stocking who challenged and threatened men on their own ground of the classics. She was a well-informed and motivated woman with the educational training and the internalized desire to devote her life partly to pleasing her husband and providing him with friendship and intelligent companionship, partly to the efficient supervision of servants and domestic arrangements; and partly to educating her children in ways appropriate for their future.²⁹

The ideal of feminine virtue displayed in novels then, was an indication of a more concrete broad consensus developing amongst the middle and upper classes; thus the exemplary female characters who

appear in the novel represent the ideal produced by members of those classes.

It is significant that almost all of the paragons of womanhood who are described in the novels under examination play little or no part in the world of work and, typically, make no contribution to 'household' economy. Adburgham points out that 'As the eighteenth century advanced, the unmarried woman of a family ceased to be an economical asset in her capacity of spinner, weaver, and seamstress, because less of these labours were done in the home. Also, it was becoming fashionable for gentlewomen to leave all household tasks to the servants'.³⁰ And Stone, writing on female education during the period, argues

It presupposed a growing number of women wholly withdrawn from productive work and with a great deal of enforced leisure on their hands. There is no doubt whatever that large numbers of bourgeois and even lower-middle-class wives were now being educated like their social superiors for a life of leisure, and were being withdrawn from useful economic employment in their husband's businesses.³¹

The women of the middle and upper classes however, only constituted a small proportion of the females in England; the majority of women were working class, yet such women rarely held any interest for the novelists. On those occasions when ordinary women are present in the novels of this period, they most often play the part of faithful servant or disreputable 'low' characters; moreover, they are never (with the exception of Pamela) attributed the individuality assumed to be characteristic of their socio-economic superiors.

Discussing female sexuality and its relation to class in the eighteenth-century novel, LeGates has argued that

The dichotomy is not between the chaste bourgeoisie and the licentious lady, but between the virtuous woman of the upper classes (whether by merit or birth) and the loose woman of the lower orders (whether by choice or circumstance).³²

However, whilst it is true that literary portrayals of women at this time do not employ a dichotomy between 'chaste bourgeoisie and licentious lady', it is incorrect to state that such a dichotomy was used to distinguish 'the virtuous woman of the upper classes' as opposed to the 'loose woman of the lower orders'. The most significant division which can be seen to exist between eighteenth-century fictional females rests upon whether a character is chaste and modest, or unchaste and immodest, regardless of class origin. The majority of heroines in eighteenth-century prose-fiction do not come from the aristocracy or the upper bourgeoisie (i.e. the upper class); more typically, they have middle or lower-middle-class origins. Heroes tend to be of a higher status or class than heroines, and thus literary romances conform to B's idea - shared by Johnson et al - that women are 'ennobled' when they marry an appropriate partner.

Throughout the century it was considered (from the lower-middle-class upwards) to be disgusting for women to marry a social inferior, and so this literary convention should cause no surprises; Fielding disregards the convention in Amelia, but in this he was atypical. If it were not the case that heroines had humbler origins than their male counterparts, then one of the major themes of eighteenth-century English novels would have been impossible; this theme is, quite simply, the upward social mobility of the heroine via marriage. So, many heroines may ultimately be accepted into the upper classes (like Pamela or Sophia), but they were not initially 'of the upper classes', as LeGates suggests. Given this it is mistaken to claim that 'virtue' can be seen as a solely 'upper class characteristic'; additionally, it will not do to talk of characters belonging to a particular class because of 'merit' or 'choice': class may be defined in a va-

riety of ways, but the concept is not endlessly plastic, as LeGates seems to suppose. Finally, the quality known as 'amiability' was not considered to be a characteristic confined to women, or to the upper classes; one of the best examples of a character possessing this trait in the fiction of the period is Goldsmith's Dr Primrose, in The Vicar of Wakefield.

Eighteenth-century novelists not only portrayed a limited and ideologically-constructed 'feminine' character, but likewise addressed themselves via their writings to a comparatively small, largely female, audience composed of readers from the lower-bourgeoisie upwards. The feminine ideal employed by the authors was offered to such women for imitation, and the manner in which our writers did this should become clear in the analyses of specific novels below.

One might argue that no eighteenth-century novel was complete unless it contained one or two clergymen; Anglican ministers play a prominent part in five out of the seven novels examined here (the Richardson novel, Pamela, and Sarah Fielding's David Simple show them in minor roles only), as they do in many other English novels of the century. S.C.Carpenter, discussing this aspect of literature, has stated that 'The clergy of eighteenth-century fiction are a numerous and most interesting company, and no doubt sketches from life', but I would suggest that one must remain somewhat sceptical about this proposition.³³ It is true that there is some variation in the presentation of ministers, and that writers such as Henry Fielding do not always portray them in a favourable light. Nevertheless, for every haughty, negligent, or uncharitable clergyman shown in eighteenth-century fiction, one can find a good many more who approximate to an idealized model; even Bage, who created a clerical villain,

was not above using the 'benevolent clergyman' stereotype. This stereotype broadly consisted of a minister who was anything from rather poor to middling (with a slight tendency towards the former, perhaps), usually middle-aged, and possessing all of those qualities which could be of service to, or be approved by, the heroine and hero of the piece. Most frequently, this character will have an unlimited supply of good sense and acute judgement (thereby facilitating sagacious advice), coupled with a strong sense of moral and parochial duty, courage, and tenderness. Additional common traits were patriotism, a preference for passivity and piety - and thus the maintenance of the status quo - and, not least, monarchism. Last, but by no means unimportant, these characters usually had a detailed grasp of the requirements of propriety: a useful faculty for those concerned with guiding young lovers.

It is through the use of such characters that the novelists attempt to support religion, and it is by means of similar yet less favourable models that they made their criticisms of some Anglican ministers. But, whether praising or criticizing, they invariably dealt with the Church by creating good or bad individual clergymen; the institutional character of Anglicanism received almost no attention whatsoever. Even so, in some instances the novelists do shed light on attitudes towards the Church's representatives, simply by constructing a model of what would pass for an honest, dutiful, and spiritual minister. Few of our novelists saw anything wrong with the fact that the clergy expounded political doctrines, or that they were - given the chance - deeply involved with the wealthy and powerful, for example. Moreover, it is significant in itself that all of the authors considered Anglican ministers to be of sufficient inte-

rest to merit inclusion in the novels; and often, such characters play, in fiction as in fact, an important role in the action.

Apart from Anglicanism, the most important religious ideas which find a place in the novels here examined are Puritanism and Methodism; they will be discussed below, in the chapters on Pamela and The Spiritual Quixote, respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

ENGLISH SOCIETY 1740-1800: CLASS, WOMEN, AND RELIGION

CLASS

As a number of historians, sociologists and others have suggested, there are difficulties in applying a strict class analysis to a social formation which is in transition from the pre-industrial stage to that of full-fledged capitalism. The complexity of social distinctions existing during the period under discussion further adds to the problem; this being the case, one could pursue a detailed investigation of class and status distinctions to the point where it would be possible to make almost any claim about a particular class seem cavalier and over-generalizing. Having no wish to follow that path, which all too frequently leads to futile pedantry, I intend to utilize a class analysis consisting of four basic categories constructed with regard to the relation of the various classes to the means of production. There is nothing original about this, but the upsurge of interest in 'class' and related Marxist concepts has, over the last twenty or so years, thrown up some bizarre or novel (depending upon one's view) formulations of what constitutes class; these constructions often have little or nothing to say about the importance of production in determining class. Thus, they depart considerably from Marxism - the tradition which not only produced the concept in its most heuristically powerful form, but likewise continues to devote much energy and intellectual vigour to applying it. It is from this broad tradition that my use of the term 'class' stems. In cases where the relation of a group to the means of production is equivocal, additional criteria may be used to determine class posi-

tion - e.g. social, political, and economic status, and 'lifestyle', more of which later.

Clearly, the mode of analysis outlined above will lead me to make generalizations, a necessary part of any sociological investigation; additionally, I am going to use the terms 'class' and 'classes' interchangeably in some instances. I recognize that the latter form may be more acceptable to some historians, sociologists et al, and likewise accept the fact of diversity within the various classes. However, I do not feel that it is necessary to repeatedly assert this diversity, particularly when one is discussing similarities between the members of a specific class. An outline of the basic typology employed throughout follows:

Ruling Class - The aristocracy and the gentry (landowners living, primarily, on unearned income from their land), plus the upper-bourgeoisie (wealthy merchants, financiers et al). This class were the major owners and controllers of the means of production and distribution including those pertaining to the major 'industry', viz, agriculture; thus, they controlled the labour power of others on a considerable scale.

Middle Class - The bourgeoisie (medium-sized farmers, merchants, manufacturers, plus some professionals and government employees/civil servants etc). I include the lower-bourgeoisie (small traders and farmers, lower professionals and government employees, shopkeepers, small businessmen/women - employers). This class had some ownership and control of the means of production and therefore some control of the labour power of others and of the distribution of the products of labour. Ideologues for the ruling class/State are included (for example, the clergy), for two reasons: 1) they were, invariably emplo-

yers (of at least domestic servants) whose income placed them economically and socially within the middle class and 2) their relation to the ruling class was more consistent with that of the bourgeoisie generally. This applies equally to most officials of the State.

Working Class - All wage-labourers and those paid partly or wholly 'in kind' or by means of the truck system. I also include subsistence farmers (cottagers) and self-employed craftsmen/women, provided that they do not employ labour (with the exception of, perhaps, their own children). Both skilled and unskilled workers can be placed in this category. Of this class, only the craftsmen/women may be said to have had any control over certain limited means of production; however, the small scale of this control plus their financial position and lack of control over the labour power of others makes this category the most appropriate one in which to place them. In short, this class was composed of those who produced wealth and worked in 'service' industries. Those on poor relief have been included, for reasons stated below.

Lumpenproletariat - All those engaged in (or dependent upon) 'criminal' activity, begging etc as a regular means of survival; that is to say, those for whom such activities represented the primary mode of acquiring an income. This class played no part in the production process, and was thus essentially parasitical. Those on poor relief could be placed in this category but, in order to distinguish them from those systematically living by 'crime', and recognizing that the 'poor' consisted largely of the old, the infirm, the unemployed and their dependents (crudely, workers and their families unable - not unwilling - to support themselves), they have been deemed working class.

Needless to say, the above typology is not exhaustive or definitive; however, it is not intended to be. All that is required is that it should be adequate for the purpose for which it was constructed, and that can best be judged by the analyses which it precedes.

It will be clear from the above that I do not accept, pace Thompson, that a class can be discerned only when a particular mode of consciousness is present, but find it more fruitful to determine 'class' according to the relation of an individual or group to the means of production.¹ One can employ the classical distinction made by Marx himself, between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself (this latter may often be expressed as 'a class-in-and-for-itself') to deal with the issue of class consciousness. Therefore, I would argue that to make class dependent upon a recognition of a shared situation is to unnecessarily abandon an important and perfectly usable tool to no sound purpose. Whether groups and/or individuals perceive their common position does not, analytically, make the slightest difference to the legitimacy of employing the term 'class', as long as one can establish that a shared or 'objective' class situation exists (or, in a historical study, has existed). One may sympathize with Thompson's anxieties over the issue of 'substitution', but he is quite wrong to assume that - because there is always room for argument as to what exactly constitutes the real interests of this or that class in a dynamic situation - one cannot agree on the broad interests of a class, and indeed, assert the existence of such a class independently from the subjectivity of those who belong to it. To proceed, as Thompson does, from such an extremely voluntaristic standpoint, is to abandon structural categories in favour of subjectivism. Therefore, one can agree with Anderson when he writes 'Whe-

ther the accent is put on behaviour or consciousness - struggling or valuing - such definitions of class remain fatally circular. It is better to say, with Marx, that social classes may not become conscious of themselves, may fail to act or behave in common, but they still remain - materially, historically - classes'.²

In eighteenth-century England, there can be no doubt that the most powerful and dominant group was the aristocracy; politically, economically, and socially, this class exercised extensive authority over the rest of the population. Webb, for example, writes

Peers were summoned to sit in the House of Lords. Because of their political importance, in their own right or through their relatives, clients, and associates in the House of Commons, they could claim the rewards of politics more readily than could their less exalted neighbours: political office, with the attendant income that was so important a means of increasing a family's fortune; patronage appointments for relatives or clients; and advancement in the peerage for themselves'.³

Not surprisingly, their numbers were not great; Webb continues, 'thanks to old age, minorities or other disqualifications, an active part in ruling England was taken by, say, 125 or 130, a group of men who knew each other and who acted and ruled on the basis of well-understood if rarely articulated assumptions'.⁴ The power of this group was not confined to parliament, however; writing of the great landowners of this class Mingay has argued that 'at the local level their influence as members of the government and as lords-lieutenant sustained their authority over the gentry and the commercial and professional classes of all but the largest towns. They preponderated in cabinets and at court, and pensions and sinecures lined the pockets of their relations and protégés'.⁵ Likewise, this class enjoyed a virtual monopoly of prestigious positions throughout the society; Williams sums up their situation as follows, 'The whole range of jobs

in the government, the civil service, the armed forces and the Church was a bottomless treasure-chest from which the upper class subsidised themselves and supported their dependants'.⁶

All commentators agree that the wealth and power of the aristocracy was based on their possession of land and, as Williams maintains, 'The Georgian period saw the steady accumulation of large estates. Every year the great landed families were adding acre upon acre to their patrimony'. And, 'Though some of the land was bought out of the proceeds of business and government...in the main it went to those who already had plenty'.⁷ The possibilities open to one with large tracts of land were considerable for, as Marshall points out, 'Even the pure landowners were not necessarily concerned with agricultural interests. Land produced not only cattle and crops and wool, it was also the source of raw materials vital for industry, such as iron ores, copper, tin and lead, and the ultimate supplier of all fuel, both wood, charcoal and coal'.⁸

The aristocracy were not the only landowners; there were in addition the gentry, and the freeholders. The latter were farmers, usually holding fairly small pieces of land, but the former were often quite wealthy, possessing sizeable estates. Writing of the gentry, Mingay states 'What distinguished them from the smallest landowners and farmers was that an unearned income from rents, mortgages or other investments, supplemented perhaps by the profits of office or a profession, enabled them to live the comfortable and more leisured life of a gentleman'.⁹ The main point is, that the gentry were part of the 'landed interest', and can be considered as part of the ruling class. As Webb suggests, 'for all the differences that marked off one rank from another in the upper strata of society, more characteristics bound them together'. Political activity ensured ties between

the aristocracy and the gentry, but as Webb continues, 'the most basic tie that joined the upper classes in English society together was their basic dependence on land'.¹⁰ This is not to suggest that there were not often marked differences in wealth between the aristocracy and the gentry for, as Speck notes, 'Life at the top of the landed class, in the episcopal palaces and stately homes, was marked by a level of conspicuous consumption which set the really substantial landowner apart from the rest of the population, including even the bulk of the gentry'.¹¹ Nevertheless, the two groups were part of a ruling class - in spite of the fact that, generally, the gentry were decidedly 'junior' partners.

In addition to this section of the ruling class, there were also the wealthy upper-bourgeois merchants, financiers, and government employees; as noted previously, many of those with land were - in one way or another - connected to interests outside of agriculture and, as Webb rightly argues, 'there never existed in England the sharp distinction between landed society and the world of business that existed in nearly all Continental countries'.¹² Therefore, according to Mingay, 'the interconnexions between landed and mercantile wealth inclined the governing class towards a broad view of what constituted the national interest'. Consequently, 'No great hostility...arose from the under-representation of the merchants and industrialists'.¹³ The 'breadth' of this view was just sufficient to include all the members of the upper class, whether aristocracy, gentry, or upper bourgeoisie. The connections between land and business took a number of different forms; apart from shared economic interests, notes Mingay, 'The more successful business families frequently bought estates or married their daughters into the aristocracy, while

the younger sons of the lesser landowners commonly made their way in trade and the professions'.¹⁴ So, when one takes into account all sections of the ruling elite, it is clear that very few people had any political influence in eighteenth-century England; Speck concludes that - by the mid-eighteenth century - 'even including the business and professional men with whom the landed proprietors had to share power, those who controlled the machinery of government both national and local seem to have represented a narrow oligarchy, forming a homogeneous, not to say, monolithic, ruling class'.¹⁵

It is extremely difficult to accurately assess the wealth/income of the ruling class; Mingay estimates that there were approximately 400 families owning estates which yielded £5,000-£6,000 (this includes the peerage and upper gentry), and 'thousands' of families possessing land worth up to £5,000 per annum. But, one way or another, many of the aristocracy must have had greater incomes than the figures above suggest. For example, Speck tells us that 'It cost the Earl of Nottingham £32,000 to endow his daughters. Around 1750 a premium to a reputable London lawyer to take on a younger son as a clerk could cost over £600'.¹⁶ In estimating the income of the gentry, Cowie puts it at £300-£2,000, far less than the vague 'under £5,000 figure given by Mingay'.¹⁷ Speck claims that wealthy merchants - although socially inferior to government officials or 'civil servants', who earned from £40 to £1,000 per year - were often extremely affluent, and gives examples of merchants earning £3,000 and £4,000 respectively.¹⁸ He places industrialists and manufacturers at around £200 per annum, with lawyers and lesser merchants at £154.¹⁹ Perhaps the only thing we can be completely certain about regarding income, is that every one of the groups considered above

procured fantastically large incomes compared to members of the working class. Cowie's assesment of their wages is as follows: agricultural labourer - 7s/6d per week (average); skilled craftsmen - £1 to £4 per week; other skilled workers - 12s to 15s per week; labourers (town) - 10s per week; women workers - 3s to 8s per week.²⁰ We will consider the working class in more detail below; now we turn to the middle classes.

Of the middle classes, George writes 'If the position of the nobility and gentry was fortunate, the great body of the middle classes had no reason to quarrel with their lot. An expanding economy was producing ever-increasing opportunities for making money, and ever-growing amenities on which to spend it'.²¹ The upper bourgeoisie have been included in the ruling class, above, for, there were significant connections between the respective groups. However, as Mingay has noted, absorption of the upper bourgeoisie by the aristocracy and gentry could not be unlimited; as the century proceeded, a smaller proportion were thus socially mobile and, 'The urban middle class was not only growing in size but developing its own class consciousness. It was becoming a distinct third group in society, proud of its mercantile wealth and urban background, building its own culture and traditions and beginning to seek political power and independence'.²² But this was towards the end of the century; for most of our period the middle classes - whilst envying and even, perhaps, resenting the upper class - were content to defer to the elite, secure in the thought that, if they could make enough money, they might one day join those exalted ranks. As Mingay observes when discussing the bourgeois merchants and the landowners 'In the eighteenth century...there was little real disharmony between them'.²³

For a number of reasons, the middle class were not as unified as the ruling class; Cowie writes, 'They formed a less cohesive group than the nobility and gentry. They differed greatly in wealth, occupation and way of life, and there was a further distinction between those in the country and those in the town'.²⁴ As Cowie goes on to explain, in the country, members of the middle class included millers, innkeepers etc and - more importantly - farmers with 100-500 acres. From the mid-eighteenth century, agriculture was flourishing; the increase in population meant an increase in the demand for produce, and the improved system of transport which was being developed meant wider markets for the farmers.²⁵ For those of the bourgeoisie who lived in the towns,

Growing national wealth, larger commercial and industrial organizations and almost continuous warfare were among the factors which raised the numbers and status of lawyers, physicians, civil servants, clergymen, soldiers, sailors, architects and schoolmasters, whose ranks were recruited from both the gentry and the middle classes. From the beginning of the [Hanoverian] period most of the country's trade was managed by middle-class men who ranged from private bankers, shopkeepers, ironmongers, linendrapers and other fairly substantial urban figures to the great and wealthy directors who controlled companies concerned with trade, banking, insurance and every form of overseas commerce, in London, Bristol, Norwich, Hull and Liverpool .²⁶

As we have seen above, even a lesser merchant from this class was likely to make around £154 per annum, and some of the more successful members of the class could match fortunes with the gentry and quite a few of the aristocracy.

A more conscious and united middle class was not to appear until the nineteenth century, yet, according to Cowie,

Despite their heterogeneity, the members of the middle classes had much in common, especially those who had improved their own circumstances. They believed in hard work, discipline, frugality and order. They regarded the lavish spending of the upper classes as wrongfully self-indulgent and, indeed, often were not educated enough

to enjoy expensive tastes. They resented the inefficiency and undemocratic nature of the country's governmental institutions and became strong supporters of efforts to reform them.²⁷

Whether the middle classes had sufficient education to enjoy expensive tastes or not remains questionable; what is not in question is that a large number of this class were quite willing to give the aristocratic way of life a try, should the opportunity arise. It must also be noted that, rather than simply being against inefficiency and for democracy, it would be more accurate to state that the middle classes were largely interested in 'democracy' only insofar as it was a means by which to increase their own power, status, and wealth; they showed little interest - even in the nineteenth century - in extending democracy to the point of, for example, universal suffrage. However, the attitudes which Cowie attributes to the bourgeoisie are described similarly by the majority of historians of the period; Stone comments on the middle class as follows, 'their whole way of life is based on a strict code of personal behaviour, emphasizing thrift, hard work and moral self-righteousness'.²⁸ He goes on to note their apparent taste for nonconformity and didactic religious works thus dealing - to some extent - with the issue of 'elective affinity' between this class, religion (of the radical-Protestant variety), and capitalism, in a manner clearly influenced by Weber. More importantly, Stone gives a detailed account of the way in which the bourgeoisie managed to successfully establish many of their norms and values amongst the ruling class; it is in this fact that the significance of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie lies. For, as Stone remarks, 'There had been bourgeois cultures before and elsewhere, but nowhere else had they spread their values through the landed elite as well'.²⁹

In contrast to both the ruling class and the bourgeoisie 'The vast majority of Englishmen lived on the verge of violence, starvation, degradation, and sudden death', according to Webb.³⁰ Cowie suggests, reassuringly, that 'The poorer workers knew poverty and hunger, but few died of want'.³¹ However, the general consensus seems to be that the working class typically suffered severe, and sometimes fatal, deprivation. Marshall, for example, writes 'Their standard of living ranged from a crude sufficiency to the most absolute destitution that ended in death by exposure and starvation'.³² Poverty was certainly rife amongst this class; as Hill argues, 'At the beginning of the eighteenth century more than one in five of the population was receiving poor relief, though real wages had risen for all but the poorest'. And, 'There was probably a growth of pauperism in the early eighteenth century. After 1722 paupers who refused the workhouse test could be denied relief. The increasingly savage penalties for offences against property in the thirties and forties (and the game laws) perhaps testify to growing pauperization. By 1740 it was a capital offence to steal property worth 1s'.³³ Whether working or receiving poor relief, most English men and women (and their children) lived in wretched conditions, largely ignored by the middle and upper classes - except in times of 'riot', 'mob' activity and so on. As Webb states, 'No one in the eighteenth century thought that poverty could be abolished or even much reduced: the belief in a naturally ordered society of high and low was strongly ingrained and reinforced by Biblical assurances that the poor will always be with us'.³⁴

There has been much discussion of how far enclosures during the eighteenth century affected rural workers and poor subsistence far-

mers; bourgeois commentators have tended to stress the long-term 'benefits' of enclosure as part of a 'rationalization' of farming techniques and so on, whilst progressives, following Marx, have - whilst recognizing the progressive aspect of such changes - concentrated on the disruptive and impoverishing effect which the practice had upon the rural poor. Whilst one may argue for evermore as to the exact degree to which enclosure adversely affected the poorer sections of rural society, there can be little doubt that they were made to suffer by enclosure. As Hill has pointed out, 'Enclosure of commons was praised by contemporaries because it forced labourers to "work every day in the year"; "their children will be put out to labour early". By depriving the lower orders of any chance of economic independence, the "subordination of the lower ranks of society... would be thereby considerably secured". (These illuminating phrases come from official Board of Agriculture reports.)'.³⁵ Such extracts clearly show that the wealthier contemporaries of the rural poor were well aware that enclosure caused hardship, and functioned as a means of social control.

For the working class, whether rural or urban, the middle and upper classes had little concern, and far less sympathy; Jarrett writes, 'it was their business to stay dutifully where God and their superiors had placed them, even though their numbers made up the bulk of the population and their labours produced the bulk of its wealth'.³⁶ Of course, the exploited sometimes demonstrated their discontent - much to the horror of their superiors; nevertheless, as Webb explains,

this turbulence was tamed or diverted in a variety of ways. In the countryside, where the sway of the landed classes was more or less complete, a natural, expected deference complemented the exercise of what was called just or legitimate influence, the accepted rightful-

ness of the rule of superior over inferior, enforced, where it did not work automatically, by the judicial power of the gentlemen of England in their guise as justices of the peace. Nor was such legitimate influence unknown to the towns, in transmuted forms.³⁷

The working class had no means - which were both legal and effective - of defending their various interests; Mingay states, 'The poverty of the mass of labourers, artisans, and petty traders of course disqualified them from participation in politics, and prevented effective access to the courts'. Therefore, he concludes, 'The remedy of the property-less and unenfranchised was to riot'.³⁸ But this is not all that such workers did; they may have been outside of parliamentary politics, but they were not excluded from politics of an extra-parliamentary nature. In fact, they attempted to form what would now be called trades-unions, but as Hill claims

The great power of the state and the employing class was brought to bear against any attempt by working men to organize to protect their position. In 1719 workmen (but not investors) were forbidden to take their skills into another country. By an act of 1726 combinations of workers were severely repressed: fourteen years transportation for using violence in labour disputes, death for wilful machine-breaking. But employers had the right to combine, "with the utmost silence and secrecy," says Adam Smith, to "sink the wages of labour".³⁹

Additionally, 'Employers could bring actions for conspiracy against members of trade-unions, and could prosecute individuals for stopping work. Nevertheless, among skilled or semi-skilled workers there were already some fairly strong trade-unions, often disguised as clubs or friendly societies, providing sick and funeral benefits'.⁴⁰ By and large, however, there is no question that the working classes were unable to effectively challenge the power of their social, economic, and political superiors; consequently, they were ruthlessly exploited.

WOMEN

Outside of fiction and the increasingly leisured world of the middle and upper class woman, work was a necessity and, as George points out, 'When we reach the level of the "labouring poor" it can almost be said that there is no work too heavy or disagreeable to be done by women, provided it is also ill-paid'.⁴¹ Women were, according to George, engaged in all sorts of 'manual' work; apart from domestic service, there were female butchers, weavers, fruit-pickers, refuse-collectors, watch-gilders (an unhealthy occupation), washer-women and so on. Pay and conditions were, almost without exception, extremely bad; women rarely worked shorter hours than men, but they always received far lower wages - for example, female fruit-pickers earned 5s to 7s per week, whilst men employed in the same task were paid 10s to 12s.⁴² Cowie, writing of the employment of women and children in cotton mills, states that they were employed 'because they were more docile, their wages were lower, and their nimble fingers and shorter stature enabled them to undertake delicate threading tasks among the machinery'. And, he adds, 'Discipline was imposed upon them by physical punishment'.⁴³ There was no question of working class women being removed from the economy, as George makes clear

The wife was expected to contribute to the family income. The wife of a day labourer usually hawked fruit or fish or carried loads through the streets from the markets - these were especially the occupations of Irish women who were as a rule unable to sew or even go out charing, washing or "nurse-keeping" as English labourers' wives often did. The journeyman's wife in trades where women were not employed often had a small shop or took in washing or needlework. A shopkeeper's wife generally served in the shop or superintended it unless she had a business of her own; if she had been a widow she frequently continued in nominal or actual charge of her first husband's business. Marriage was a business partnership - the wife's portion was often the means of setting her husband up as a master. It was only the well-to-do shopkeeper's wife whose dowry had been a

large one who was considered entitled to be relieved from the obligation of work in house or shop.⁴⁴

George is here writing of women in London, but the position of women in the economy was - with some regional variation in actual tasks performed - much the same throughout England. Domestic servants and apprentices (often female) were more or less at the mercy of their employers; Cowie states, for example, 'It was common for servant-girls and apprentices to have their clothes turned up or down and be smacked or whipped in drawing-room or shop'.⁴⁵ And Jarret, noting the infamous Brownrigg case - wherein two female apprentices were tortured and murdered - comments upon the fact that no protective legislation to guard against such abuse was forthcoming, 'Nothing was done and domestic servants continued to be subject to terrorization on the one hand and lechery on the other'.⁴⁶

In rural areas, by the late eighteenth century, the larger farmers were fairly prosperous; the uses to which they put their prosperity seem to have consisted in trying to make their children grander, and taking their wives out of the world of work. Cowie writes of this group, 'Their wives, instead of themselves making butter, curing bacon and brewing beer, began to content themselves with supervising the performance of such menial tasks by hired servants'.⁴⁷ However, during the eighteenth century, agriculture became less dominant in the economy and for many of the labouring class, escape from the village to the town was the only possibility by which they might improve their lot. As noted above, women had to perform arduous tasks wherever they lived - unless they belonged to the upper or middle classes - and both contemporary documents and subsequent historians have frequently commented upon the influx of young people

from the countryside into the towns. Many women sought positions as domestic servants in London and other towns; Jarrett suggests that 'The figure of the country girl who came to London looking for honest work and finishing up as a whore was in fact one of the standard archetypes of eighteenth-century England'.⁴⁸ So, leaving rural poverty for the town held no guarantee of improving one's status or finances; George, discussing eighteenth-century women generally, writes 'the hardships of the age bore with especial weight on them. Social conditions tended to produce a high proportion of widows, deserted wives, and unmarried mothers, while womens' occupations were over-stocked, ill-paid and irregular'.⁴⁹ In fact, there was a 'surplus' of women in eighteenth-century England and this doubtless played its part in exacerbating prostitution and illegitimacy, and making marriage a female preoccupation of an almost obsessive nature.

There seems to have been a definite tendency for men from the eighteenth-century upper class to view women - particularly those of the working class - almost solely as a means of pleasure. Adburgham comments, 'there is a mass of evidence to show that seduction was a sport that was tacitly approved, even admired - a sport that kept rich and leisured gentlemen amused and exercised out of the fox-hunting season'. However, it was not only working class women who were considered to be a legitimate target; Adburgham continues, 'No one expected them to marry their quarry, even if the victim were a girl of gentle birth who had been persuaded to elope in the belief that she was going straight to a marriage ceremony after climbing over her father's garden wall'.⁵⁰

The consequences of being seduced were high for all classes of women; bourgeois women might forfeit the chance of a 'good' (or in-

deed any) marriage and face being disowned by their relatives; working women in a similar plight might find themselves unable to get references (necessary for getting employment as a servant in any respectable household) and thus be pushed towards petty crime and/or prostitution. In cases where a working woman conceived, she also ran the risk of being subjected to physical punishment. Cowie states that 'Illegitimate children were common in all classes', and gives an example of the attitude taken towards working-class unmarried-mothers, 'In 1766 the Poor Law authorities of Gloucester, "for the discouragement of bastardy", ordered that "mothers of base-born children" chargeable to the parish should receive a public whipping of fifty lashes'.⁵¹ Cases in which the woman was not prepared to reveal the identity of her sexual partner were treated with considerable callousness, as Stone records, 'A common practice was for the midwife and some local women to cross-question the mother during labour, refusing to come to her help in her agony until she revealed the name of the father. Indeed the midwives' oath of 1726 imposed this duty upon them'.⁵² But it was not only the mother who was liable to suffer, 'Because of the tremendous incentive to the mother to conceal the birth, the child was likely to be murdered in the first few hours, or abandoned in the street, either to die there or to be dumped in a workhouse where the prospects of survival were not much better'.⁵³ Quite apart from the social stigma and other penalties associated with unmarried pregnancy, the unmarried mother shared with her more respectable sisters the many dangers attending childbirth; as Cowie states, 'Among women in all classes deaths in childbirth were frequent'.⁵⁴ Likewise, Stone remarks, 'For women, childbirth was a very dangerous experience, for midwives were ignorant and ill-trained,

and often horribly botched the job, while the lack of hygienic precautions meant that puerperal fever was a frequent sequel'.⁵⁵

Prostitution appears to have been the most thriving and easily accessible occupation for women and there were, as Jarrett argues, 'tremendous differences within the ranks of the 50,000 who ranged from fashionable courtesans down to common streetwalkers'.⁵⁶ This estimate of 50,000 prostitutes seems to be generally accepted by historians: it should be remembered that the figure applies to London alone, in the latter part of the century, and that it includes 'the wives of artisans and others who lived partly by prostitution'.⁵⁷

Although there were a number of social factors behind the high level of such sexual activity (for example, the surplus of women; the late age of marriage for men etc), which were outside of the individuals' control, this did not prevent the authorities - who typically held a fairly complacent attitude towards 'vice' in the city - from conducting the occasional purge; Cowie states that 'In London the Lord Mayor and Aldermen every now and then tried to clear the streets of prostitutes, sending the worst to be whipped or put to hard labour'.⁵⁸

As suggested previously, many working class women were, for one reason or another, drawn towards this degrading occupation as a means of survival. Stone writes of these unfortunates 'The rising tide of pregnant and abandoned young women, many of whom drifted into the disease-ridden and futureless profession of prostitution, were tragic victims of sexual exploitation, particularly since there is evidence of an association of pre-nuptial pregnancy not only with economic dependence and low social status but also with illiteracy'.⁵⁹

As noted previously, there was a high ratio of females to males during the eighteenth century and this, in conjunction with other

factors such as the decreasing participation of women in the economy, meant that there were a growing number of spinsters. Having no apparent function, these women came to be seen as a burden on their families and a general problem to the society; they thus became figures of fun, often subjected to sharp satirization in both novels and drama. As a woman's status was determined by her kinship to males, this ensured that a woman without a husband was often in the position of being a mere dependent, whilst the woman with no close male relative was (unless very wealthy and eminent) held in contempt by almost everyone. Jarrett writes, 'One of the less-publicized results of the Protestant reformation was the fact that Englishwomen no longer had any refuge other than marriage'.⁶⁰ During the late seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries, proposals were made (by Mary Astell et al) suggesting that small communities of women could live together for the purpose of pursuing religious devotion and, incidentally, thus remove themselves from the wider society in which they were considered a nuisance. But these proposed solutions were viewed by many as being nothing more than an attempt to re-establish the nunneries removed by the Dissolution. The nunneries had performed a useful social function by providing a mode of living for genteel women unable or unwilling to marry, but as feeling against Catholicism remained high in eighteenth-century England, any scheme involving the creation of institutions which might be seen as similar to those of 'Popery' met with no success. The - essentially middle and upper class - spinster problem was not solved, but there were important reasons for this; Stone argues, 'The three obstacles to any solution of the spinster problem were social snobbery, which made most business occupations beyond the pale for a girl of genteel up-

bringing; the non-vocational educational training of women; and the lack of openings in the professions or even as clerks'.⁶¹ An additional consequence of 'social snobbery' did, in conjunction with the sexual double-standard, further exacerbate the problem by making marriage between women of the middle or upper classes with men of lower social status taboo. As Adburgham suggests, 'Wealth and position was the criterion for an eligible husband, not character, disposition, intelligence, or suitable age'.⁶² And Jarrett concludes, 'However unpleasant marriage might have been for many women, it was at least a destination, a state of definite arrival rather than an indefinite period of waiting. Whether marriage was heaven or hell, there was little doubt in the minds of most males that spinsterdom was a limbo from which women should be only too glad to escape'.⁶³ All of the evidence indicates that many eighteenth-century women shared this view which Jarrett attributes to their male counterparts.

Even those women who did marry were by no means sure of gaining any economic or social stability; prior to the Marriage Act of 1753, marriages were carried out with the utmost informality and - often - recklessness. As George writes of the so-called 'Fleet' marriages, 'The practice was a direct incitement to bigamy, fictitious marriage for purposes of seduction, or marriage as the result of a drunken frolic. By persuasion, force, or fraud, women were taken to the purlieus of the Fleet, and there married, to be stripped of their fortune and deserted. Heirs (of either sex) were entrapped by fortune hunters'.⁶⁴ However, in cases where the marriage was perfectly legal and valid, women did not have the same freedom as men:

It was infinitely easier for a man to rid himself of a wife who committed adultery on a single occasion than it was for a woman to escape

from a husband who was habitually unfaithful to her. This was equally true at the bottom of the social scale, where the colourful but unpleasant custom of selling wives still persisted in some places.

And, Jarrett continues,

Only in the middle ranks of society, where people were too poor to obtain Acts of Parliament but too proud to sell their wives in the market place, was there no escape at all. It was no wonder that middle-class wives had a reputation for contentment: they had no choice.⁶⁵

The only thing to add to this is the reminder that - in all classes - women had little choice in the matter of divorce.

Discussing the differing attitudes towards marriage held by the various classes, Clinton has claimed that

For the nobility, the importance of marriage and family lay primarily in lineage and property concerns, and arranged marriages were the norm. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, attached more of an emotional significance to the family unit, domesticity and conjugal affection. Furthermore, unlike the nobility, the middle-class placed a great premium on female chastity and marital fidelity. Combining the bourgeois emphasis on companionship and mutual affection and the upper-class conception of a contractual agreement, John Locke defined marriage as a voluntary compact between a man and woman in which they shared a "communion of interests".⁶⁶

This statement is in need of some amendment, however. Firstly, there is much evidence to suggest that - as a residue of Puritan influence - choice of marriage partner was, throughout the century, becoming the prerogative of the participants rather than their parents or elder relatives; as Stone puts it, 'public opinion in landed and bourgeois circles in the late eighteenth century was turning decisively against parental dictation of a marriage partner'.⁶⁷ And, this comparative freedom meant that even if the idea of the contract was still strong in upper-class circles, it did not dominate to the point where it outweighed 'mutual affection', which was not solely a bourgeois value. Moreover, whilst there does appear to have been a more lax

attitude towards post-marital conduct amongst the aristocracy (as compared to the bourgeoisie), both classes viewed pre-marital female virginity as an absolute pre-condition for marriage. If the nobility had not shared this notion, then their concern with lineage would have been entirely nonsensical, as they would have failed to take account of the importance of determining paternity - the very basis of the double-standard.

As for the lower-middle-class, individuals here typically made their own choice of marriage partner for, Stone maintains, any economic or other leverage which parents in this class once possessed had already declined by the end of the seventeenth century. Likewise, men and women of the working class - whilst forced by their circumstances to take account of the economic consequences of marriage - chose their own spouses.

Any education which women received was, not surprisingly, aimed at making them desirable marriage-partners; there were schools specifically for the highest ranks of the ruling class, but as Cowie notes, 'In these fashionable, expensive schools the standard of education was usually low', and 'There were also schools for middle-class girls, who were prepared for marriage in their station of life'; nevertheless, girls at this level were not overburdened academically for, 'Learning for upper and middle-class girls was thought to endanger their matrimonial prospects; "bluestocking" was an opprobrious term'.⁶⁸ Young women then, were taught to cultivate appearance in such places, not thought; Stone remarks, 'By the late eighteenth century, the ideal of feminine beauty and deportment was extreme slimness, a pale complexion and slow languid movements, all of which were deliberately inculcated in the most expensive boarding

schools'.⁶⁹ For women beneath this social level, yet far above the position of the majority (that is, the labouring women), there was little if any formal education beyond learning how to read and write; however, in the latter part of the century there were many publications directed towards them. Adburgham comments on these, 'it was towards the high purpose of making good wives out of women that the great majority of magazines devoted the greater part of their space'.⁷⁰ Working-class women were, of course, lucky if they could read; most could not, and many received no formal education whatsoever.

RELIGION

Clearly, the subject of religion in eighteenth-century England is a vast one which cannot be dealt with in any detail here; as the novels which I have examined appear from 1740 onwards, and typically only refer (except in passing) to the religion of the Church of England and its ministers, Anglicanism from 1740-1800 will be the main focus of the following section.

Firstly, it is undisputed that the eighteenth-century Anglican clergy were not generally held in high esteem; as Sykes puts it, 'That the clergy as an order were very generally disliked and despised is undeniable'.⁷¹ The reasons for this dislike were numerous, but some of the more important factors involved centred around the institutional abuses embedded within the Church of England. As Sykes suggests, the most common charge against the clergy concerned 'episcopal negligence', usually in the form of non-residence. This non-residence was itself, Cragg maintains, a consequence of pluralism (whereby one man could be in possession of several 'livings'); plu-

ralism was not an eighteenth-century innovation, continues Cragg,

But in the eighteenth century the scramble for places became more intense, and the rewards of success more spectacular. Moreover, we must remember that in the eighteenth century the scions of noble houses again begin to appear in the ranks of the "dignified clergy", and an age acutely conscious of the gradations of nobility assumed that a peer's son could rightly hold more places of profit than a commoner.⁷²

And, as Overton points out, 'Pluralities and non-residence being thus so common among the very men whose special duty it was to prevent them, one can hardly wonder that the evil prevailed to a sad extent among the lower clergy'.⁷³ Different commentators have made varying estimates of the extent of non-residence, and the degree to which curates were employed to fulfil the obligations of the absentee; Gilbert has argued that

The organizational and human resources of Anglicanism changed scarcely at all between 1740 and 1812, when a parliamentary inquiry discovered that there were 4,813 incumbents who were non-residents and not performing the duties of their living, but only 3,694 curates serving non-resident incumbents. Over 1,000 parishes, in short, were simply unattended by ministers of the Established Church.

According to Gilbert, this negligence was not a new phenomenon, consequently,

By 1740 habits of indifference stretching back several generations had become embedded in the structures of many local communities.⁷⁴

Doubtless, the successes of eighteenth-century Methodism were - in at least some areas - made possible by the complacency of the Church for, it was not simply that some communities were uninterested in religion: some were (according to Hannah More et al) completely ignorant of the most basic teachings of Anglicanism.

Further reasons for the sceptical attitude with which the Church and the clergy were viewed were the practice of translation (moving from one see to another as a means of improving one's finances), the

obvious political bias of the Church's ministers, and the recognition that clergymen were directly involved in the business of social control. However, if many perceived Anglican ministers as all equally worthy of contempt, there were nevertheless considerable differences in the status and life-style of the higher and lower clergy.

Carpenter, describing the system of 'prizes and blanks' attributed to the Church, states 'The prizes, which mostly went by favour, were few, and even for the pittance the demand greatly exceeded the supply. There were too many clergymen, a fact which caused many to become place-hunters and drove some to accept even the most beggarly curacies'.⁷⁵

As Sykes has suggested, 'The differences which separated the several grades of clergy were too wide and deep to admit of easy generalization concerning the social position of their order in Hanoverian England. To the fortunate minority, possessed of prebends and other cathedral dignities, both wealth and position were accorded in good measure'.⁷⁶

Similarly, Overton writes, 'While the most eminent or most fortunate among them could take their places on a stand of perfect equality with the highest nobles in the land, the bulk of the country curates and poorer incumbents hardly rose above the rank of the small farmer'.⁷⁷

Apart from the higher ranks of the clergy - many of whom lived in luxury - there were those of the middle grade who, according to Sykes, received about £300 per annum for their services.⁷⁸

Below this group were the comparatively poor ministers who might consider themselves lucky to earn £50 or so in a year, and finally, the assistant-curates who, Carpenter estimates, 'might receive as little as £24 per annum'.⁷⁹

Many Anglican ministers were probably a part of what Sykes has termed 'the depressed majority', some of whom lived from hand-to-mouth in near squalor.⁸⁰

Writing of the eighteenth-century Church, Cragg has stated, 'Church and State, in intimate association, worked together in an alliance which was usually inequitable but which was seldom dishonourable. The bishop in his palace and the rector in his parsonage were an integral part of the social scene'.⁸¹ The relationship between Church and State was certainly 'inequitable', for the power of the former was in almost continuous decline after the Revolution; however, comforting as Cragg's assurance regarding the nature of this alliance might be, it is also highly debatable. If it was not dishonourable for the Church to play the lackey to the State, that is, to the ruling class and its policies, by acting in accordance with the interests of this class to the detriment of the vast majority of English men and women, then the Church is acquitted. Likewise, the fact that Anglican ministers acted as ideologists to convince working people of the justness and inevitability of their impoverished and laborious lives, and also made vindications for the wealthy does not - if one supposes this to be justifiable - detract from the position of the Church. But unlike Cragg, I would claim that the function of the Church during this period was to contribute to the enforcement and acceptance of social control: a control necessary to further exploit and dominate the English working class.

Considering the relation between the clergy and politics in the eighteenth century, Overton has stated, 'As a rule, the political influence of the clergy was not very wisely exercised'.⁸² And, he goes on to add

The keen interest which the clergy took in politics, especially such as were supposed to affect the Church, sometimes led them to forget their sacred characters and to connive at, if not sanction, the immoralities of men who atoned for their irregularities by defending the temporalities of the Church.



Therefore, he concludes

It would have been well if the clergy had, as a rule, been as active and earnest in their proper work as many of them were in political business. But, with many honourable exceptions, they showed a sad apathy in the performance of their clerical functions. 83

Carpenter has argued that, 'the power of the clergy in affecting public life, and especially at election times, was so considerable that both political parties, not only in Anne's reign but thereafter, were eager to appear as the true friends of the Church'.⁸⁴ Whilst there is some truth in this - for even though the power of the Church had declined, it was far from impotent - it is equally important to note, as Gilbert points out, 'By 1740 more than two centuries of conflict and change had left the Church dependent on the State, the parson subordinate to the squire, and once-powerful ecclesiastical courts bankrupt of independent coercive power. The fate of Anglicanism rested as much on the policies of its secular patrons as on the endeavours of its clergy'.⁸⁵ And, even Cragg has some perception of of this dependence when he writes

The place of the bishops in parliament was the symbol of their intimate involvement in the political life of the age. They reached this position by the hard and uncertain ladder of promotion. Advancement was often dependent on access to the right patron, and, since patrons were usually swayed by political or social considerations, the churchman could never forget his involvement in the structure of the nation's life. The only way to climb was to solicit the good offices of those with influence.⁸⁶

All that needs to be added to this is the reminder that advancement was invariably, not merely 'often', 'dependent on access to the right patron'; the 'political and social considerations' which interested patrons were frequently financial and related to their own personal welfare rather than anything else. Soliciting the 'good offices of those with influence', in practice often meant abandoning any princi-

ples (personal or 'religious') which might upset a possible patron, and offering to subject the interests of the Church plus anyone or anything else to the whim of the influential person. Unfortunately, there is no necessary correspondence between moral excellence and influence, and this fact remained true in the eighteenth century. So, not surprisingly, those who were in a position to determine which Anglican ministers received promotion and lucrative posts were often totally unfit to exercise or control any public office whatsoever themselves. Moreover, they were well aware that being able to control appointments gave them a good deal of bargaining power in both personal and political relationships, and, they were not reticent in the use of such power to pursue their own ends.

Overton has claimed that, during the reign of the first two Georges, 'It is to be feared that politics at this period did more to debase the clergy than they did to elevate politics'.⁸⁷ However, the dubious ties between Anglicanism and political patronage continued throughout the century, influencing both high and low ministers. Cragg argues that 'Even the eighteenth-century politicians conceded that bishops had other tasks besides voting for their patrons in parliament. But the demands entailed in this kind of obligation made it almost impossible for bishops adequately to discharge their primarily religious duties'.⁸⁸ How far politicians were concerned with the religious duties of their Anglican colleagues is a matter for debate; nevertheless, there is no doubt that bishops were expected to spend at least six months of the year in London performing political services, and all of the evidence suggests that they had more concern for similar tasks in their local diocese, when they happened to be there. It would be absurd to think that the clergy were,

given the nature of their 'responsibilities', under any illusion regarding the primarily political character of their own respective roles, whether in town or country. As Cragg goes on to point out, 'a conscientious bishop would be on dining terms with all the leading gentry of the county'; there is nothing to indicate that they found this form of duty odious or even inconvenient.⁸⁹ Sykes rightly claims that

The exact point at which social intercourse with friends passed into the cultivation of political interest with the leading whig or tory magnates of the diocese was perhaps difficult of definition, but the obligation of the bishop to confer in a serious manner with the nobility and gentry of his particular persuasion, with a view to advancing the influence of their party, was unquestioned. The political authority of the episcopate was exercised no less powerfully in the country than in the house of lords itself.⁹⁰

And Sykes writes of the bishops,

The expectation of their assistance in forwarding the interests of their party in the election of members of parliament for constituencies situated within their territorial jurisdiction was a corollary of their political character in the house of lords, and in this respect the party chiefs accounted the bench amongst their most valuable allies. In an age when political education was imparted mainly through the pulpit, the ecclesiastical organization of which the bishop was head together with his widespread influence with the clergy of his diocese furnished the most practicable means of party organization then available throughout the country. Accordingly, few political ministers faced the fortunes of a general election without previous consultation and negotiation with their episcopal friends, nor were the majority of the episcopate unwilling to become partners in the enterprise.⁹¹

It is arguable as to whether the politically-tendentious sermonizing of the eighteenth-century English clergy can usefully be called 'education', but Sykes has correctly perceived the importance of the clergy in the area of party organization, and their readiness to play an active part in politics. The orientation of virtually all of the clergy was towards flattering and supporting those with financial and political power; Carpenter, for example, writes of this, 'The town

churches were intended for, and were filled by, the more prosperous citizens', and, 'The preachers aimed at pleasing the more cultured part of the congregation, and did little for the simple'. In particular, 'The London clergy were well aware that the more important members of their congregations were those whose influence might secure for the preacher promotion to a more lucrative cure'.⁹² But the obsequiousness of the clergy to the ruling class was not confined to London, as we shall see below.

Of the 10,000 or so parishes that existed in England during the eighteenth century, the greatest number were to be found in rural districts; here, what Gilbert has termed the 'squire-parson alliance' dictated the nature and extent of clerical activity in the community. Whilst the clergy were dominated to a large degree by such secular patronage, this was not - in practice - without advantage for the Church of England; Gilbert writes,

It was greatly to the advantage of the Church that political authority and social control were highly localized in eighteenth-century England. The Anglican clergy, who since the Reformation and particularly since 1689 had witnessed the gradual erosion of their traditional independent authority over the moral and religious behaviour of their parishioners, very often remained in a position to dictate religious norms by virtue of an alliance with local ruling elites. When a resident clergyman in a manageable parish enjoyed the wholehearted support of the local landowners and the magistracy, he could guarantee high rates of religious practice and make religious Dissent virtually untenable.

During the seventeenth century there had been a good deal of competition between the clergy and the squirearchy as they fought for dominance in such communities, but the ministers were destined to slowly lose the battle; from 1700 in particular,

further erosion of their independent influence and authority had predisposed the clergy to rely increasingly on the patronage of the lay ruling classes; and no longer threatened by clerical competition, the landed gentry had shown increasing readiness to welcome the local

parson as an ally.⁹³

The dominance of the Whigs in English politics throughout much of the eighteenth century was not to the advantage of the Church or the rural landowners, on the whole, for, as Gilbert indicates, these two groups were 'two parties with vested interests in preserving as much as possible of the pre-industrial status quo'.⁹⁴

The way in which the influence of the squire-parson alliance operated within the local community was not confined to the exercise of formal authority; Gilbert has described both the way in which this alliance functioned, and to what end,

The parson, like his lay counterpart, the gentleman landowner, in theory was an exemplar to the lower orders of morality, propriety, and patriotism; and even when theory and practice coincided only imperfectly, the alliance of squire and parson, operating through the informal "influence" of rank and status, through a variety of parish officers and institutions, or through the immense authority of the local magistracy, was able to exercise a clear leadership role in local societies. The preservation of the existing order, the maintenance of social harmony and social tranquillity: this was the raison d'etre of the Church of England as a religious establishment.⁹⁵

However, as Gilbert recognizes, if 'influence' was not always enough to ensure conformity and submission from the local population, more overt forms of coercion were at the disposal of the ruling class. Nevertheless, all of the various techniques employed in controlling subordinates depended - to a considerable extent - upon the successful legitimation of ruling class domination, as this guaranteed a generally deferential attitude on the part of the working class. In the latter part of the century such deference became harder to maintain because, Gilbert argues,

Instead of being accepted and even welcomed as socially useful, the paternalism of the squire-parson alliance, and especially its functions of social control, were provoking resentment from communities whose confidence in the traditional social orthodoxy had vanished.

An interesting index of this change was the tendency for "the mob" to become an enemy of the ruling classes, a variety of collective behaviour directed against the status quo. Previously it had been an instrument of the "dependency system", a conservative force.⁹⁶

To conclude, one can state that the Church of England performed an important service for the ruling class during the eighteenth century, primarily by organizing and directing clerical ideologists whose task was the exposition of religious doctrines and generally conservative political ideas to their audiences. Vindications for social, political, financial, and legal inequality plus admonitions against anyone who dared to question the social order were the tools which Anglican ministers employed, with some success, throughout the period.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NOVEL AND SOCIETY 1740-1800: REALISM;
AUTHORS AND READERS; INTENTION AND TECHNIQUE

THE NOVEL AND REALISM

As indicated previously, the eighteenth century was a period during which the ideology of individualism became firmly established in England. The driving force behind the promotion of this ideology was the increasingly prosperous bourgeoisie who, it is generally agreed, emerged as a powerful class throughout the century. One of the major cultural products which can be traced to the influence of this class is the novel as it developed in eighteenth-century England. It is not suggested here that the novel was suddenly produced as a finished form at some point in this period. Rather, it is argued that the gradual formation of the bourgeoisie as a distinct economic group in the preceding centuries, and their creation, articulation, and transmission of, especially, individualist ideology, provided the necessary intellectual scenario - and indeed, the actual reading public - which made possible that process which Ian Watt has termed 'the rise of the novel'.

Watt notes the connection between the appearance of the bourgeoisie and the subsequent emergence of the novel, and then goes on to argue that 'formal realism', which he sees as the defining characteristic of the novel, itself only occurs once individualism has come to challenge pre-capitalist notions of tradition and so on. He writes, 'from the Renaissance onwards, there was a growing tendency for individual experience to replace collective tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality; and this transition would seem to constitute an

important part of the general cultural background to the rise of the novel'.¹

According to Watt, literary forms prior to the novel not only rely upon reference to literary tradition in order to discern truth, but are also dependent upon plots drawn from 'past history or fable', these being employed within - and dependent upon - 'pre-established formal conventions'.² Therefore, he claims that

Defoe and Richardson are the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend, or previous literature. In this they differ from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, for instance, who, like the writers of Greece and Rome, habitually used traditional plots; and who did so, in the last analysis, because they accepted the general premise of their times that, since Nature is essentially complete and unchanging, its records, whether scriptural, legendary, or historical, constitute a definitive repertoire of human experience.³

The uniqueness of individual experience upon which the novel concentrates entails, continues Watt, that the novelist continually aims to show that which is both particular and new; thus the novel necessarily contradicts the assumptions which had hitherto informed literature.⁴ Typically, argues Watt, the novelist seeks to portray 'particular people in particular circumstances'; to give a detailed account of persons and their environment; and also tends to use proper rather than type names for characters; additionally, the novel usually draws upon contemporary (or near-contemporary) life. A further distinguishing feature of the form is, Watt suggests, that language is employed in a primarily referential way, rather than in a poetically decorative manner.⁵

Watt sees the focus upon the individual in the novel as a manifestation of the increasing interest in - and changing definition of - realism in eighteenth-century England, both in the realm of philosophy and that of literature. Regarding philosophy he states 'Mod-

ern realism...begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses: it has its origins in Descartes and Locke, and received its first full formulation by Thomas Reid in the middle of the century'.⁶ But whilst Watt wishes to suggest a connection between philosophical and literary realism, he does not want to imply that the former 'causes' the latter, nor does he suppose that literary realism adheres to 'specialized tenets' derived from philosophical realism.⁷ However, he does maintain that the change in literature outlined above 'was analogous to the rejection of universals and the emphasis on particulars which characterizes philosophical realism; moreover, what is significant about the novel in this context is that it is in keeping with 'the general temper of realist thought'.⁸

The fact that both eighteenth-century novelists and philosophers concentrated upon the individual in this way can be explained by reference to the wider cultural background and, more specifically for Watt, their shared aim, viz, 'the production of what purports to be an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals'.⁹ So, Watt concludes

Formal realism...is the narrative embodiment of a premise that Defoe and Richardson accepted very literally, but which is implicit in the novel form in general: the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its readers with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms.¹⁰

However implausible the contemporary reader may find the writings of eighteenth-century English novelists, there is little doubt that the authors themselves were (excluding the later writers of 'Gothic' and other fantastic tales) attempting to avoid the incredible or unbelie-

vable. Just what is deemed realistic will obviously vary historically and geographically; nevertheless, both eighteenth-century readers and authors saw the innovative writing of Richardson, Fielding et al as far more realistic than previous literature. All of the writers discussed here (with the exception of Bage) made claims for the realism of their novels, but this does not mean to say that they all adhered to exactly the same conception of realism, nor does it entail that realism was the only major principle guiding the construction of the novels. For example, the psychologically-oriented approach to character found in Pamela is largely absent from the other works examined, Burney's Evelina being the most similar in its use of psychological dramatization via the subjectivity of the major character. The realism of the other novels is rather more dependent upon their plausibility as credible stories told in a manner which does not strain the reader's sense of verisimilitude too severely. In every case, the author has made some effort (with greater or lesser success) to avoid the use of 'types' and to offer authentic and individualized characters involved in circumstances peculiar to them but, at least theoretically, possible for other people.

Perhaps equally as important as literary realism for these writers was the issue of didacticism; the authors clearly did not see themselves as simply writing believable fictions for their works contained moral exhortation, and they likewise frequently stated that their main purpose in writing was to convey moral teaching to their audience. It is important to remember this point when considering eighteenth-century English prose-fiction because, as Tompkins has observed, for writers, readers, and critics during this period 'the function of the novel was explicitly educational and...its main busi-

ness was to inculcate morality by example'; consequently, novels were expected to 'always show life subservient to moral law'.¹¹ Not all of the novelists of the age viewed their task with the seriousness implied by these strictures, but it is noteworthy that even Defoe - whose Moll Flanders and Roxana were probably read mainly for their accounts of loose-living and criminality - went through the motions of claiming a moral purpose for his novels.

If the realism associated with the eighteenth-century novel represented a break with earlier forms of literature, the concern of the authors to make a moral point in their fictions illustrates a degree of continuity with legend, mythology, biblical and folk tales. All of these forms typically provided both a story and a moral, the latter being equally, if not more, important; yet these previous modes of expressing fictional creativity did not aim to conform to formal realism. And, in the absence of the comparatively rigorous restrictions governing what might be taken as realistic in the novel, it is almost certainly easier to produce a story which perfectly illustrates a moral point. If, however, a writer seeks to construct a prose-fiction which adheres to formal realism and also articulates a moral message, there is likely to be some tension between the two aims. In eighteenth-century prose-fiction any clash between these two aims was usually resolved by the writer preserving the moral of the story at the risk of damaging the realism of the piece as a whole; in this way, pace Benjamin, the novel did - at least initially - have 'counsel' for its readers.¹²

AUTHORS AND READERS

Having briefly considered realism and didacticism, we must now

touch upon the question of whether the eighteenth-century English novel can or cannot justly be termed 'bourgeois'. When this label is applied it is usually in view of one or all of the following: 1) the author's social origins; 2) the class composition of the reading public to whom the work was directed; 3) the actual content of the novel - that is, whether or not the novel articulates ideas and/or portrays events which can be shown to be closely connected to bourgeois concerns.

Regarding the first of these criteria, one can cite the figures put forward by Raymond Williams, which indicate that during the period 1680-1730 thirteen out of nineteen English writers came from the professional (and thus, middle) class, four from the ranks of merchants, tradesmen and craftsmen (lower-middle-class), and two from the nobility and gentry. Between 1730-1780, eleven out of twenty-five had professional origins; two came from the nobility; additionally, there were four tradesmen, four farmers, three craftsmen, and one merchant. From 1780-1830, twenty-five out of fifty-seven writers had professional origins; one was from the nobility; eight from the gentry; there were also nine merchants, five tradesmen, five craftsmen, two poor farmers, and one labourer. To summarize, in the first period seventeen of the nineteen writers had middle-class origins; in the second period twenty-three of the twenty-five were middle class; in the final period forty-five out of fifty-seven were from the middle class. This preponderance of writers from the middle class does indicate the extent to which that class can be seen as the dominant force in the production of prose fiction during the eighteenth century.

The social origins of the authors included in this study were, in four cases, bourgeois, whilst three of the writers were from gentry families. Samuel Richardson's father was a joiner who employed three apprentices; prior to this the men of the Richardson family had been (for several generations) yeomen. Richardson himself was apprenticed to a printer, because his father could not afford to place him in the Church; however, the apprentice went on to become a master printer, married his employer's daughter, and was successful indeed. As Eaves and Kimpel state, 'Richardson's life was that of a conventional middle-class businessman'.¹³ In contrast, the father of Sarah and Henry Fielding was a general; he was also, according to Rogers, a 'Hanoverian rake'. Both of the parents were, however, from gentry families (with, in the father's case, some connection to the nobility) and the elder Fielding became - at one stage - a 'country squire'.¹⁴ Therefore, these two writers can be classed as having gentry origins. Another writer whose father became a country squire was Richard Graves, whose own occupational life was spent within the Anglican Church wherein he held the position of rector.¹⁵

Oliver Goldsmith's father was an Anglican curate, who owned a seventy acre farm; Goldsmith himself wanted to take orders, but was rejected. Prior to writing, Goldsmith did some menial jobs, but was more typically engaged in the middle-class occupations of tutor and physician.¹⁶ Fanny Burney's father was a member of the upper bourgeoisie; he was variously an organist (a fairly lucrative occupation at £100 per annum), a composer and music teacher and, subsequently, a music master for the fashionable. Additionally, he was a prominent music historian. Fanny, who was schooled in Paris, never had to work for her living.¹⁷ Lastly, we turn to Robert Bage who was a

paper-maker, as was his father; apart from having his own business, the younger Bage did, according to Scott, become involved in a partnership of businessmen seeking to establish an iron 'manufactory', which proved unsuccessful. It is noteworthy that Bage's letters frequently displayed the concerns of the employing businessman, and contain a number of references to the wage-demands of his employees: demands which never failed to alarm him.¹⁸ Of the authors under discussion then, four can be placed within the middle class using the class position of their respective fathers as the primary criterion for such a placing. In a similar way, both of the Fieldings and Graves would be counted as members of the gentry; if, however, one was to focus solely upon the class of the writer as being determined by his or her own relation to the means of production one might make a strong case for concluding that all of the writers were essentially members of the middle class. For, none of those writers considered here who came from gentry families actually lived primarily from income derived from land ownership, as did the gentry as a whole.

The reading public towards whom the eighteenth-century English novel was directed was undoubtedly mainly middle class in composition. As Williams has argued 'It is from the 1690s that the growth of a new kind of middle class reading public becomes evident, in direct relation to the growth in size and importance of a middle class defined as merchants, tradesmen, shopkeepers and administrative and clerical workers. New forms of reading, in the newspaper, the periodical and the magazine, account for the major expansion, and behind them comes the novel, in close relation to this particular public'.¹⁹ And, as Watt points out, whilst the reading public grew during the eighteenth century, 'it still did not normally extend much further down the

social scale than to tradesmen and shopkeepers, with the important exception of the more favoured apprentices and indoor servants'.²⁰ Although a small number of those below the middle class may have had the necessary skill, leisure, and access to books required in order to read novels, the vast majority of the population clearly did not.

Burke, states Watt, thought that the reading public numbered around 80,000 (out of a population of 6,000,000+) in the 1790s; Hemmings suggests that 'even by the end of the century there may have been no more than 100,000 persons in the country who could read print with any facility', and Williams even speculates 'it seems probable that general literacy did not increase, and may even have declined, in the period between the Restoration and the end of the eighteenth century'.²¹ The number of readers in the eighteenth century was by all estimates fairly small; smaller still was the number of book-buyers. Watt, working from the sale of the most popular books of the period, sees this buying public as merely 'tens of thousands', and goes on to point out how costly books were at the time.²² He concludes, 'The novel in the eighteenth century was closer to the economic capacity of the middle class additions to the reading public than were many of the established and respectable forms of literature and scholarship, but it was not, strictly speaking, a popular literary form'.²³ Hemmings, using the example of an inexpensive edition of Tom Jones (six volumes at 3s each), claims that it 'cost more than a labourer would earn in a week'; most labourers would have thought themselves lucky to earn something approaching half of this sum per week.²⁴ Nevertheless, one can agree with Williams when he writes 'book-buying was obviously socially limited, and it is very significant that the eighteenth-century public depended, to a considerable

extent, on devices of corporate buying', that is, book-clubs and societies, proprietary libraries and so on.²⁵

As the middle class were both the major writers and purchasers of novels in the eighteenth century it is hardly surprising that these writings were usually middle class in orientation. Readers above the ranks of the bourgeoisie undoubtedly bought some of the novels and, as indicated above, sometimes wrote them; however, they did not constitute the majority of readers or authors. Regarding those readers below the middle class, one can accept that some of these individuals had access to books owned by their employers, but such people certainly did not buy novels themselves. Any author who wished to sell his or her novels would therefore be unlikely to consider the literary desires of this small and economically insignificant part of the reading public, even if he or she was aware of those desires. Bourgeois authors apparently had little trouble in deciding what their public wanted for, as Watt has suggested of Defoe and Richardson, 'As middle class London tradesmen they had only to consult their own standards of form and content to be sure that what they wrote would appeal to a large audience'.²⁶ This is, perhaps, something of a simplification; nevertheless, it is basically correct.

So far then, we have seen that the second of the criteria listed at the beginning of this section was fulfilled; in other words, the class composition of the reading public was mainly bourgeois. The social origins of the authors generally likewise strengthen the case for terming the novel form bourgeois; of the writers examined in detail in this study three had gentry origins, but overall the gentry produced far fewer novelists than did the middle class. Moreover, as I have suggested above, a consideration of these gentry-bred

authors which took into account their relation to the means of production as being more important than that of their fathers, would probably lead one to deem them middle class. In either case, I wish to claim that the social origins and/or class position of any given author is not, ultimately, very important; as indicated previously, one can be an ideologist for a particular class without actually being a member of that class oneself. This applies just as much to the production of fictional prose writings as it does to that of political tracts etc. It is perfectly possible in principle for an aristocrat or an artisan to write a bourgeois novel, even though this might be somewhat unusual in practice. This arises from the fact that, in my opinion, the most salient feature of the bourgeois novel is its content: content which is always - regardless of how skillfully or artistically it is handled - an articulation of bourgeois concerns, seen from a bourgeois point of view. In this way, the bourgeois novel raises middle-class problems to which the author provides middle-class solutions. How far the content of the seven novels discussed here can be said to be bourgeois, and thus fulfil the third of the criteria outlined above should become clear in the following chapters.

INTENTION AND TECHNIQUE

Richardson, in his preface to the second part of Pamela, refers to the success of the original and 'hopes, that the Letters which compose this Part will be found equally written to NATURE, avoiding all romantic flights, improbable surprises, and irrational machinery; and the passions are touched, where requisite; and rules, equally new and practicable, inculcated throughout the whole, for the general

conduct of life'.²⁷ Here, it will be noted, Richardson is not only claiming that his work is realistic or authentic, but is also enthusiastically advertizing its didactic nature. Richardson's text - which, he stated, was based upon a true story which he had heard some years prior to the creation of Pamela - was presented as a series of letters written (mainly) by the central female character. Additional material appears as extracts from the diary or journal which the heroine composes. With the exception of a small section of the text in which Richardson intervenes to move the narrative along, and his drawing of moral conclusions at the close of the first part, there is no overt intrusion by the author qua author.²⁸ Therefore, the novel is essentially epistolary and told through the subjectivity of Pamela. In addition to the effect of immediacy which one might expect from first-person narrative, Richardson's writing does have a certain dramatic quality which arises from his frequent use of the present tense; as Eaves and Kimpel indicate, the author consciously made use of this technique which he termed 'writing to the moment'.²⁹ What is perhaps the most important feature of Pamela is Richardson's presentation of the heroine's feelings about her experiences and her reflections upon the religious beliefs which preoccupy her. As Dr Johnson once commented, 'if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment'.³⁰

Both the form and content of Pamela show some sign of radical-Protestant influence; indeed, Pamela's constant self-reflection bears a superficial resemblance to the process of dialogue between the self and the 'inner voice', which was associated with Puritanism. Not

only does Pamela refer frequently to religious matters, but moreover, her conception of the relation between herself and God rests upon assumptions which initially appeared within Protestantism. At times, what Richardson offers as her thoughts and emotions amounts to little more than sermonizing, but in the main his technique does achieve a degree of psychological realism which was quite innovative in the novel form. It is for this reason that the author could plausibly claim to have written according to nature, whilst still pursuing a didactic purpose; doubtless it was this aspect of Richardson's work which led eighteenth-century readers to appraise Pamela as realistic. In the second part of the novel Richardson appears to have run out of literary imagination, for it is more blatantly didactic than even the first part. In the absence of any major development in Pamela's story, the author fills his pages with extremely tedious moralizing and, on the most slender of pretexts, inserts, amongst other irrelevant matter, thirty-nine pages in which the heroine airs her views on Locke's Some Thoughts Concerning Education. As Tompkins has maintained, Richardson saw his novels as 'conduct-books' and furthermore 'a little solid information, on whatever pretext inserted, was always favourably received - at least by the critics'.³¹ Nevertheless, such overt didacticism in such quantity inevitably, I would suggest, interferes with the endeavour towards verisimilitude, and the second part of Pamela provides a good example of this; the immediacy of Pamela Part One is noticeably lacking in Richardson's sequel. Regarding the issue of the individual and social integration, one can state that Pamela represents the moral individualism associated with radical-Protestantism (and thus the bourgeoisie); this, and her humble origins place her outside of the

class in which Richardson wishes to place her, viz, the gentry. Throughout the novel B. - who represents the gentry - gradually comes to view Pamela as a worthy individual and, more significantly, begins to embrace the moral code which Pamela adheres to. Thus, concessions on the part of the gentry and the subsequent incorporation of Pamela by marriage allow her upward mobility and decide the question of her social integration.

When we turn to Sarah Fielding's David Simple we have to rely on the words of her brother, Henry, for an account of the author's intentions; he stated that 'the Merit of this Work consists in a vast Penetration into human Nature, and a profound Discernment of all the Mazes, Windings and Labrinths, which perplex the Heart of Man to such a degree, that he is himself often incapable of seeing through them'.³² Obviously, what is being claimed here is that David Simple contains some sort of psychological insight; according to Kelsall, in his introduction to the OUP edition of the novel, Richardson likewise believed that Sarah was 'a psychological novelist of the same kind as himself'.³³ However, as Kelsall recognizes, this was not the case; why both Henry Fielding and the author of Pamela should view Sarah's novel in this light is far from clear, unless it is because they accept the moralizing observations with which the work is riddled as the fruits of such insight. There can be no question of David Simple being similar to Richardson's novels, if for no other reason than the fact that Sarah Fielding's characters are little more than formal types, being static and undeveloped; they have none of the reflexivity or immediacy of Pamela. So, when Henry Fielding goes on to state that the characters in David Simple 'are as wonderfully drawn by the Writer, as they were by Nature herself', one can

only conclude that he was being extremely generous in his assessment of his favourite sister's work.³⁴ Unfortunately, the inadequate portrayal of character, the fragmentary nature of the overall composition, and the overtly didactic attitude of the author of David Simple result in an ambling would-be moralistic piece which fails to amount to a coherent critique of the very things which Sarah Fielding wished to attack. Perhaps, as Kelsall argues, Sarah 'is not really a novelist at all'; in any event, the book fares little better if one views it as a moral treatise, for it leads the reader from one example of folly or wickedness to another in the most arbitrary manner, to no useful literary or philosophical purpose.³⁵

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Henry Fielding claimed verisimilitude for the characters drawn by his sister, and likewise for the events contained within the novel 'the Incidents arising from this Fable, tho' often surprizing, are every where natural, (Credibility not once being shocked through the whole)'.³⁶ In the sense that the text does not introduce dragons, miracles and the like the claim is, of course, basically true; Sarah Fielding's failure with regard to what might be called realism is the result of her slender artistic ability, and not of any intention to portray the fantastic. The high value placed upon a work being realistic is apparent from Henry Fielding's preface; similarly, Jane Collier who - it is thought - wrote the preface to Sarah's sequel, Volume The Last, writes therein of 'real Life (which these kind of Writings intend to represent)'.³⁷ She goes on to point out the particularity of the author's project when she states 'Her Intention is not to show how any Man, but how such a Man would support himself under the worldly Misfortunes and Afflictions to which human-kind is liable'.³⁸ This points

up the idea that David is an exemplary character undergoing particular trials, and is not in any sense meant to be seen as a universal type.

Sarah Fielding's technique consists of employing an authorial overview with which she narrates the story of her hero, transporting him from one dire situation to another; she frequently speaks directly to the reader from this position and comments upon the action as it unfolds. Generally, the composition is scrappy and anecdotal - a fault which is exacerbated by the introduction of lengthy pieces such as the story of Isabelle (a character who, having told her story, plays no further part in the novel), which takes up fifty-four pages. Therefore, in both David Simple and its sequel, Volume The Last, one finds little in the way of development in either the story or the characters, the former being rather trivial and the latter decidedly wooden. David's singularity arises from his flawless character and his boundless naivety: he is frequently considered to be one of the first heroes of sensibility in view of these traits. The solution which Fielding would like to offer for the hero who finds himself in a world populated by the malicious and self-interested, would involve the institutional order remaining intact whilst individuals underwent change; yet presumably she saw this as impossible, for she ultimately relegated that 'solution' to the realm of hope. Having denied the possibility of integrating David into the wider society, Fielding can then only solve his dilemma by placing him outside of the mainstream of social activity in the company of a few similarly unworldly friends. However, even this escapist or retreatist alternative to the social integration of the individual is undermined by Volume The Last (published nine years later), in which David and most of his

friends and family meet unhappy endings. Thus, in Sarah Fielding's view the individual can neither be integrated within the society nor can he or she escape from it.

Henry Fielding clearly states his intention in writing Amelia, in the dedication to his patron, Ralph Allen; Fielding writes 'The following book is sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infest the country'.³⁹ So, at the outset Fielding has made it apparent that his work has a moral purpose which is not confined to illustrating characters worthy of imitation, but additionally seeks to provide a critique of institutionalized 'evils'. How far he can be said to have succeeded is debatable, but there is no doubt that in making the attempt Fielding helped to extend the scope of the novelist. As he explains in chapter one, some of the events surrounding Booth and Amelia are 'extraordinary' but, he insists, we can understand such events if we put aside notions of fortune etc and seek to account for them with reference to 'natural means'.⁴⁰ In other words, Fielding argues that a careful examination of human life can reveal - in any particular case - the causal relation between various contributory factors affecting that life. However, this is no mere philosophical enterprise; the point of the work resides in the fact that 'as histories of this kind...may properly be called models of HUMAN LIFE, so, by observing minutely the the several incidents which tend to the catastrophe or completion of the whole, and the minute causes whence those incidents are produced, we shall best be instructed in this most useful of all arts, which I call the ART OF LIFE'.⁴¹

Throughout the novel Fielding acts as omniscient narrator with

comparatively little intrusion as the author; however, he does use Dr Harrison as a more or less direct channel for his own comments on a number of occasions and - without building the character of an actual narrator - suggests that he (the narrator) is currently in contact with the heroine by the use of devices such as the following: 'Amelia declared to me the other day', and so on.⁴² Alter has written of Amelia, 'Fielding, as always, is highly conscious of his role as a pioneer: with the partial and uncomfortably didactic exception of the continuation of Pamela, no novel as yet had attempted to deal with what happens to two people after they unite in the state of matrimony, when, in place of the adventures or tensions of courtship, they must bear the heavy and multifarious responsibilities of making a life together'.⁴³ And, as Utter and Needham have observed, 'The typical plot of the English novel has love for the starting-post and marriage for the finish-line', so Fielding's originality here should not be overlooked.⁴⁴ Of course, Fielding focused rather more upon the relation between individuals and the wider society than on individuals as such; thus he produced a work which does not have the narrow psychologically-oriented tension of Pamela but which offers a more general picture of eighteenth-century institutions and social relations. The question of the individual and integration in the novel centres around Booth, a feckless character who must be integrated into a Christian way of life. For Fielding, the process of integration is complicated by the fact that Booth must be not merely integrated within the wider society (which is shown to be dominated by corruption and dishonesty), but rather within the ranks of those who pursue honest Christian lives against all of the odds. In order to facilitate this, Booth is made to undergo an unconvincing conver-

sion, Amelia's lost inheritance is restored to her (solving financial difficulties), and the couple retreat to the country away from the temptations to vice which surrounded them in the city.

In The Spiritual Quixote, Graves initially adopts the pose of editor in order to explain how the manuscript of the work came to light; he may have done this simply for the fun of it, to conceal his authorship, or perhaps because such a long time had passed between the writing of the piece and its publication (sixteen years) that he thought it appropriate to present the novel as being of historical interest. I suspect that the first of these options is the most likely; indeed, Graves' sense of fun makes it difficult in places to determine just when he is being serious or otherwise. Nevertheless, when we move on to the alleged author's preface, I think that we can take the following as a genuine statement of Graves' intent, 'The following narrative was intended to expose a species of folly, which has frequently disturbed the tranquillity of this nation!'.⁴⁵ Having pointed out that it is the itinerant to whom he most strongly objects, Graves goes on to argue that his novel 'has a direct tendency to prevent Religion becoming ridiculous'.⁴⁶ Adopting the persona of editor again for the advertisement, Graves tells us that he has learnt that the supposed author, Christopher Collop, 'was suspected to favour them in his heart', 'them' being the preachers under attack; we will consider Graves' attitude towards the enthusiasts when we come to examine the text.⁴⁷ After we have been through a dedication, a prefatory anecdote, the 'author's preface', a postscript, an advertisement, and another dedication, we come to the introduction wherein Graves - this time as author - states that he has tried to make the book interesting (likening it, to some extent, to the then popular travel

tales) and 'The reader will likewise meet with several trifling incidents from real life; which, however, the Author flatters himself, are so far disguised by an alteration of the circumstances of place and time, as to prevent a particular application - unless where a particular application was intended'.⁴⁸ This might be thought to be another of Graves' jokes, but for the fact that, as Hill has pointed out, there is much in the novel which was certainly drawn from Graves' own life; more of this later.

The novel itself is loosely based on Cervantes' original, and aims to satirize eighteenth-century Methodist preachers; however, as Tracy has argued, Graves was somewhat influenced by Henry Fielding and the 'comic epic in prose'.⁴⁹ Overall, the work does appear to be something of a variation on the picaresque theme, the main difference being that Graves' hero is by no means a rogue. Throughout, Graves employs the omniscient author technique and intrudes a good deal to comment in detail upon certain aspects of the story; he also uses several characters to express his own religious opinions at length, and introduces a number of rather peripheral 'histories' such as that of Rivers and Charlotte.⁵⁰ This sort of material does make for unnecessary breaks in the sequence of events and, as it is presented seriously but tediously, does not fit in well with the main body of the story which, I would suggest, consists of the sort of incident and humour typically found in Smollett's works. Like both Fielding and Smollett, Graves does not aim for a minutely-detailed psychological novel; instead, he relies upon a number of humorous characters and incidents interspersed with chunks of religious didacticism, and the histories mentioned above. Graves' portrayal of the individual and society is based upon how his central character,

Wildgoose, can be re-integrated into the gentry; the hero's initially imperfect integration is exacerbated by his decision to abandon his home and way of life in favour of itinerant preaching, a choice which entails downward social mobility. However, this willingly adopted pariah status is finally rejected by the hero as a consequence of his reconciliation with Anglican beliefs, and his marriage to a 'good' woman; he then takes up his rightful place in the community and resolves to leave spiritual and social problems to established authority.

Oliver Goldsmith, in his advertisement for The Vicar of Wakefield, states that 'There are an hundred faults in this Thing, and an hundred things might be said to prove them beauties'.⁵¹ The first part of the sentence is undoubtedly correct, but one may well have reservations regarding the rest of it. Goldsmith's apology goes on to suggest that the most important question is whether or not the book is 'amusing', but he also seems to want to defend the piece on the grounds of the simplicity of its content, and the way in which it presents religion. There has been a lot of debate concerning both the form and content of this, Goldsmith's only novel, with some critics arguing that it displays ingenuity and the skilful use of irony, whilst others deem the work a shambles. Given the raggedness of the novel, its poor lay-out, and change of tone after the first sixteen chapters (in which it moves from comedy to what one writer has called 'pathetic narrative'⁵²), I am inclined to agree with those who think it badly-written. Apart from the above reasons for viewing the novel as an artistic failure (it was initially a commercial failure too) which has been elevated by over-sophisticated contemporary interpretations, it is well-known that Goldsmith was a vehement critic of

novels generally, and this gives one some reason to suspect that he was unlikely to produce a novel of his own for anything other than financial reasons. With the exception of those works which enjoyed enormous success during the eighteenth century (Richardson et al), the novel was considered to be a very easy form for writers and therefore did not command much respect. Wardle states that Goldsmith, replying to a friend's suggestions as to how his novel could be improved, said 'that it was not worth the effort, since he would not be paid for his pains'.⁵³ Regarding novels more generally, Sells claims that Goldsmith 'set little store by the novel and none at all by the novels which were published in his own day. He thought nothing of Fielding'.⁵⁴ According to Sells, Goldsmith also disliked Smollett (at least, prior to Smollett employing him) and Sterne, and made his dislike so well-known that 'he actually became involved in a brawl', as a consequence of this. Perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that 'In January 1759 he had advised his brother not to allow the latter's son to read romances or novels, since they depict a happiness which has never existed'.⁵⁵ In my opinion this is probably the greatest irony relating to Goldsmith for, as Allen maintains, 'Goldsmith of all writers was the least cut out to be a realistic novelist, and what he achieved was something very different from what he intended; instead of the near-tragedy of a man who brought himself and his family to ruin he produced something very much like a fairy-tale, an idealized picture of rural life, with a delightful Quixotic comic character at the centre and with Burchell as an awkward eighteenth-century good fairy to contrive a happy ending'.⁵⁶ If Allen is right in stating that Goldsmith's intention was to write a realistic novel, one wonders how he viewed The Vicar of Wakefield after he had

completed it; within a few years of having attacked novels for portraying an unreal happiness, he had penned one of his own which must surely be a prime example of those aspects of the novel which he supposedly despised.

The story of Dr Primrose and his family is told by the former, in the first person; thus the narrator is also the main character of the piece. Both the Vicar and Burchell as the two good men of the story speak for Goldsmith in a number of places and in this way, his Tory-Anglican views are scattered throughout. And, as Friedman has pointed out, 'The Vicar of Wakefield is extraordinarily digressive even for a novel written in an age very tolerant of digressions in fiction'.⁵⁷ These constant interruptions in the narrative suggest that the author took little care and/or had little skill in manipulating the form which he derided; of all of the novels considered in this study, The Vicar of Wakefield is probably the worst-written and most crudely ideological one. Goldsmith's Primrose, although eccentric in his personal and religious views, is integrated within the community when the novel opens, but this integration is disrupted when the family are forced to move to another parish and accept a humbler way of life. The Vicar's wife and daughters never really become reconciled to this change, and Olivia, the eldest daughter, herself becomes further isolated as a result of her apparent 'fall'. Her integration is finally achieved when it is disclosed that she was legally married to the man who sought to seduce her, whilst the rest of the family - including the Vicar - are re-absorbed, and even socially elevated by the marriage of the youngest daughter, Sophia, to the aristocrat, Burchell.

Fanny Burney, in her preface to Evelina, begins by stating that

novelists are the least respected of all writers but goes on to list Rousseau, Johnson, Marivaux, Fielding, and Richardson as having saved the form from contempt. In view of their achievements, she argues that there is nothing shameful in attempting 'this species of writing'. Having made this apology, Burney clearly outlines her project 'To draw characters from nature though not from life, and to mark the manners of the times, is the attempted plan of the following letters'.⁵⁸ In this way Burney commits herself to the realistic presentation of individuals and their various milieux and, having argued that the popularity of novels (particularly amongst young women) was unlikely to decline in the near future, she proceeds to propose that those which are not injurious should be encouraged. The author herself completely eschews 'the fantastic regions of romance, where fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious imagination, where reason is an outcast, and where the sublimity of the marvellous rejects aid from all sober probability'. Her heroine is, she maintains, 'the offspring of nature', and not some implausible 'faultless monster'.⁵⁹

Burney then discusses the importance of originality in novel-writing, concluding that 'In books...imitation cannot be shunned too sedulously'; however, she recognizes that it is difficult to avoid the commonplace without having recourse to 'unnatural' subjects. Yet, whilst playing down her own claim to originality, Burney contends that the aforementioned writers who have influenced her, have likewise 'culled the flowers' from the path which they chose to explore thus forcing her to take a slightly different direction.⁶⁰

Evelina is an epistolary novel told mainly through the character of Evelina herself, thus the events and characters are shown to the

reader via the subjectivity of an adolescent girl making her 'entrance into the world'.⁶¹ Perhaps the most important character apart from the heroine is Villars, her guardian, whose letters to Lady Howard and Evelina serve to move the story along and to provide a contrast to the world of fashion and high rank in which Burney places her nervous young heroine. Additionally, Villars is the main source of didacticism in the work, his frequent advice amounting to a fairly full conduct-guide. The characters in Evelina are virtually all well-sketched, and often very amusing, and there is less of the discrepancy between minor and major protagonists than one finds in so many other eighteenth-century novels. However, there is no sustained attempt to examine the subjectivity of anyone other than the heroine and, consequently, the other characters are sometimes dull, and occasionally neat but flimsy types. Nevertheless, Evelina was very successful and, as Spacks has noted, 'It has been admired ever since its own time for the accuracy of its social detail and conversation'.⁶² Allen, who thinks Burney overrated, himself remarks upon her 'camera-eye' and 'microphone-ear', so it would appear that the author's skill in this respect was recognized by both her contemporaries and her subsequent critics.⁶³ As Spacks has contended in her consideration of Burney's journals and novels and their relation to the author's own life, Evelina 'manifests a high level of psychological insight closely related to the self-knowledge that emerges from even the youthful diaries'.⁶⁴ The insight which Burney displays resides in her understanding of female anxieties and conflicts, argues Spacks, who illustrates Fanny Burney's own attitude with the following quotation: 'The fear of doing wrong has been always the leading principle of my internal guidance'.⁶⁵ These words would fit easily into

her heroine's mouth; Evelina is one who has been denied her rightful status - this, and her rural upbringing make her something of an outsider in the aristocratic company in which she finds herself. However, Burney ensures Evelina's complete integration when the girl is accepted by her noble father (Sir John Belmont) and finally married to Lord Orville.

Robert Bage's Hermesprong contains no dedication, preface, or author's introduction wherein Bage expresses his purpose in writing the novel, but the sub-title of the work is itself an indication of his intention to create an ideal rather than a realistic hero: 'Man as He is Not'. Scott has stated that Bage was generally concerned with the presentation of character rather than narrative, and Tompkins has claimed that Hermesprong departs from Bage's previous novels, 'Hitherto he has been evolving a novel of manners and character, stripped of improbable turns of fortune and strengthened by a strong speculative interest. Now, forsaking the natural fluidity of this form, he writes a book in which the tendentious elements have stiffened into a bizarre framework'.⁶⁶ As Tompkins goes on to argue, in Hermesprong the author's manipulation of his characters is obvious and thus 'They are ingredients in a pattern rather than individuals, and they are stripped of all complexities of character in order that the pattern may not be disturbed'.⁶⁷ The fact that the characters are, with the possible exception of Miss Fluart, so poorly developed, and the plot so thin may well explain why critics like Allen insist on labelling Bage 'A doctrinaire novelist proper'; however, whilst it is undeniable that Bage wrote with his political views always in mind, the woodenness of Hermesprong is the result of something other than Bage's politics.⁶⁸ It may of course be argued that it was precisely

Bage's didactic or 'doctrinaire' intentions which caused Hermstrong to be static and uninspired, but I would claim that one can just as easily - and indeed, more plausibly - explain the failings of the novel with reference to Bage's reliance upon a simplistic plot, and his lack of attention to character. Hermstrong's speeches certainly do not help the novel, it is true, but Bage's tendency to continually insert what he takes to be witty comments contributes at least as much to the pedantic overall effect as any political proselytizing which the novel contains.

Wilkins has suggested that in Hermstrong, Bage 'displays the contemporary scene through the agency of a critical witness from another sphere'; such a technique was quite common in eighteenth-century English novels, and all that need be said here is that what Bage actually does with his hero is to put forward a very limited bourgeois critique of the aristocracy, some Anglican ministers, and contemporary attitudes towards women. The story is related to us by Gregory Glen, himself a character in the action which takes place; after giving details of how he came to be involved, Glen ceases to speak in the first person and adopts the position of omniscient narrator. Prior to this he has informed us that he writes neither for fame, fortune, nor to instruct; unfortunately, he never does state his reasons or intention. Bage, in the guise of Glen, refers to critics and readers in a number of places, and therefore makes no effort to sustain a continuous artistic illusion throughout the novel.⁶⁹ Whatever the rights or wrongs of this, it too detracts from the work, and all of Bage's attempts at humour do not repair the damage. Hermstrong was of course, what Allen has called an 'ideal creation'; he was intended as such and Bage did not seek to convince readers that he was meant to

be anything else.⁷⁰ Goldsmith's Primrose was equally unrealistic, but we have some reason to think that this was in spite of - rather than because of - the author's intention. Hermsprong also differs from the other central characters discussed insofar as he is initially shown as a complete outsider and critic of the environment in which he appears. As the representative of moral and intellectual ideas not shared by those who surround him, it seems that he neither wants to - nor can - be integrated into the community. However, Bage ultimately shies away from this position, implying that Hermsprong's views are reconcilable with those institutions which he has previously attacked. Thus, integration is fostered by trivializing conflicting ideologies and practices illustrated in the first part of the novel into a conflict between good and bad individuals; additionally, the revelation of Hermsprong's true aristocratic status allows automatic integration into the socio-political hierarchy which the hero has apparently opposed until the near-conclusion of the novel.

To conclude, we can briefly consider our writers' didactic purpose in relation to ideology. Richardson's Pamela was unashamedly didactic and sought to provide general moral guidance (particularly for young women) in a completely serious manner. His support for individualism was, however, uneven; he accepted the view that individuals should be assessed according to their own particular merits or failings, rather than their class position, just as he considered the individual to be the primary unit in matters of religion and conscience. However, he did not advocate social change in order to encourage individualism in any sphere, and his general attitude towards social organization suggests that he thought it best left alone. He made it clear that he did not wish to give servants

and others ideas inappropriate to their station, but rather promoted the belief that exceptional persons would inevitably be rewarded, in heaven, if not on earth. Richardson took social integration for granted, whilst assuming that those with particular merits might well become upwardly mobile and thus integrated into a higher level of the hierarchy than that from which they had originated. Ideologically, Richardson's message urged people to be content with their lot, to rest safe in the knowledge that they would get their just deserts; he certainly did not recommend that individuals should actively strive for the improvement of their own social, political, or economic standing. Overall, it may be stated that the author who has been almost universally deemed the archetypal bourgeois novelist of the eighteenth century, showed extensive support for the status quo. Richardson represented the bourgeoisie in a period during which they accepted their servile status vis-à-vis the ruling class almost without question. Like Richardson, Sarah Fielding supported moral individualism; she did not favour the values which she associated with economic individualism. Her didacticism - similarly lacking in humour - ignored the possibility of social change, by arguing that a better society was dependent upon change in individuals. In the absence of such change she saw no way in which altruistic and honest persons could be integrated into the sort of self-interested and corrupt society which she portrayed in David Simple. Social mobility receives little attention in the novel; and the essence of Sarah Fielding's ideological pronouncements was that all should be altruistic and content; the only goals which any individual could legitimately pursue were, in her opinion, those such as the achievement of 'purity' in heart and mind. In contrast, Henry Fielding's Amelia was a critique of exis-

ting institutions and practices, almost in the form of an exposé. Whilst avoiding the melancholy atmosphere of David Simple, Fielding indicated his distaste for the individualistic society in which he set the action of Amelia, and argued for fairly radical institutional change - without which he saw little prospect of any change in the majority of individuals. It is implied in Amelia that individualism, and therefore corruption and dishonesty, are characteristic of city life, and that Christians cannot really be comfortably integrated into such milieu; only in the comparatively untainted rural areas, suggests Fielding, can some form of genuine individual-social integration be achieved. Consequently, Fielding's ideology centres around proposals for legal reform as a means of tackling both institutional and personal corruption for, in Fielding's view, decent people can only appear in any number in a just and well-regulated society based upon Christian precepts.

Like Henry Fielding, Graves in The Spiritual Quixote saw his didactic task as one of exposure and criticism, mainly via the weapon of satire. However, whereas Fielding attacked established institutions and authority, Graves defended them, and levelled his charges against (especially) critics of, and rivals to, the Anglican Church. Graves was no exponent of individualism, and the small measure of support which it received from him rested largely on his belief that individuals should mind their own affairs. He assumed that individuals would be integrated in their local communities but that within these communities, and indeed, within the wider society, they should concentrate solely upon their own direct personal concerns. Graves saw not the slightest need for social change, and if he had done so, he would have maintained that any innovation should be entirely the

prerogative of established secular and religious authority. Graves did indicate that he thought upward mobility was sometimes justified, but his main use of social mobility in the novel consists of ridiculing enthusiasts for their apparent readiness to 'lower' themselves. His ideological position can be summed up as one of completely unequivocal support for the then current form of social organization. Similarly, Oliver Goldsmith was largely resistant to social change, particularly in relation to the Church and the monarchy. Goldsmith's didacticism operates via the lengthy political speeches of his central character, wherein the middle class are supported but change (with the exception of certain legal reforms) is eschewed. Goldsmith took the integration of the individual more or less for granted but, judging by The Vicar of Wakefield, thought upward mobility an acceptable goal. The essence of Goldsmith's ideology was that traditional authority should be wholeheartedly supported and that all - including the poor - should accept existing conditions. In conjunction with this, he attempted within the novel to deny that the rich had any advantages over the exploited, arguing that the latter were fully-compensated in 'heaven'. Fanny Burney's Evelina has a somewhat narrower focus, and is only really didactic in the sense that it can be seen as a conduct-guide for young women: one which is rather uncritical of the position of women generally. The background assumptions of the novel are individualistic, and it does not occur to Burney that the social order could or should be modified. She assumed that individuals would be integrated into the appropriate rank, and took a fairly severe view of those who she portrayed as actively seeking social advancement. Basically, the ideological claim seems to be that propriety, obedience, and deference in women are rewarded, and

that the modest and 'pure-hearted' triumph where self-seekers fail. By way of contrast, Robert Bage, in Hermsprong, airs a good many opinions concerning socio-political issues, but these views are presented in a rather contradictory manner. Bage was very much influenced by the basic tenets of individualism, and his central character epitomized what he took to be the best qualities of individualistic 'man'. In some sections of Hermsprong Bage seems to be arguing for considerable social change, but he eventually retreats and allows his ideal individual to become part of the establishment. Thus, his ideological position appears to have been that individualism represented the highest goals for human beings, and that it is only in terms of individuals that any aspect of social organization can be assessed. This individualism, however, must not be seen to challenge the established institutions such as the Church and the monarchy; how far his attitude here was dictated by expediency remains unclear. Yet, the only message to be drawn from the novel as it stands is, ultimately, that 'bad' individuals should be excluded from power and that a more egalitarian attitude should be taken towards people in general, and women in particular.

Having made these preliminary comments, we can now consider the seven novels in greater detail; they are discussed in chronological order in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

PAMELA

Pamela is the story of a servant-girl who, having successfully resisted the sexual advances of her young master, finally marries him and thus transcends the problem of being 'poor but honest'. Given this basic plot of her upward mobility into the gentry via marriage, it is not surprising that the novel makes reference to the social hierarchy of eighteenth-century England; several themes which touch upon particular aspects of this hierarchy and the social relations dependent upon it occur throughout. The first is the idea that poverty combined with honesty is, under any circumstances, preferable to riches and dishonesty. For Pamela, this is axiomatic.¹ Therefore, when she refuses to comply with B.'s wishes - regardless of his threat to discharge her - she is convinced that a return to poverty will cause her far less 'distress' than would the sexual and moral surrender which he desires.² Indeed, she feels so strongly about her honesty or virtue (terms used herein to signify, primarily, sexual virginity) that she later claims, 'I would marry a man who begs from door to door, and has no home, rather than endanger my honesty'.³ Consequently, when B. tries to lure Pamela with all manner of material rewards including fine clothes and jewellery, she makes it clear that she sets little store by such things: 'What should I think, when I looked upon my finger, or saw, in the glass, those diamonds on my neck, and in my ears, but that they were the price of my honesty, and that I wore those jewels outwardly, because I had none inwardly?'.⁴

Pamela's parents have, she tells B., 'taught me to prefer goodness and poverty to the highest condition of life'; however, as the

story progresses and it becomes apparent that Pamela will not have to choose between honest poverty and dishonest luxury, poverty becomes - in her statements - not merely a trial which can be tolerated, but rather something which is enjoyable and admirable in itself.⁵ And, when Pamela's father learns of her forthcoming marriage and suggests that he and his wife might disgrace Pamela by their poverty, she replies, 'Your poverty has been my glory, and my riches'.⁶ However, if poverty is here shown to be bearable, and perhaps having certain advantages, riches are seen as a heavy burden; one which Pamela outlines in verse:

For, Oh we pity should the great,
Instead of envying their estate;
Temptations always on 'em wait,
Exempt from which are such as we.

Their riches, gay deceitful snares,
Enlarge their fears, increase their cares;
Their servants' joy surpasses theirs;
At least, so judges Pamela.⁷

According to this view, riches involve so many problems that one cannot see why people try to gain and maintain wealth. But the fact is that people have done so in the past, and will continue to do so, as long as they recognize the countless advantages attending wealth. Pamela herself knows that the rich are more powerful than the poor, as becomes apparent when she makes statements such as 'power and riches never want advocates!', and, to B., 'if you were not rich and great, and I poor and little, you would not insult me thus'.⁸ So, when Pamela asks, rhetorically, 'what can the abject poor do against the mighty rich, when they are determined to oppress?', we know - as did Richardson - that the most typical answer one could expect to such an enquiry would be, 'very little'.⁹ Nevertheless, whilst 'power and

riches never want tools to promote their vilest ends', the poor have little opportunity to break moral laws and this - in Richardson's view, as expressed by Pamela - implies that the poor may well be, generally speaking, morally superior to their wealthy counterparts. In this particular proposition, and in many others to be found in the novel, the author demonstrates the completely formal nature of his version of 'morality'.

In spite of the fact that Pamela claims to be so happy in 'beloved poverty', her remarks on the condition of poverty are later qualified.¹⁰ Although she has stated that she would rather marry a beggar than risk her honesty, she is clearly upset when Lady Davers, B.'s sister, labels her 'beggar-born', and a 'beggarly brat'. This charges Pamela's parents with a poverty too extreme for her to accept, and she answers, 'Good Madam...spare my dear parents. They are honest and industrious; they were once in a very creditable way, and never were beggars'.¹¹ Being part of the 'honest and industrious' poor then, and thus being hard-working and deferential, set one somewhat above the lowest ranks of society. From the point of view of the ruling class, the most important fact about people such as Pamela's parents was that, as Walzer has pointed out, 'the poverty of the "industrious poor"...led neither to disorder nor discontent'.¹² It is this section of the community that Pamela intends to help once married to B., her enthusiasm for philanthropy depending - at least in part - upon her expectation of the prayers and blessings of the poor for her husband.¹³ This is a rather surprising attitude towards charity coming from a post-Puritan Anglican, but the balance is evened up as we learn that Pamela is only concerned with local worthy paupers, and that she intends to relieve them according to a rational

system of administration, aided by an account-book in which she has written 'Humble returns for Divine Mercies'.¹⁴ She claims, of course, to take no credit for such actions, supposing herself to be a mere instrument of Providence.

Apart from her comments upon the fact that the rich can afford to pursue their interests, however much these may be morally wrong, Pamela makes few criticisms of her socio-economic superiors. She thinks that B. is both spoiled and easily angered, but sees this as a misfortune of his sex and class.¹⁵ Additionally, when she reads Lady Davers' opinion of B.'s intention to marry outside of his own class, she is critical of the pride of the rich and their disdain for social inferiors: 'O keep me, heaven, from their high condition, if my mind shall ever be tainted with their vice, or polluted with so cruel and inconsiderate a contempt of that humble estate they behold with so much scorn!'.¹⁶ However, Pamela tends to pity rather than criticize the rich and, whilst she supports the idea that they should use some of their resources charitably, she does not see anything amiss in the existence of enormous financial inequality, assuming this to be divinely ordained

Wise Providence

Does various parts for various minds dispense:
The meanest slaves, or those who hedge and ditch,
Are useful, by their sweat, to feed the rich.
The rich, in due return, impart their store,
Which comfortably feeds the lab'ring poor.
Nor let the rich the lowest slave disdain:
He's equally a link of Nature's chain;
Labours to the same end, joins in one view;
And both alike the Will Divine pursue;
And, at the last, are levell'd, king and slave,
Without distinction, in the silent grave.¹⁷

The above is quoted approvingly by the heroine, and constitutes a compressed account of Pamela's understanding of social relations;

note Richardson's use here of the archaic 'chain of being' analogy, which contrasted sharply with the atomistic individualism dominant in the period.

Pamela is not merely complacent about socio-economic distinctions however. For, in Richardson's continuation of the novel she goes so far as to state 'it is my absolute opinion, that degrees in general should be kept up', her own case being an exception.¹⁸ No doubt the author put these words in her mouth to deflect the criticism made previously that he opposed social inequality - a number of contemporary commentators had seized upon what they viewed as a 'levelling' tendency in Pamela Part One. Nevertheless, it is clear from Pamela's many conversations with B. in the original novel that she is a defender of existing social relations, and likewise a nice critic of whether or not those who surround her are acting in accordance with their social position. From B.'s first advances, Pamela constantly chides him for ignoring the 'distance' between them and thus 'demeaning' himself; throughout the story she appears to be preoccupied with the idea that B. may risk 'disgracing' himself amongst his peers and, in the eyes of his other servants.¹⁹ Moreover, although Pamela frequently reiterates her own low status, she solemnly offers B. advice as to how he should behave; and this is social, not moral advice: 'I think you ought to regard the world's opinion, and avoid doing any thing disgraceful to your birth and fortune;...a little time, absence, and the conversation of worthier persons of my sex, will effectually enable you to overcome a regard so unworthy of your condition'. And, she concludes, 'I shall wish you happy in a lady of suitable degree'.²⁰ Yet, in spite of Pamela's constant references to her own low station and her unworthiness regarding B., this is not because she

sees herself as nothing more than a common servant. She is particularly anxious to protect B. by hiding the real nature of his behaviour towards her from his other servants, and this in itself indicates that she sees herself as being somewhat above her peers. Additionally, Pamela recognizes that she has enjoyed a privileged position in service - prior to the death of her mistress - and has, during this time, become accomplished in arts such as singing and dancing which not only distinguish her from the other servants, but likewise ensure that she would find difficulty in getting another job with what amounted to inappropriate skills for one of her class. So, whilst Pamela plays the humble servant, her general attitude towards her fellow servants is close to what one might expect from an overseer, that is, she considers her master's interests rather than those of her peers. Although it is Pamela's pleas which lead B. to reinstate those servants whom he has unjustly dismissed, and whilst she shows some generosity towards these former colleagues once married, this results from Christian charity rather than identification or 'solidarity' with the servants.²¹ Therefore Pamela, with her exceedingly deferential stance towards the gentry, has few qualms about moving up the socio-economic scale away from the servants, however much she implies that her relationship with them must become more distant in order to preserve B.'s dignity.²²

B. does, of course, act in a manner likely to engender criticism from his own class when he marries his late mother's maid-servant, but for all the talk of 'demeaning' in the early part of the novel, he does not do so prior to this. The contemporary sexual double-standard was such that no man in B.'s position would be thought to be demeaning himself simply because he tried to seduce a socially-infe-

rior girl. Such activities were not only largely taken-for-granted, but were also viewed as completely trivial and unimportant, in relation to any high-status seducer's rank or dignity. As Spacks has suggested, B. sees his initial attempts to seduce Pamela 'as belonging to a pattern so familiar as to be virtually devoid of meaning'.²³ B. has nothing whatever to lose in terms of honour or respect (discounting personal pride) until he decides to marry Pamela; up to this point he acts, as Pamela herself observes, like most of the other gentlemen in his local community, and differs from them primarily only because he eventually becomes so besotted by a socially-inferior woman that he is prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to secure her.²⁴ For Richardson, B.'s stance denotes 'love', but for countless critics - both in Richardson's time and since - it appears more as lust, obsession, lack of self-control and so on.²⁵ B. does, at one point, claim that he does not wish to marry anyone, regardless of status considerations, however he then asserts that if he will not marry an equal or a superior, he could hardly think of wedding one of Pamela's low rank.²⁶ Even when he has definitely decided to marry Pamela, both he and she remain apprehensive about the likely censure from B.'s class and, as Spacks remarks, 'Mr.B. and his bride share from the beginning their assumption that the judgement of "the world" matters enormously'.²⁷ In the event, it is only Lady Davers, B.'s sister, who really takes them to task, but it is not long before she is won over.²⁸ B. then proceeds to proclaim in detail (to Pamela) his reasons for having chosen her as a marriage partner; in essence, his choice seems to have depended not so much upon her virtue, but rather more upon her remarkable deference. Sketching his requirements in a wife - which are considerable, to say the least - B.

frankly admits that he would not get the degree of obedience and respect from a socially-equal spouse that he both insists upon and has found in Pamela. Quite apart from Pamela's physical beauty, moral character and so on, B. here confirms that - above all else - he expects to have his own way, and to be treated with the deificatory subservience characteristic of Pamela. She, ever-willing to obey, takes the trouble to codify his pronouncements into forty-eight 'rules' or propositions, to be studied and adhered to.²⁹

Konigsberg, discussing the 'poor virtuous girl weds rich man' theme common to Pamela and other tales, comments that it 'pleases the lower class by giving hope for social advancement, and satisfies the higher class by fostering equilibrium in society and giving expression to its males' desires to possess women more earthy than women of their own class'.³⁰ The point about offering hope to a lower class in this way and the view that cross-class marriages may play some part in maintaining social stability are, I think, relevant. The theme of upward mobility via marriage to a rich man was well-known and frequently used in eighteenth-century English novels. However, whilst women thus became (in fact and fiction) a focal point of class compromise, one cannot accept that the 'earthiness' of lower-class women played much part in the process. The belief that women from a class lower than one's own are more 'earthy' (by which I assume that Konigsberg means more sexually stimulating/active) is itself dubious and loaded with implicit elitism. Nevertheless, accepting this to be so, one can state that no man of B.'s class would have had the slightest difficulty in possessing more poor women than he could possibly have coped with; such a man would hardly have had to resort to reading tales such as Pamela in order to gratify any desire for a

socially-inferior woman. However, as Stone has indicated, there is some evidence to suggest that when, for example, members of 'the quality' took mistresses in eighteenth-century England, the women were usually 'from a well-to-do professional or merchant background'; thus, they differed little from the wives of the men who kept them.³¹ Throughout the eighteenth century marriages between members of the gentry and the women of the bourgeoisie became increasingly common (although there were few examples to match Pamela and B. in practice), but such marriages depended far more upon political and financial considerations than anything else; where straightforward personal choice was involved, it seems likely that physical beauty and deference would most attract a man to a socially-inferior woman.

Modern criticism of Richardson often portrays him as something of a 'Puritan', and suggests that Pamela is a good example of his Puritan outlook.³² Yet, whilst it is true that there is some evidence for this view, it would be wrong to suppose that Richardson's views - as expressed in Pamela - can be quite so easily and unequivocally placed. For, whilst Richardson, like most others of his age, held some opinions which might ultimately be traced to Puritanism, there was a considerable distance between his beliefs and attitudes and those held by the Puritans of the preceding two centuries. In modified form, many ideas which had previously been considered peculiar to Puritanism had, by the mid-eighteenth century, become the common property of British culture; it was in this sense that Puritanism, although defeated politically in the seventeenth century, continued to live in subsequent centuries. Therefore, to imply that Richardson was particularly representative of Puritan thinking is very misleading; if a candidate must be found amongst eighteenth-century prose writers,

then Defoe might more justifiably be considered. There is no evidence to suggest that Richardson's contemporaries saw him in this light, and it is hard to imagine why his critics should have failed to employ the un-flattering term 'Puritan' to him and his work, had they felt it to be even remotely applicable.³³

Like the Puritans, Richardson thought that marriage was a blessed state, and that individuals should be allowed to choose their own spouses. However, Puritans believed that marriage partners should be chosen according to their moral worth or 'godliness', and it is obvious that B. would not fulfil this requirement.³⁴ Moreover, as noted above, we have already seen the practical rather than spiritual considerations which influenced B.'s choice of Pamela for a wife. Within marriage both Richardson and the Puritans assumed that the husband would be the dominant partner (a view peculiar to neither, as it was traditional throughout European society); for the latter this assumption was based upon the idea that a husband would be morally-superior to his wife but, as is repeatedly made clear in Pamela, the heroine of the story is unquestionably of a higher moral status than her husband. In spite of this Richardson makes Pamela conceive of B. as 'the kind protector of my weakness, and the guide and director of my future steps'.³⁵ Walzer has argued that 'Puritan writers insisted upon the inferiority of the female, but nevertheless recognized in her the potential saint'; Richardson followed them in that much, but departed from them by subjecting his heroine to a man like B..³⁶ For Richardson, B.'s high rank is ample compensation for his low moral status; had Pamela been a Puritan, she would have left B.'s employment, regardless of the material consequences, as soon as he made any improper advance towards her. And, in so doing, she would

have obeyed the wishes of her parents, who had urged her to leave if B. behaved at all suspiciously.³⁷

Puritan attitudes towards parental authority were somewhat equivocal; notwithstanding the patriarchal management of the 'little commonwealth' advocated by Puritan preachers, the individualism inherent in the Puritan conception of the relation between each human being and God, and the emphasis upon the individual's right to seek grace regardless of family ties, ultimately tended to minimize passive acceptance of parental control. In Pamela's case, above, there could have been no question of her justifiably ignoring her parents' advice, Puritan or not; as Ball remarks, 'While it cannot be claimed that Pamela directly disobeys her parents in this instance, it cannot be claimed that she gives them the consideration that a morally respectable child should'.³⁸ But Pamela acts independently of her parents all through the novel, for all her talk of being 'dutiful' and, in Richardson's continuation, we find that she gives her father advice rather than vice versa, thus indicating that social status determines wisdom beyond age. At various points in the story Pamela suggests that she is virtuous because of her upbringing, that is, because of the good example and religious teaching of her parents, and her late mistress; B. claims that his own faults arise largely from the fact that he was not controlled or restrained as a child.³⁹ Whilst Pamela mentions God's grace in this context, the emphasis in her statements is upon socialization rather than grace itself; in this, I think that Richardson departed somewhat from Puritanism. He continually stresses the importance of example in Pamela, whereas Puritans - broadly following Calvinist teaching - tended to concentrate more upon grace than upon anything else which might influence the individual's spiri-

tual being.⁴⁰ However, this is a question of emphasis, rather than one of fundamental disagreement; moreover, as we are told that Pamela's two (dead) brothers have been instrumental in bringing the family into poverty, the implication is that parental example alone cannot ensure that the child becomes a worthy adult.⁴¹

As much of Pamela takes the form of a personal journal, this may appear to indicate that the heroine monitors her thoughts and actions in a manner similar to that displayed in Puritan diaries or spiritual autobiographies.⁴² However, unlike Pamela's journal, those of the Puritans recorded spiritual progress in detail, and were not simply a narrative of worldly events in one's life with some religious reflections scattered throughout. Puritan diaries were basically confessional and meditative, and typically only came to light posthumously; in contrast, Pamela's journal is addressed to her parents and is eventually read by, or to, her husband and his friends and relatives.⁴³

Pamela then, writes for a secular audience. Such a character would be unlikely to produce a spiritual journal, for the following reasons: She has no enduring sense of sin, and is continually proclaiming her honesty and innocence; as Mrs Jervis says of her, 'I never found her inclinable to think herself in a fault'.⁴⁴ Whereas Puritan journals dwelt upon consciousness of sin, and the struggles and temptations leading to progress or setbacks which formed the basis of spiritual reflection, Pamela's journal consists mainly of her hopes and fears regarding secular events. The heroine's only temptation involves her brief consideration of suicide (and her motives for pondering this course of action, viz, to escape violation and exercise revenge, are noteworthy); apart from this, she can hardly be said to be engaged in the kind of spiritual battle described by Puritans.

Therefore, Pamela does not grow spiritually throughout the novel; as the story is predicated upon her near-complete virtue, she can have no conversion or re-birth. Consequently, her letters and journal merely chart her secular progress: her upward mobility. Spacks has pointed out that, 'To remain essentially the same, in many eighteenth-century novels, constitutes the central character's triumph', and Pamela appears to be a good example of this proposition.⁴⁵ B. likewise undergoes no spiritual transformation, but allegedly 'reforms'; both the manner and quality of his development suggest formal repentance and an eye for practical considerations, and therefore has little in common with the Puritan experience.

More generally, Pamela's acceptance and defence of the social hierarchy does not accord well with Puritanism. The extent to which Puritans felt able to suffer this hierarchy (which included the monarchy and the episcopacy) varied quite considerably, but they would hardly have held the traditional and subservient attitude towards rank displayed by Pamela. They did not suppose social relations to be divinely ordained, as does Pamela. The fact that she continues to respect B. after he has attempted to seduce her on several occasions, itself shows an un-Puritan deference to social rather than moral stature; additionally, Puritans did not support the double-standard relating to sexual conduct which Richardson, by failing to punish B., and even allowing him to wed the heroine, shows himself to be complacent about.⁴⁶ Just as Pamela's virtue was, for Richardson, her most important characteristic, so B.'s high social position is clearly seen to be more significant than his past lechery. Pamela forgives this all too easily, if we mistakenly suppose that she accurately represents Puritanism.

Finally, if we are to consider the question of Richardson's religious attitudes and their relation to Puritanism, we must briefly mention his stance towards Anglicanism in Pamela. Although neither the Established Church nor its ministers play much part in the story, it is obvious that Richardson viewed the Church as both essentially sound and legitimate; the author attended Anglican services, when not indisposed by his various ailments. In the novel, there is a good Anglican minister, Williams, and a dubious one, Peters, but Richardson made no suggestion of any need whatsoever for Church reform. And, he can only advise clergymen beset by 'proud patrons' to be pious and trust to Providence.⁴⁷ However, the issue of Church reform was the most important single factor which had united the Puritans of the two previous centuries. Whether Presbyterians or Independents, the Puritans fought against Episcopacy; Richardson did not. The overall impression created by Pamela is that Richardson did not have much interest in religious issues, but rather saw religion as, on the one hand, a useful weapon for the maintenance of the existing social order, whilst on the other hand, it could help to promote refinement in the area of manners. Richardson's determination to sanction Pamela's conduct with the secular rewards of upward mobility, wealth, and fulsome praise itself indicates a prudential approach towards morality. Virtue, as many of Richardson's critics have argued, is supposed to be its own reward - something which Richardson was loath to accept.⁴⁸ I conclude that the smug, calculating, and self-righteous atmosphere which pervades Pamela was in marked contrast to the practical vigour and spiritual seriousness generated by radical-Protestantism, and epitomised by Puritanism.

Perhaps the most significant feature of Richardson's Pamela is

that it presents us with an ideal which Richardson thought appropriate for women; the model is offered for the imitation of all women, regardless of class. Richardson thought that there was one line of correct conduct for women, and he tried to universalize a set of 'feminine' qualities which he saw as being both fitting and elevating for the 'dear' sex. Pamela is a representative of the author's views regarding women, and she illustrates the kind of moral achievement in women which he deemed thoroughly admirable.

Watt has argued that 'the legal position of women in the eighteenth century was very largely governed by the patriarchal concepts of Roman law', and has further observed that, 'the patriarchal legal situation of married women made it impossible for them to realize the aims of economic individualism'.⁴⁹ He goes on to cite the example of Roxana as a successful, unmarried, business-woman, but accepts that autonomous economic action and independence on the part of women was - whether they were married or single - hard to achieve. Even the unmarried Roxana's economic successes were not only atypical - they were likewise based upon, and inseparable from, her recurring violations of moral law. These violations eventually lead her to be complicit in the breaking of juridical law and the Biblical commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'. And this, Defoe's heroine concludes, heralds her final downfall. Watt later suggests that 'the conception of sex we find in Richardson embodies a more complete and comprehensive separation between the male and female roles than had previously existed', but does not relate this to his own points about patriarchy, noted above.⁵⁰ I would argue that it is the anomalous position of women - subject to patriarchal control - in an individualist society, which fosters the creation of a complex, specifically feminine code of con-

duct. Such a code would serve to explain and justify the situation of the many women who, as a result of economic developments, were increasingly excluded from what was then considered to be the most important sphere of individual action and achievement, viz, the economy. If men were to make their mark by their actions in this expanding area (whether from adherence to the older accumulative propositions associated with Calvinism, or in accordance with the secular aim of wealth for power and luxury), women were recruited in growing numbers to the contracting realm of religion and 'morality'. Though never to become members of the highest command in this domain, women were good enough to act as supporters and defenders of the new faith of chastity, propriety, prudence, and delicacy. This dogma, largely produced for the observance of women by men, did - however - offer the individual woman the opportunity to become a heroine. It is as if the forces of the bourgeoisie during this period divided along sex lines: the men to wage war on the economic and political front, that is, to act practically, whilst the women - defenders of form rather than content - were left to struggle in the realm of the ideal, with additional support from ideologists drawn from both sexes. This does, of course, over-simplify things and implies a lack of interconnection between practical and ideal interests which cannot withstand close scrutiny; nevertheless, it is this sort of picture which appears when one ponders the channelling of male and female energy into superficially separate projects.

The activities described above were, nevertheless, complementary and, if women played less part in the economy, they were to be rewarded with increasing leisure, entertainment, and socio-moral status. The area of morality constituted their very own ladder of elevation,

and the female fighter for morality and manners was ensured respect and accorded honour by both men and women of the middle class - even if she did not have the good fortune to ascend the social hierarchy after the manner of Pamela. Such were the rewards for female heroism, and such was the circumscribed campaign in which heroically-inclined women were expected to excel.⁵¹ One did not even have to leave the house. Caution was required, for, to stray onto the wrong battlefield - to the terrain struggled for by men - was to abandon all pretensions to heroism, and even to simple modesty.

This kind of ideology, which Richardson and his ilk played such a major part in creating, was not merely one of elevation via obedience. However much it may have contributed to a somewhat more respectful attitude towards women, on the part of men, there can be little doubt that, in providing women with a sphere of possible excellence, it also involved judging female conduct with reference to an expanding range of exacting standards. If the 'angels' of the middle class derived some benefits from this mode of elevation, they likewise now had further to fall if they failed to satisfy their rigorous examiners. This point will become relevant when we consider the following: Watt has claimed that there is, in eighteenth-century England, a 'decarnalization of the public feminine role', and has suggested that the author of Pamela and his allies played an important part in this process.⁵² Richardson's stance, continues Watt, promoted the idea that women are immune from 'sexual feelings', and that they marry 'because the pieties of marriage and the family were safe only in their hands'.⁵³ Such a view was, maintains Watt - who himself tends to emphasize the influence of Puritanism upon Richardson's work - 'directly opposed to the earlier attitudes of Puritanism itself,

where such figures as Calvin, John Knox, and Milton were notoriously prone to lay more emphasis on the concupiscence of women than of men'. This puzzles Watt, who muses, 'Exactly why the serpent's invidious connection with Eve should have been forgotten is not clear'.⁵⁴ The answer to this apparent paradox is, quite simply, that Richardson had by no means forgotten about the 'invidious connection'. For all of Richardson's supposed devotion to women and their advancement, he did not think that they were morally-sound to the point whereby they could be allowed to have control over their own lives; just as the Puritans whom Watt cites were convinced that women must be controlled by men, so thought Richardson. Whatever his novels may seem to imply it is likely that Richardson promoted the 'women as angels' notion as a means of trying to educate and flatter his female audience into proper conduct, according to the ideal which he had painstakingly constructed to illustrate female moral potential.⁵⁵ In one of his private letters, Richardson actually used the Biblical account of the Fall to justify the subordination of women, and made explicit his belief in Eve's culpability: 'It is certain that the Woman's Subordination was laid upon her as a Punishment. And why?—Because Adam was not deceived, says the Apostle: but the Woman being deceived was in the Transgression'. Further attempting to make a case for subordination, Richardson argued that it 'is not a Punishment but to perverse or arrogant Spirits'. Should one reject the above propositions that female subordination was (a) deserved, and (b) not really a punishment, then Richardson would doubtless have employed his trump card: 'Women are safest when dependent'.⁵⁶ Safe, presumably, because they lacked autonomy. It is no wonder then that Richardson - defender of the ladies - decreed that, for the dear sex, 'content is heroism';

the author himself did not, of course, act according to this maxim throughout his own life of socio-economic advancement and moral-crusading.

Just as there is 'more than one way to skin a cat', so there is more than one way to subjugate women. Bourgeois moralists like Richardson, ever ready to formulate principles to be adhered to by others, preferred to control women covertly, by teaching them to internalize norms and values commensurate with the emerging paradigm so beloved of the bourgeois male. Therefore, when commentators such as Kinkead-Weekes refer to Richardson as 'The greatest feminist of the eighteenth century', they fall into the trap of taking the author of Pamela and his ideology at face-value, and incidentally betray their ignorance of what constitutes 'feminism'.⁵⁷ For, having some sympathy with women, enjoying their company and correspondence, and arguing that they should be treated with courtesy and consideration, does not make a man a feminist: a supporter of female emancipation. Richardson did not support anything which could justifiably be called feminism; he was no egalitarian, in matters of either class or sex. It is indeed doubtful as to whether he can even be said to have had a particularly enlightened view of women, unless one considers the construction and advocacy of a restrictive and all-embracing code for women to be an indication of enlightenment. Richardson did not champion the interests of women as opposed to those of men, and did not think that there was any case for equality between spouses.⁵⁸ What Richardson wanted was rigorous control of women by men, and for the men themselves to deal with women in a more respectful and refined way: men should be well-mannered in their dealings with ladies. Richardson would admit to no real conflict of interests between the

sexes, any more than contemporary Fleet Street newspapers will entertain the claim that there is a conflict of interests between classes. It was manners, not emancipation, that interested Richardson. The most liberal view that he held regarding women was that they should - given the desire and the talent - be encouraged to greater learning. However, he qualified this statement by maintaining that, 'the great and indispensable duties of women are of the domestic kind', and went on to add that any woman who put learning before these sacred tasks was 'good for nothing'.⁵⁹

Watt has observed that one of Richardson's main innovations in Pamela was to portray a servant-girl who saw 'chastity as a supreme value', and, as Spacks remarks, 'had Pamela become Mr.B.'s mistress, her tale would hardly have been rare'.⁶⁰ Pamela had learnt the value of chastity, not least from the attitude of her father, whose overwhelming anxiety when he arrives at B-- Hall in search of his daughter is, this very issue: 'Is she honest? Is she virtuous?'. Had she not been, the loving parent would most certainly have disowned her.⁶¹ But Pamela is a sound adherent to the code of feminine virtue, being fully aware of the niceties involved, and needing no cue to make the appropriate judgment against any woman who has transgressed. She knows that there are women who have failed to conform to her laudable example, and has asked her parents, 'what sort of creatures must the women-kind be, do you think, to give way to such wickedness?'.⁶² Pamela defines herself in contrast to women who 'let the side down', and scorns Mrs.Jewkes, who laughs when the heroine solemnly states, 'to rob a person of her virtue is worse than cutting her throat'.⁶³ Mrs.Jewkes, who mockingly dubs Pamela 'Purity', is - according to our heroine - 'a disgrace to her sex', one who is 'vile and unwomanly',

the 'disgrace of woman kind'.⁶⁴ In fact, Pamela thinks so ill of her gaoler that she concludes, 'To be sure she must be an atheist'.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, although Pamela remains convinced of Mrs. Jewkes' inability to fully reform, she does eventually forgive her, and even feels some sympathy for that other erring female, Sally Godfrey, in the light of the latter's suffering and repentance. This forgiveness is based upon the connection of the two women with B..⁶⁶

At various points in the story B. expresses views comparable to those which were associated with a belief in the 'concupiscence' of women. He implies that Pamela is herself responsible for his own bad conduct towards her, and states, 'she has all the arts of her sex; they were born with her'. She is, he continues, a 'little witch' and a 'saucy slut', who is 'perverse' and 'ungrateful'.⁶⁷ The image of witchcraft suggests itself to B. as he struggles to make sense of Pamela's atypical attitude; she has practised 'insinuating arts', and has even 'bewitched' Mr. Williams: she is a 'sorceress'.⁶⁸ Having found Pamela a match for his scheming and his repartee, B. bemoans the plight of his own sex, concluding, 'If our wits were equal to womens' we might spare much time and pains in our education, for nature teaches your sex what, in a long course of nature and study, ours can hardly attain to'.⁶⁹ Yet B.'s view of women - for all his supposed reformation - does not alter greatly once he has decided to marry Pamela; he continues to attribute to women some sort of almost magical power: 'The man who thinks a thousand dragons sufficient to watch a woman, when her inclinations take a contrary bent, will find all too little: she will engage the stones in the street, or the grass in the field, to act for her, and help on her correspondence'. B. later tells Pamela, 'Your mind is pure as that of an

angel, and as much transcend mine', but he continues to view feminine power with suspicion and, after an altercation with his sister, exclaims, 'Your sex is the d--l; how strangely can you discompose, calm, and turn, as you please, us poor weathercocks of men!'.⁷⁰ For B., whose faults allegedly arise from his late mother's over-indulgence, even the affair with Sally Godfrey can be shown to be largely the result of her mother's scheming.⁷¹ No wonder then that B. must have complete obedience from his wife; in the first place, he sees such obedience as a right derived from his sex and status, and in the second, as essential if he is to protect himself and his interests from the ever-present danger represented by women.

However, B. has little reason to doubt his own ability to control his new bride; Pamela has fully demonstrated her propensity for obedience in all that is consistent with 'virtue'. This is clear throughout the novel, but once it is certain that she is to marry B., her compliance and exaggerated gratitude become yet more tiresome: 'how shall I deserve your goodness to me?', she asks her future spouse. As Pamela has no interest in idle pastimes, and they both recognize that she can no longer mix with the servants (and may well be scorned by the women of the gentry), the heroine resolves to play a part in household economy, and to do more reading, which, she tells B., 'will help to polish my mind, and make me worthier of your conversation'.⁷² As Pamela explains to Mrs. Jewkes, 'he shall always be my master; and I shall think myself more and more his servant'.⁷³ Pamela's fulsome gratitude reaches something of a climax at that point in the marriage service where she is asked if she knows of any impediment which she should reveal; her slavish reply is, 'None, Sir, but my great unworthiness'.⁷⁴ After the marriage, when B. gives an

impromptu lecture on his likes, dislikes, and opinions (with particular reference to married-life, child-rearing, and personal conduct), Pamela responds ecstatically, whimpering, 'pray give me more of your sweet injunctions'.⁷⁵ The content of this **turgid** speech is later transformed - by the heroine - into a set of forty-eight rules and propositions which clearly indicate that Pamela is to be the junior partner in the marriage, and that B. will suffer little in the way of contradiction. Yet Pamela is exceedingly happy; her heroic action in the cause of virtue has brought her both socio-economic rewards, and public recognition of her moral status on the part of her social superiors. She now stands as an example to all women and - in keeping with Richardson's view of what constituted a truly 'feminine' character - would hardly resent being dominated by a man who, she informs us, 'pities my weakness of mind, allows for all my little foibles, and endeavours to dissipate my fears'.⁷⁶

CHAPTER FOUR

DAVID SIMPLE

In David Simple, Sarah Fielding tells the story of a young man who is attempting to find a 'real friend' in a society wherein avarice and injustice are typical rather than exceptional. However, Fielding nowhere indicates that such 'problems' arise from anything other than individual sources. The wrongs which her hero witnesses, learns of, or suffers, are never viewed as the product of an immoral and inequitable society, but are portrayed as stemming from the vanity, greed, or maliciousness of specific individuals. The question of why so many wicked or morally lax individuals exist in the society is not answered; it is simply asserted that they do constitute the majority. Beyond illustrating instances of greed, pride, and so on, Fielding can only bemoan the world - in which Christian values count for little and almost everyone acts only in accordance with their own interests or passions. Given this pessimistic picture of society, one might wonder why David and his friends do not conform to the pattern of individual wickedness. But again, no answer is offered, unless one counts the notion of individuals having different 'natures': for Sarah Fielding, some people are good-natured, whilst most are clearly bad-natured.

Although Fielding obviously wishes to condemn individualism, and its consequences, she does not make an integrated 'Christian' critique of her society. Therefore, David's attitudes and responses are not backed-up by a definite, and clearly outlined point of view from which he assesses the people and situations which he discovers in his search. Rather, he somehow conjures up what the author takes to be

appropriate feelings 'from the heart', that is, from his innate goodness. This contrasts with Henry Fielding's Amelia, wherein, as Alter has suggested, the problem of adhering to Christian values in a non-Christian society is presented as a dilemma caused not solely by wickedness in the individual, but - at least in part - by the existence of corrupt and unjust institutional structures, most notably, the legal framework.¹

Sarah Fielding makes little direct comment upon the subject of religion in her novel; whilst viewing Christianity as both desirable and correct or true, she does not consider specific beliefs or propositions in any detail. Her support for Christianity is then, a general one: she displays no particular preference for one interpretation over another, and shows no prejudice against Catholicism (unlike, for example, Defoe). Two minor characters even find Catholic solutions to their problems, with the approval of David and his friends.² Whilst David is supposed to be a Christian, there is very little reference to his religious beliefs but he is, nevertheless, considered by his friends to be an instrument of Providence.³ Camilla's father is another who is specifically mentioned as a Christian and, in spite of the manner in which he treats his daughter, is reckoned to be an essentially good man. His Christianity leads him to refrain from applying corporal punishment to his children, for he believes that such punishment induces servility - something inappropriate in a 'Christian' country, in which his children were in 'no danger' of becoming slaves. However, 'he often added that we did not scruple buying and selling Slaves in our Colonies; but then we took care not to convert them to our Faith, for it was not lawful to make Slaves of Christians'.⁴ This is a prime example of formal morality in a char-

acter whom Fielding deems generally good, and indeed, she does not criticize his view on this particular issue. Yet she has earlier written disdainfully of one aspect of a purely formal adherence to religion, when commenting upon David's prospective sister-in-law who understood no more than that she 'should' attend church every Sunday.⁵

At one point in the story we are shown the contrasting appearance and character of a clergyman and an atheist; this allows Fielding to make a crude case against atheism, by attributing solely good qualities to the former, and solely bad ones to the latter. The clergyman is described as neat, cheerful, and plainly dressed, whilst the atheist is dirty and unkempt and, 'In short, everything without was an Indication of the Confusion within, and he was a perfect Object of Horror'.⁶ In the course of the conversation between these two, the atheist speaks out against the vested interests of the clergy and, in the novels of this period, such criticism almost invariably indicates a 'bad' character; true to form, the atheist goes on to proposition Cynthia.⁷ Such conduct arises, in Fielding's opinion, 'from a natural Propensity to Vice': a propensity which we are implicitly invited to attribute to anyone not holding any religious belief.⁸ The arguments or discussion between the clergyman and the atheist revolve around the question of the existence of a deity and, not surprisingly, the few points made by the latter are poor and ineffectual; we do not learn what the minister's allegedly superior rejoinders are. But the clergyman, of course, only desires 'to do good', and gets the chance to do so when the atheist - whilst drunk - breaks a leg.⁹ It later becomes clear that the atheist was David's brother, Daniel, and

that he has subsequently died (as a result of his vices), having retracted his disbelief.¹⁰ During his life, he had used religion as a means of financially exploiting old women, his own disbelief supposedly resulting from his fear of the idea of a deity.¹¹ Needless to say, we are informed that his life was never happy.

Fielding appears to have viewed religion (as did Goldsmith) as having, primarily, a consolatory function; writing against suicide, she illustrates the point by the recovery of Stainville - which is dependent upon the fear and consolation provided by religion, for it does that, 'which no Human help could have done'.¹² David himself sees religion in terms of its soothing powers and, on hearing of the atheist's attempt to refute the proposition that there is a deity, he exclaims, 'Good God! is it possible there can be a Creature in the World so much an Enemy to himself, and to all Mankind, as to endeavour to take from Mens' Minds the greatest Comfort they can possibly enjoy!'.¹³ So, although there is no adequate defence of, or case made for, religion, it is apparent that Sarah Fielding held conventional and largely uninteresting opinions on the subject; she certainly did not attribute to religion the positive and dynamic features implied in Henry's Amelia.

Sarah Fielding's references to women in David Simple are - as with most of the other issues which she touches upon - in the form of more or less undeveloped observations. That women suffered considerable injustices in the eighteenth century is undisputed, and Fielding listed some of these by, for example, presenting a man prepared to sell his daughter; a 'good' wife who is treated abysmally; and then showing the lack of compassion (particularly from women) typically

felt for one unlucky enough to be 'ruined'.¹⁴ The issue of womens' status/lack of power is a constant theme, particularly regarding marriage and dependency. For example, we are shown a young woman who remains silent in company, because she is unmarried; Spatter explains to David, 'it is reckon'd a very ill-bred thing for Women to say any more than just to answer the Questions ask'd them, while they are Single'.¹⁵ Admittedly, this is portrayed as an idea found amongst the quality, but it is indicative of the more generally supported set of attitudes which placed women on a par with children - they were to be 'seen but not heard'. The fact that marriage was a primary aim for virtually all women, and educated women being viewed with suspicion and disdain, ensures that Cynthia is discouraged from reading anything other than the most vacuous romances. She is told, 'Miss must not enquire too far into things, it would turn her Brain; she had better mind her Needle-work, and such Things as were useful for Women; reading and poring on Books, would never get me a Husband'.¹⁶ Given the economic position of women, few things could be more important than a husband for, as Camilla states, 'good or bad Usage was to be had, just according to the Situation any Person appeared in, and...most People weigh'd the respect they paid others very exactly in a Scale against the Money they thought them worth'.¹⁷

As Sarah Fielding frequently reiterates, the position of female dependants - of whom there were many in the period - was often unenviable, for a typical 'benefactor', 'only desired the Wench to keep her House, to take care of her Children, to overlook all her Servants, to be ready to sit with her when she call'd her,---with many more trifling things'.¹⁸ Cynthia, who has suffered at the hands of such a patron, tells David that 'People who are so unhappy as to be in a

State of Dependance, are forced to do the most nauseous things that can be thought on, to please and humour their Patrons'.¹⁹ Hence the common term for such dependants, 'toad-eaters'. Sarah Fielding was herself a dependant, but there is no evidence to suggest that she was ill-used. Camilla, whose own status has declined due to her estrangement from her father, sees her own position as the worst one into which anyone could possibly fall: 'Alas, Sir,...there is no Situation so deplorable, no Condition so much to be pitied, as that of a Gentlewoman in real Poverty. I mean by real Poverty, not having sufficient to procure us Necessaries'.²⁰ What concerns Camilla here, however, is not that which one might truly consider to be absolutely 'necessary' - that is, food, shelter, clothing etc, but rather that which is necessary to maintain one's status. For, downward mobility results in one being ignored by one's 'friends', propositioned by men, and likewise morally-condemned and thus blamed for one's own misfortune. It is this which most hurts Camilla. Yet, bad as the lot of women such as Cynthia and Camilla may have been, their lives were surely easier than those of the majority of women in Britain at this time - neither of the characters is forced to resort to whoring, industrial or agricultural labour, or security-oriented marriages.²¹

Generally, Fielding wanted to criticize the ill-usage of female dependants, and likewise, the practice of viewing single women as commodities for the marriage-market. Cynthia - whose father has tried to press her into a marriage which she does not want - makes it clear that she is opposed to expedient/economically-oriented marriages, and goes on to reject the opinion that a wife should be content in the position of an 'upper-servant', functioning mainly to display her husband's wealth. For her, any woman prepared to marry a fool

for financial reasons is, in effect, prostituting herself. Additionally, Fielding wants to discredit fortune-hunters of either sex, such as Livia, and the atheist (whose exploitation of women is both financial and sexual). In contrast, Fielding asserts the importance of mutual love between spouses - something not very common in a society which included many who saw marriage in terms of a 'contract'/ financial transaction - and the possibility of women being constant in their affections.²² However, whilst the author does argue against wife-beating and other forms of oppression employed by husbands, she also warns that men should not indulge their wives to the point of 'spoiling' them. She too apparently thought that women, like children, were in need of some form of external control.²³

Of course, Fielding has something to say about the 'bad' qualities which women may display, but here she simply notes the supposedly feminine vices assumed by other eighteenth-century writers, for example, vanity, envy, inconstancy of affection, encouragement of rakes, extravagance, coquetry, and so on.²⁴ The author's own individualizing view of the world ensures that she does not perceive the injustice suffered by women as resulting from structured economic, political, and social inequality but - as with everything else wrong in the world - from the stupidity/vice of individuals. So, not surprisingly, her conception of a 'good' woman (such as Cynthia or Camilla) is basically that of her male counterparts: a good woman is one who conforms to the unrealistic and tendentious strictures of the male-dominated eighteenth century. Fielding more or less unquestioningly accepted the prototypical 'feminine' virtues of gentleness, obedience, pre-marital virginity, physical beauty etc which appear - as Utter and Needham have shown - as characteristic of heroines throughout the En-

glish novel, from its origins through to the late nineteenth century.²⁵ Therefore, Sarah Fielding remained almost completely uncritical of the ideological and social straight-jacket within which she and her female contemporaries lived. The didactic novel, in this form, amounted to little more than an entertainment, in which normative prescriptions/proscriptions and pious wishes were expressed, but social change never seriously discussed.

Insofar as Fielding reflects upon rank in David Simple, she adopts the standard poses of the period, with all of the hypocrisy which that implies. David does not believe rank to be the ultimate determining factor regarding 'goodness', but the only character whom he meets who most definitely argues against the importance of social position (Orgueil) turns out to be completely lacking in the most elementary compassion. And in practice, Orgueil himself mixes almost exclusively with his own (middle) class; thus, the only 'egalitarian' character in the story is shown as heartless and, by implication, hypocritical. David however is - unlike Camilla - interested in people of lower rank in his 'search' for a 'real friend', mainly because their, 'want of Education shewed more openly, and with less disguise, what their Natures were'. However, he finds little to gratify him amongst such social inferiors, 'indeed hitherto his Observations of that kind had given him but a melancholy Prospect'.²⁶

We can briefly outline the stock notions concerning class and status which appear throughout: servants are easily corrupted, and it is essential for their masters and mistresses to set them a good example. Nevertheless, people at the lower end of the socio-economic scale may be more likely to show some generosity in their dealings with others, particularly if those others are destitute; they are

also - according to the atheist - more gullible.²⁷ At the other end of the social continuum are the upper class, whose major vice is - in Fielding's view - selfishness and superficiality; this is the status-conscious world of fashion and gambling, in which the poor are (when considered at all) regarded with the utmost contempt. The men of this class - regardless of their sexually-exploitative motives - deem their attentions towards lesser women a great favour and, to illustrate the point, Fielding introduces the archetypal lecherous peer, who in this case partly redeems himself by an altruistic act.²⁸ Yet, in Cynthia's opinion, which I take here to be that of the author, the rich and fashionable - by their endless desire for unnecessary and ultimately worthless products - have an important economic function. She assumes that, given the inequitable distribution of property (a fact which she does not consider susceptible to change), the lower class - in this instance, merchants - can only make a living by catering for the passions of the wealthy.²⁹ Booth, in Henry Fielding's novel, Amelia, expresses a similar belief that people necessarily act according to their uppermost passions; he is shown to be wrong. But Cynthia's view of the upper class constitutes an apology for both the vanity and the luxury of the wealthy, and this passes without comment either from the author or from any of the other characters.

Whilst Orgueil, as previously noted, is not presented as a good character, he is not without insight, and is well aware of the way in which money and manners are assessed in comparison to other qualities; as he tells David, 'while a Man can support himself like a Gentleman, and has Parts sufficient to contribute to the Entertainment of Mankind, his Company will be courted, where Poverty and Merit will not

be admitted'. However, we are later offered - in somewhat disguised form - the view that the ambitious and/or avaricious are not, whether they realize it or not, happy. They do not, we are informed, have peace of mind; this is the supposed prerogative of the poor.³⁰

In spite of some condemnation of the wealthy, the author also invites us to disapprove of what are allegedly typical attitudes and actions amongst the poor (this includes an attack upon beggars).³¹ Significantly, the only class who are not in some way badly discredited are the middle class - from whom David and his friends are drawn. Sarah Fielding's contention is that 'human Miseries', 'arise from the Envy and Malignity of Mankind'.³² The solution which she offers is both conservative and functionalist, an apology for the power of the wealthy and an admonition to the poor to be content and passive in the face of exploitation and oppression: 'Were all Mankind contented to exert their own Faculties for the common Good, neither envying those who in any respect have a Superiority over them, nor despising such as they think their Inferiors; real Happiness would be attainable'. In Fielding's view then, one must simply accept that some are possessed of 'Advantages of Nature, or Station'; this fact is not to be inquired into or challenged (to do so would be, according to the author, to act merely from 'envy'), but rather accepted.³³ The underprivileged are thus told to deny their own material interests for the pursuit of altruism, whilst the mercenary and self-interested rich are vindicated in their inequitable possession of power and property, and it is piously hoped that they might refrain from openly despising those whom they oppress. In her conclusion, Fielding writes of the happiness of her hero and his friends and claims that, 'it is in the power of every Community to attain it, if every Member of it would

perform the Part allotted him by Nature, or his Station in Life, with a sincere Regard to the Interest of the whole'.³⁴ In other words, if everyone was 'good', and fulfilled his or her function regardless of what it might be, and without considering the justice or injustice of existing social relations, then everything would be fine. A more direct statement of conservative ideology can hardly be imagined; Fielding does try to sugar the pill with the notion that all stations are equal - everyone has a part to play - and that realizing this should make one satisfied, and determined to work 'for the common Good'.³⁵ But the 'common good' here means nothing other than the interests of those whose social, political, and economic advantages were already well-established.

A work such as David Simple can only serve to indirectly strengthen the evils which Sarah Fielding claimed to feel uneasy about. For, the individualist ideology which lay behind the avaricious and self-interested attitudes which she condemned, was the very dogma which informed her own atomistic view of her society. Her conclusion implies the comparatively easy achievement of harmony within a communally-oriented society (totally unlike the one which she has sought to illustrate). But one of David's observations indicates that the author doubted the feasibility of her blueprint for the 'good' society, for he concludes that the world might be a better place if people acknowledged the competitive nature of their relations with others. Throughout the novel, Fielding directs all her efforts towards stressing the individual sources of good and evil, and completely ignores or overlooks the societal aspect of her subject-matter. And, given her account of human nature, the solution which she puts forward is quite invalid; if she were correct in her assumption that

human beings could be classified as good or bad 'by nature' then - as nature is for her determined outside of human control - the problem would not be susceptible to any humanly-constructed remedy. It could only be resolved by a transformation of human 'nature' by, presumably, God.

When Sarah Fielding wrote her continuation, Volume the Last, the pessimism which she had displayed in the original novel was - if anything - more strongly held. She confesses her belief, 'That solid and lasting Happiness is not to be attained in this World'.³⁶ David and his friends, having moved away from London into the country, enjoy happiness for eleven years, during which time all of the company are content, Cynthia and Camilla prove to be remarkable housewives, and the latter's father - now safely removed from the influence of the 'wicked woman', Livia, - begins to savour life again. However, due to the maliciousness of some new villains such as Ratcliff, and that of their old 'friend' Orgueil, and his wife, the circumstances of the major characters go from bad to worse. At the end of Volume the Last, only Cynthia and David's daughter, Camilla, survive; thus Fielding points up the hopelessness which pervaded David Simple: the only protection from a corrupt, self-interested, and individualistic society is the truly individual and transcendent escape afforded by death. Sarah Fielding then, was both appalled and overwhelmed by the harsh consequences of individualism, yet as she failed to realize the historically-specific nature of the phenomenon, and rejected the possibility of social (as opposed to individual) change, she could see no prospect of her society becoming more just and compassionate. This is probably why she produced what must be one of the most melancholy prose fictions of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE

AMELIA

Amongst other things, Amelia is about feminine virtue - not just in the narrow sense of chastity alone, but with wider reference to the family and the outside world. Perhaps, as Fielding's contemporary, John Cleland, suggested, 'The chief and capital purport of this work is to inculcate the superiority of virtuous conjugal love to all other joys'.¹ Yet, in addition to this particularistic form of love, there is a broader conception of Christian love to be seen throughout the novel. The degree of importance which Fielding accorded to marriage and the family had developed from within Protestantism, particularly - as Watt and others have pointed out - from Puritanism. But, by this time, such emphasis had become part of a more general ideology of conservatism and Anglicanism; Fielding himself was not, of course, a Puritan.²

If Amelia represents the Christian woman of good sense and virtue, there are a number of other female characters in the novel who are located elsewhere along Fielding's continuum of feminine goodness; the women against whom we are tacitly invited to compare the heroine all display - at least for the author - considerable faults. This may be simply a device with which Fielding sought to underline the exemplary nature of Amelia, but it may also - I suspect - be an indication of the patronising attitudes and suspicion with which Fielding and most of his contemporaries viewed women generally. Such attitudes have never prevented their adherents from elevating specific

women, as opposed to the sex overall; we are continually reminded that Amelia does differ from all of her fellow-women, as she is held to be a paradigm or ideal. In her husband's words, 'The deity I adore'.³ Predictably, her virtues included immense love for her husband and children, chastity, obedience, compassion, and so on; this frequently leads Fielding to portray her, as Alter suggests, 'frozen in the conventional poses of virtuous womanhood, a sort of modern version of the Worthy Wife of Proverbs xxxi'.⁴ But before considering Amelia in greater depth, we must first turn to the lesser women in the novel.

The most striking contrast to Amelia appears in the character of Miss Mathews; her stance towards the world is composed of a mixture of cynicism and overpowering passion - in this latter respect, she is both more 'romantic' and egocentric than any of the other females in the work. Her inability or unwillingness to restrain herself, particularly, sexually, leads to her 'seduction', to concubinage, to attempted murder and adultery, and further causes her to try to wreck Booth and Amelia's marriage. Symptomatically, she cares little for 'virtue and religion', which she counts as the tools of hypocrisy; in the discussion with Booth wherein this is made clear, it likewise becomes obvious that her notion of love is both selfish and carnal. Thus Miss Mathews represents something of an archetypal wicked woman, being cunning, sensuous, and completely uninterested in the family unit - a polar opposite to Fielding's heroine, whose very innocence leads her close to snares which the worldly would perceive immediately. Unlike Richardson's Pamela, Amelia is so innocent that it does not occur to her that anyone might attempt her virtue.⁵ Miss Mathews would deem anyone as ingenuous as Amelia a fool, for her own view

is that relations between human beings are typically based upon appearance and mutual deceit, whether they occur between members of the same sex or between men and women. In her conversations with Booth, she locates the faults of both sexes - but especially those of women - as arising from men: 'I believe that from the damned inconstancy of your sex to ours proceeds half the miseries of mankind', and, 'Oh! Mr.Booth, our sex is d—ned by the want of tenderness in yours'.⁶ Nevertheless, we never doubt Miss Mathews' ability to look after herself (her very robustness being alien to the tradition of heroines), and if she suffers eventually through becoming, 'disagreeable in her person and immensely fat', she yet retains power over James, as his concubine.⁷ All in all, given Fielding's didactic purpose, she escapes rather lightly; as the most reprehensible woman of the piece, she has an easier time than, for example, Mrs.Bennet (later, Atkinson) to whom we now turn.

Mrs.Bennet is initially presented to us as a rather sombre and modest sort of woman, but we soon learn that she is susceptible to that vice so severely condemned by Puritans, vanity. It is this weakness which encourages her to take chances which result in her own seduction by the peer who later seeks to capture Amelia; the consequences of her earlier misdoings have caused her husband to commit suicide. Mrs.Bennet is by no means a really wicked woman; in fact, it is she who warns Amelia of the intentions of the peer and his procuress, Mrs.Ellison. Even so, Fielding makes sure that the reader remains aware of her continuing vanity (mainly with respect to her learning), and contrives conversations between her and Dr.Harrison to this end. It is as if Fielding almost shares James' expressed opinion regarding womens' minds, for, when Booth claims to be knowledgeable

in this respect, James remarks, 'I don't however, much envy your knowledge...for I never think their minds worth considering'.⁸ It may be that Anna Laetitia Barbauld's assessment is accurate when, in considering Fielding's treatment of Mrs. Bennet, she comments, 'Any portion of learning in women is constantly united in this author with something disagreeable', and, 'Mrs. Bennet...seems introduced purely to show the author's dislike to learned women'.⁹ Apart from her vanity, it also transpires that Mrs. Bennet is something of a hypocrite; having spoken strongly against second marriages, she herself later re-marries. Moreover, notwithstanding the high premium which she places upon learning, she states: 'Indeed, I believe that the first wish of our sex is to be handsome'.¹⁰ Later on in the story, she goes so far as to risk Amelia's reputation for the purpose of promoting the interests of her own husband, but it is in Mrs. Bennet's dialogues with Harrison that Fielding shows what he seems to think is her worst aspect.

Dr. Harrison, the moral spokesman of the novel, does not (as many commentators have noted) come across as the good-humoured man Fielding leads us to expect, and his sole purpose in speaking with Mrs. Bennet appears to be to exercise his contempt for her education. In addition to discrediting her with his superior knowledge, he likewise suggests some undesirable consequences of female learning which Mrs. Bennet's behaviour show to be actual. For example, Harrison asks, 'if a learned lady should meet with an unlearned husband, might she not be apt to despise him?'. Mrs. Bennet disagrees yet, in a later and similarly antagonistic argument with Harrison, her (unlearned) husband ventures an opinion to which she retorts: 'I am sure you can be no judge in these matters'.¹¹ As Battestin notes, in his con-

sideration of Fielding's 'good women', 'A true wife, he feels, must attend to the useful domestic duties and must be a good-natured, sensible, and loving companion, yet willing to submit to the superior judgement of her husband'.¹² So, when Mrs. Bennet refers to 'that nonsensical opinion that the difference of sexes causes any difference in the mind', Fielding has already done his best to convince us that this woman is a vain, hypocritical fool, in spite of her apparent learning.¹³ It is significant that Amelia, his ideal, has not had the dubious benefits of a classical education, but relies solely upon her own good sense and Christian virtue plus directives from the two men in her life - her husband, and her spiritual adviser, Harrison.

All of the other female characters in Amelia - with the exception of Amelia's childhood nurse (Atkinson's mother) - are similarly guilty of assorted failings. Amelia's mother is both malicious and snobbish; her sister is envious and tries to swindle the heroine out of her rightful inheritance; her onetime friend, Mrs. James, becomes conceited and only values the ceremonial aspect of friendship; her landlady, Mrs. Ellison, turns out to be a procuress (as does Mrs. Trent) and even Amelia's maid finally deserts her, stealing everything of value in the process. The sheer frequency and diversity of female misdoings in the novel certainly set our heroine apart - as Fielding intended - but do not add to the credibility of Amelia's fine example.

Whilst Amelia does occasionally display that weak physical constitution which Watt has described as 'sociosomatic snobbery', her general attitude is one of forbearance, cheerfulness, and devotion to her wifely duties.¹⁴ The only instance of the heroine being in the wrong, occurs when she tells Harrison of a challenge sent to her husband by James. Although Amelia obviously does not want Booth to put

his life at risk, she recognizes that 'honour' demands that he accept the challenge. To this, Harrison replies with some vehemence, 'Honour! nonsense! Can honour dictate to him to disobey the express commands of his Maker, in compliance with a custom established by a set of blockheads, founded on false principles of virtue, in direct opposition to the plain and positive precepts of religion and tending manifestly to give a sanction to ruffians, and to protect them in all the ways of impudence and villany?'.¹⁵ When Amelia points out that 'custom' and the 'opinion of the world' are perhaps important in this instance, Harrison shows his disdain for such factors and goes on to remark upon the practice of duelling, 'Chiefly, indeed, it hath been upheld by the nonsense of women, who, either from their extreme cowardice and desire of protection, or, as Mr. Bayle thinks, from their excessive vanity, have been always forward to countenance a set of hectors and bravoos, and to despise all men of modesty and sobriety; though these are often, at bottom, not only the better but the braver men'. Harrison is by now so inflamed by the topic that he continues long after Amelia has completely submitted to his opinion; he goes on to accuse her of a 'desire of feeding the passion of female vanity with the heroism of her man', and it becomes apparent that whatever Amelia says on the subject, Harrison will deem her wrong. Drawing upon the example of Andromache dissuading Hector from danger, he comments, 'This is indeed a weakness, but it is an amiable one, and becoming the true feminine character'; to dissuade then, or to encourage, is to be wrong - but the former failing is more acceptable in Harrison's ideological view, being more genuinely feminine.¹⁶

Seduction plays a central part in Amelia whether realized - as in the cases of Miss Mathews, Mrs. Bennet, and indeed, Booth - or merely

attempted. Amelia is herself in danger from two of her husband's acquaintances, Bagillard and James, in addition to the mysterious peer. She never appreciates the danger involved, however, assuming that: 'a woman's virtue is always her sufficient guard'.¹⁷ In case this is interpreted as stupidity, Fielding later makes the point that, 'it is not want of sense, but want of suspicion, by which innocence is often betrayed'.¹⁸ As noted above, what Fielding here takes to be characteristic of innocence, viz, naivety, contrasts markedly with Richardson's view of female innocence as displayed by Pamela. At the very beginning of that saga, the heroine's suspicions are aroused via her parents' fears for her 'virtue', and this ensures that Pamela, although innocent in the practical/sexual sense of the term, is wary in her dealings with B. and his servants. Amelia's innocence is less formal, and it is implied that such innocence is at least partly dependent upon her 'naturally' good disposition (although Fielding, elsewhere in the novel, stresses the importance of, for example, a religious education for children, and the social forces which contribute to an individual's character: 'it is not from nature, but from education and habit that our wants are chiefly derived').¹⁹

Unlike the more typical seduction theme found in eighteenth-century English novels - in which a man from the quality pursues an innocent, middle-class girl - the emphasis in Amelia is upon the adulterous nature of of the lechers involved. And, insofar as the novel can be taken as a (limited) critique of Fielding's society, it is clear that adultery is viewed as peculiarly significant. As Alter maintains, in his penetrating analysis, 'adultery itself is a kind of paradigm of all that is wrong in a society where Christian values have been discarded'. Additionally, it is 'the perfect ex-

pression of a ruthlessly egoistic hedonism, a cynically exploitative, utterly disengaged relationship to humanity which makes a man willing to inflict all kinds of suffering on others for the sake of his own momentary gratification'.²⁰ The serious nature of adultery lies in the fact that it not only undermines the relation of husband to wife, but also threatens what Fielding and other Christian writers of the period took to be the primary foundation of society - the family. The kind of selfish individualism which the peer represents is thus contrasted with a more traditional kind of Christian benevolence, which begins in the family but also extends to the outside world, in the form of Christian charity or brotherly love. Therefore, virtuous characters in Amelia are less immediately concerned with their own 'state of grace' than, for example, the heroes/heroines of either Defoe or Richardson.

The fullest denunciation of adultery in the work is made by Dr. Harrison in his letter to James, which by chance is found and publicly mocked at the very masquerade where the peer hopes to seduce Amelia. The place is important, for Fielding suggests - via his characters - the morally-dubious nature of such entertainments, and the corrupt and lax attitudes of those who delight in them.²¹ Interestingly, whilst Harrison's condemnation begins by noting the religious law against adultery, he goes on to claim that it is likewise unnatural, and a violation of the husband's property rights: 'If it had not been so expressly forbidden in Scripture, still the law of nature would have yielded light enough for us to have discovered the great horror and atrociousness of this crime'. Also, 'there is scarce any guilt which deserves to be more severly punished. It includes in it almost every injury and every mischief which one man can do to, or

can bring on, another. It is robbing him of his property'.²²

Harrison continues, arguing that the consequences of adultery are likely to include the breaking-up of families, an end to 'industry', disloyalty to King and friends, and, possibly, murder and suicide (as an example of the latter, we have previously learnt of the case of Mrs. Bennet's first husband).

Almost all of the action in Amelia takes place in London, which, most historians agree, was the place in England for finding instances of (particularly sexual) 'immorality'. Rudé, writing of Hanoverian London, suggests that, 'this was a period when public morality and conjugal fidelity, as displayed by the fashionable classes, were at low ebb. Prostitutes openly advertized their wares; gentlemen kept mistresses as a matter of course, if not as a matter of honour: George II set the example (after having been set it, in turn, by his father) by taking his mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth, with him on State visits to Hanover'.²³ Similarly, Jarret contends, 'If married women in the labouring classes were made miserable by violence and poverty, those among the aristocracy were made equally miserable by vice and impropriety. Only in the contented ranks of the "middling sort of people" was the paradise for women to be found'.²⁴ Given the prevailing attitudes of the rich and fashionable - the frequenters of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, both of which Fielding clearly saw as places of corruption and immorality - it is not surprising that Booth, 'was convinced that every man acted entirely from that passion that was uppermost', even though his own behaviour does, in many respects, contradict this notion.²⁵ Yet Booth's 'theory' often finds confirmation within the novel, and this is to be expected, according to Dr. Harrison, for quite simple reasons: 'In the great sin of adultery, for

instance; hath the government provided any law to punish it? or doth the priest take any care to correct it? On the contrary, is the most notorious practice of it any detriment to a man's fortune or to his reputation in the world?'. Harrison concludes that the answer to these questions is, 'no', and further remarks, 'What wonder then if the community in general treat this monstrous crime as a matter of jest, and that men give way to the temptations of a violent appetite, when the indulgence of it is protected by law and countenanced by custom?'.²⁶ One might argue that Fielding's conservatism is apparent here for, although such passages constitute social criticism, it is criticism of a particular type; Fielding did not accept that any improvement in moral standards was possible unless new standards were legally enforced.²⁷ Once again, in spite of the more sociologically-informed observations throughout the novel, the idea of human nature/natural dispositions to good or evil has found its way into Fielding's narrative. In this respect, he appears unable to relinquish one of the ideas which he apparently wished to attack. As Alter points out, in Amelia, 'the old dichotomy of good and bad nature is partly replaced by another one of human nature and society', but the word 'partly' should be underlined here; ultimately, it seems that human nature does, for Fielding, form the basis of all social ills and thus, the corrupt society.²⁸

In Amelia Fielding reiterates the theme of societal corruption which, Harrison asserts, is 'clogging up and destroying the very vitals of this country'.²⁹ The law is one of Fielding's major targets, as he illustrates the bribery necessary to ensure reasonable treatment at the hands of jailors and baillifs, and the misuse of judicial power by Justice Thrasher, who sentences according to his

own whim and the apparent status of the unfortunates who appear before him. In Booth's case, 'The justice, perceiving the criminal to be but shabbily dressed, was going to commit him without asking any further questions'.³⁰ So, money and status determine the quality of 'justice' one receives in Fielding's portrayal; it is only because Miss. Mathews can provide money that Booth spends so little time in prison. We later learn of the part played by the attorney, Murphy, in swindling Amelia out of her inheritance, and it seems as if almost everyone involved in the process of legal administration is corrupt. Fielding, via Dr. Harrison, states of lesser legal functionaries, 'there are none whose conduct should be so strictly watched as that of these necessary evils in the society, as their office concerns poor creatures who cannot do themselves justice, and as they are generally the worst of men who undertake it'.³¹ Nevertheless, the criticisms of the legal system which Fielding makes are somewhat blunted by his introduction - probably for the purposes of his plot - of an upright and honest J.P. at the end of the novel, who proceeds to reward the minor villains with their just desserts. One wonders whether the 'necessary evils' mentioned above are only necessary in an un-Christian society. Sometimes, the author appears to want to make this claim, as when Harrison says,

The nature of man is far from being in itself evil; it abounds with benevolence, charity, and pity, coveting praise and honour, and shunning shame and disgrace. Bad education, bad habits, and bad customs debauch our nature, and drive it headlong as it were into vice. The governors of the world, and I am afraid the priesthood, are answerable for the badness of it. Instead of discouraging wickedness to the utmost of their power, both are too apt to connive at it.³²

However, to make any claims - whether positive or negative - about the nature of 'man' is to employ a paradigm which directly opposes Fielding's own sociological pronouncements. I would argue that

Harrison's later discussions of the problem of corruption and the possibility of the 'good' society throw light upon the kind of source which Fielding's view is derived from. And, the assumptions behind such thinking do, I maintain, rest upon the belief that human beings are naturally disposed towards selfishness and a disregard for others, not benevolence and so on.

Dr. Harrison's conversation with one whom he sees as a possible patron for Booth, provides an insight into the organic-functionalist character of the author's perspective: 'corruption of the body politic as naturally tends to dissolution as in the natural body'.³³ This corruption supposedly arises from an improper distribution of functions which, apart from being impractical and harmful to both individual and public well-being, is likewise morally wrong, for, 'to deny a man the preferment which he merits, and to give it to another man who doth not merit it, is a manifest act of injustice, and is consequently inconsistent with both honour and honesty'.³⁴ Public and private good, 'can never be completed nor obtained but by employing all persons according to their capacities'; this view, however, does not anticipate Marx, but looks back to Plato's account of the good society as envisaged in The Republic.³⁵ Clearly, if it is the 'governors of the world' and the 'priesthood' who are responsible for the corrupt state of society, then one is invited to suppose that if such rulers were good men, then a just society would naturally follow (not, of course, without extensive control through the use of force and ideology), as suggested in Plato's vision of the role of the philosopher-king. And, in case one is tempted to imagine that Fielding is simply advocating what might currently be termed a 'meritocracy' when he states, 'Wherever true merit is liable to be superseded by favour

and partiality, and men are entrusted with offices without regard to capacity or integrity, the affairs of that state will always be in a deplorable condition', it is worth remembering that the best example of modern social organization was - for Fielding - that achieved under Cromwell, who, 'carried the reputation of England higher than it ever was at any other time'.³⁶ Additionally, whilst it is true that Fielding attacked many of the attitudes surrounding class and status which were current in his time, it would be a gross exaggeration to claim that he was - in any contemporary sense - an egalitarian. It was not the existence of social differentiation and an unequal distribution of power and money that was wrong, but rather the fact that status claims were upheld over and above moral worth, and power was frequently misused, according to Fielding. The quality were criticised for their conduct, not because elite groups were distasteful to Fielding per se. Undoubtedly, this author's view of class and status was less obviously rigid than many of his contemporaries, as we shall see below, but at the same time, he was no radical.

The most important working-class character in Amelia is Atkinson, who is devoted to Amelia and Booth; apart from being remarkably virtuous, he is also well aware of his place vis-à-vis his social superiors. His deferential stance towards Booth is usually accompanied by statements such as, 'I know the distance which is between us'.³⁷ Every other character is similarly conscious of Atkinson's low status, and his exemplary conduct is deemed all the more remarkable given his class position. In the course of Booth's conversations with Miss Mathews, Atkinson's generosity is mentioned, and causes her some surprise: 'Good heavens!...how astonishing is such behaviour in so low a fellow'. To this, Booth replies, 'I thought so myself...and yet I

know not, on a more strict examination into the matter, why we should be more surprised to see greatness of mind discover itself in one degree or rank of life than in another'.³⁸ Booth continues in this vein, pointing out the frequency of bad conduct amongst the upper classes and the occasional instances of 'whatever is really great and good' which can be found amongst the more humble. Later on in the story Booth remarks, 'there are very few who are generous that are not poor', as by now his own experience has indicated to him the lack of fairness and altruism characteristic of the wealthy and powerful.³⁹ Even so, there is never any sign that Booth believes that rank can be either ignored or abolished; the point which Fielding wants to make is simply that rank cannot be used as a reliable indicator of the moral worth of an individual. In all of his dealings with Atkinson Booth does not once treat his inferior as an equal, nor does he attempt to modify the extreme deference which Atkinson continually shows. The discussion of Atkinson which takes place between Amelia and his new wife (Mrs. Bennet), provides a further example of the importance of rank, notwithstanding the benevolent - yet patronising - attitude of the heroine.

Amelia is obviously fond of Atkinson who, she states, has 'great tenderness of heart and a gentleness of manners not often to be found in any man, and much seldomer in persons of his rank'. This reference to rank is not appreciated by Atkinson's wife, who retorts, 'And why not in his rank?...Indeed Mrs. Booth, we rob the lower order of mankind of their due'; she then goes on to stress the importance of education (predictably), noting that it does not ensure that those who receive it - viz, the upper classes - become particularly virtuous.⁴⁰ But the very terms which Atkinson's wife uses suggest that she has

not abandoned a concern for class and status, and one doubts whether she would be such a staunch defender of the 'lower orders' were it not for her recent marriage to Atkinson. If additional evidence of Mrs. Bennet's less than egalitarian beliefs were required, then we have only to peruse the comments which she has made twenty-four pages previously. In telling Amelia her history, she claims that her Aunt (another educated, yet far from 'good' woman) turned the neighbours against herself and her first husband, 'which is always easy enough to do amongst the vulgar against persons who are their superiors in rank, and, at the same time, their inferiors in fortune'.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Mrs. Bennet's later arguments bring forth a sympathetic response from Amelia, who answers, 'How monstrous then...is the opinion of those who consider our matching ourselves the least below us in degree as a kind of contamination!'.⁴² Somewhat incongruously, Amelia appears as one who has never thought of this particular issue prior to her talk with Atkinson's wife, in spite of the fact that she too has married one of lower rank. With regard to women marrying 'downwards', there is no question of Fielding's view being generally held by his contemporaries; as Watt notes, 'Dr. Johnson, for instance, regarded it as a "perversion" for a woman to marry beneath her'. He then goes on to give his own explanation for this view (mentioned earlier) which revolves around the idea that women were supposed to be immune to sexual feelings.⁴³ However, I suspect that Watt's view of the matter accepts too easily an ideological proposition which few eighteenth-century men and women actually believed themselves. The real point behind the objection to women marrying socio-economic inferiors was, in my opinion, related to sexism and class dominance. Given that the predominant eighteenth-century conception of marriage

involved women - of whatever rank - being subjugated by their husbands, a genteel woman who married, for example, an artisan, would necessarily be (in theory, at least) under his power. And the ruling class - though unwilling to disrupt this aspect of male dominance - did not relish the prospect of high-status women falling under the power of men from humble origins.⁴⁴

Mrs. Bennet continues her diatribe by arguing that contemporary attitudes towards rank are, 'extremely incongruous with a religion which professes to know no difference of degree, but ranks all mankind on the footing of brethren! Of all kinds of pride there is none so contemptible'.⁴⁵ Fielding's interpretation of this religiously-oriented equality was - I suspect - far more literal than that of many other eighteenth-century English writers and thinkers. Although one might be sceptical as to how far Mrs. Bennet can be thought to be a vehicle for Fielding's beliefs here, as he has elsewhere taken pains to discredit her, I think one must conclude that these are his own opinions. Dr. Harrison's speech to Amelia (also concerning Atkinson) tends to confirm this: 'I am pleased with the behaviour of you both to that worthy fellow, in opposition to the custom of the world; which, instead of being formed on the precepts of our religion to consider each other as brethren, teaches us to regard those who are a degree below us, either in rank or fortune, as a species of beings of an inferior order in the creation'.⁴⁶ Yet having noted this, it must be reiterated that Fielding's position is essentially a conservative one; it is a belief in a 'common humanity' which provides the basis for any 'egalitarianism' displayed, not a conviction that individuals are - or should be - equal in, for example, a political context. For, apart from the corruption of the quality, the thing which our

author really wishes to attack is not class dominance/privilege, but rather snobbery - Fielding's view on this is articulated through the example of Mrs. James who, having married a wealthy man, forgets the true nature of friendship and acts towards Amelia with decorum, but no feeling. Therefore, the benevolence which Fielding believes to be appropriate when dealing with the lower orders tends towards a form of paternalism; equality can only be such in the eyes of God.

Our heroine, Amelia, is certainly not proud, or guilty of assessing people on the basis of rank; not only does she suffer from marrying downwards but moreover, when Booth's situation becomes so bad that he decides (on Harrison's advice) to take up farming, 'She was so kind as to say that all stations of life were equal to her, unless one afforded her more of my company than another'. Likewise, Amelia maintains that, 'none deserve happiness, or, indeed, are capable of it, who make any particular station a necessary ingredient'.⁴⁷ In spite of this, Booth still sees the move as one which degrades his status. Amelia later reaffirms her beliefs when she states, 'I would not be ashamed of being the wife of an honest man in any station', and, from what we learn of her character, we are inclined to take this claim as genuine.⁴⁸ At the close of the novel when, as far as Amelia is aware, the couple's fortune is at its lowest point, Booth asks his wife, 'How shall we live?'. And, Amelia's immediate reply is, 'By our labour...I am able to labour, and I am sure I am not ashamed of it'. She adds, 'why should I complain of my hard fate while so many who are much poorer than I enjoy theirs? Am I of a superior rank of being to the wife of the honest labourer? Am I not partaker of one common nature with her?'.⁴⁹ Noble as this appears, it is nonetheless true that Amelia has never experienced any

work worth mentioning (even during their hardest times, the couple keep a maid); Fielding was not about to let her start at this stage.

Perhaps, as Price has suggested, 'Fielding can reward his heroes because they do not seek a reward. He wishes to free our faith in order, as Pope does, from any simple-minded expectation that goodness will find its reward on earth. The only reward it can find there is that it pays to itself: the pleasure it finds in doing good and in sustaining its integrity'.⁵⁰ However, if Price is right about the author's intention, one might conclude that Fielding has failed, for, the conclusion of Amelia - in which villains are punished and the good rewarded - seems to me to reinforce this 'simple-minded expectation'.

CHAPTER SIX

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield traces the fortunes of a rural clergyman and his family in a manner which alternates between the comic, and the apparently serious; there is some controversy over how far Goldsmith intended his main character, Dr. Primrose, to be a satirical figure, but, whilst not wishing to enter into that controversy, I am treating the novel as non-satirical insofar as it deals with issues such as politics and religion.¹ I would claim that, although certain incidents and actions in the novel are clearly supposed to be humorous, Goldsmith treats both political and, in the main, religious notions as important rather than comical. The novel was taken at face-value by Goldsmith's contemporaries, frequently being praised for the high 'moral' tone which reviewers appear to have discovered in the work. This in itself provides some justification for approaching it as a serious piece; the author's intention (even if one accepts that Goldsmith was as sophisticated as Hopkins suggests) is merely one factor to be considered. In a sociological study of literature intention must always be balanced against the overall social context of the work, including the response of readers and critics, as this remains a far more reliable indicator of its social relevance.

The basic plot of the novel concerns the vicissitudes faced by the Vicar and his family; these consist of a series of misfortunes, usually arising from the Vicar's naive and over-optimistic stance towards the world, including a lost fortune, confidence tricks, a broken engagement, a seduced daughter, and a domestic fire. Apart

from the Vicar himself, characters include both good and bad aristocrats, a wise and a foolish daughter, a status-seeking, money-grabbing wife, a penitent villain, and so on. Firstly, we can examine the author's presentation of female characters; I would suggest that Goldsmith displays a consistent and systematically sexist view of them in particular, and of women in general.

Family life is an important subject in The Vicar of Wakefield, being one of Primrose's major preoccupations; he is comically dogmatic - as a strict 'monogamist' - on the issue of marriage, and frequently speaks at length about his children.² However, Primrose sees no need to be involved in the day-to-day running of the household; whilst his wife and daughters perform domestic tasks (practical labour), he concentrates, apart from a little agricultural work, upon spiritual work ('theory'), or so he claims: 'The temporal concerns of our family were chiefly committed to my wife's management; as to the spiritual, I took them entirely under my own direction'.³ In fact, he does not fulfil his responsibilities here, as his lax attitude towards his children - and the consequences of this - later prove. Although Deborah, the Vicar's wife, is held responsible for all things pertaining to the household, there is never any doubt (regardless of the Vicar's frequent stupidity) as to who is the more intellectually able of the two, at least, not in Primrose's mind. And, in spite of the fact that Deborah often disobeys her husband, the power structure within the family clearly favours the Vicar. Primrose does - as far as he is able - call the tune, and has an epitaph for his (living) wife, which supposedly acts to keep her on the right track: 'It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly

put her in mind of her end'.⁴ Even in this short epitaph, one can see that whilst Deborah has a 'duty' to her husband (i.e. he has rights), in return, she has nothing more than a promise of his fidelity. Additionally, the epitaph employs the notion that her vanity or 'passion for fame' is a strong incentive to complicit behaviour, as is the reminder of her 'end'. Throughout, Deborah is shown to be motivated by a desire to improve herself and her family via her daughters: a wise marriage being seen as a solution to the problem of inadequate finances and lowered status. Her status pretensions are underlined shortly after Burchell saves Sophy's life, for, the Vicar tells us, 'if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon'.⁵ As the reader already knows, and as the Vicar reiterates, the position of the family is such that any aloofness of this kind is quite inappropriate; however, shortly afterwards, Primrose adopts a similar position.

Primrose's family is, in his words, 'The little republic to which I gave laws'; this does not point - as the notion of 'republic' might imply - towards the Puritan conception of the family, but rather indicates the more general patriarchal assumptions behind the Vicar's outlook. It may well be ironic, too, for the laws are not always complied with.⁶ In many areas, the Vicar's attitude - which is that of Goldsmith, with his Tory-Anglican sympathies - towards his wife and daughters is extremely patronising. When, for example, Deborah and the girls spend time on their appearance, the Vicar lectures them on vanity and mocks them in a manner designed to embrace the reader into the superior stance which he displays. It is also worth noting that, in the exchange between the couple which takes

place at this point, the Vicar refers to his wife by the term 'child'; women and children were seen, by many eighteenth-century men, to occupy roughly the same position in the social structure as far as status and rights were concerned. Given the position of eighteenth-century women, such a view was not so very far from the truth.

The arrival of Primrose's landlord, Squire Thornhill, allows him further scope for sexist observations as, whilst he remains wary of the Squire, at least two of the women are favourably impressed by what he terms the 'power of fortune and fine clothes'.⁷ The situation also provides Primrose with an opportunity to delineate for the reader the 'contrariness' of women; having learnt that one daughter, Sophy, offers no words against Thornhill, whilst the other, Olivia claims to dislike him, the Vicar states, 'I found by this, that Sophia internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him'.⁸ Primrose, ever aware of status differences, had earlier made a half-hearted attempt to discourage any relationship between the Squire and his daughters, feeling that, 'such disproportionate acquaintances' are harmful; in this instance, he turns out to be right.⁹ However, the Vicar does little or nothing to really prevent or discourage Thornhill's pursuance of Olivia, and it is likely that Goldsmith wanted the reader to recognize this as a mistake on Primrose's part. It is obvious that Thornhill is a bad character; this is indicated by his anti-Church comments, which lead the Vicar to muse, 'I could have been better pleased with one that was poor and honest, than this fine gentleman with his fortune and infidelity'.¹⁰ In this, the Vicar is deceiving himself, as, when Sophy shows her regard for Burchell, Primrose remarks, 'nor could I conceive how so sensible a girl as my youngest could thus prefer a man of broken fortune to one whose expe-

ctations were much greater'. This is followed by a ludicrous piece of sexist nonsense concerning the 'natural'/functional differences between the sexes: 'as men are capable of distinguishing merit in women, so the ladies often form the truest judgments of us. The two sexes seem placed as mutual spies upon each other, and are furnished with different abilities, adapted for mutual inspection'.¹¹ Notwithstanding the Vicar's own naivety, much of the novel presents his sceptical observations upon the pretensions and naivety of his wife and daughters; although he has reservations about the status of the two 'ladies' introduced to the family by the Squire, 'My daughters seemed to regard their superior accomplishments with envy; and what appeared amiss, was ascribed to tip-top quality breeding'.¹² The whole issue of his daughters' pretensions and aspirations causes Primrose some anxiety, for, 'their breeding was already superior to their fortune; and...greater refinement would only serve to make their poverty ridiculous, and give them a taste for pleasures they had no right to possess'.¹³ This last statement is made to Thornhill, when the issue of how London would 'improve' the girls is raised by the Squire's whores; Thornhill goes on to make his 'basest proposal' to Primrose (who has already indicated that he does not favour the idea of the girls going to London), and when the Vicar shows his indignation, simply denies the implication of his own words. This denial is readily accepted by the Vicar, and shortly afterwards he is happy with the idea of his daughters going to the city for two (fictitious) jobs spoken of by the Squire's accomplices. The motive behind his compliance here is that the family could use the money, and moreover, 'if the Squire had any real affection for my eldest daughter, this would be the way to make her every way qualified for her

fortune'.¹⁴ So, the unworldly Dr. Primrose is aware of the benefits of his daughter making a good match and - in the light of the possible financial advantage to be gained here - forgets his former caution and concern for his daughters' safety and virtue. However, the Vicar's hope that his daughter(s) might be a solution to pecuniary problems does not prevent him from continuing to lecture upon the folly of cross-class relationships: 'Unequal combinations are always disadvantageous to the weaker side, the rich having the pleasure, and the poor the inconveniences that result from them'.¹⁵ But the Vicar does not appear to believe his own rhetoric, for he completely ignores Burchell's warnings against the girls going to London, and states to Sophia, 'it would be even madness to expect happiness from one who has been so very bad an economist of his own'.¹⁶ In other words, the Vicar is not prepared to consider Burchell (whom he knows to be a good man) as a potential suitor for his youngest daughter. His reasons are solely financial.

Apart from the ever-present 'vanity' ascribed to the women in the novel, the central sexist theme is that of feminine virtue - which is little more (as far as Goldsmith's view of unmarried women is concerned) here than the equation of virginity with virtue. When Olivia disappears, the Vicar says to his children, 'all our earthly happiness is now over! Go, my children, go and be miserable and infamous; for my heart is broken within me!'.¹⁷ And Olivia's virginity (which Primrose immediately assumes to be lost) is taken to be of such importance that he can go on to moan, 'Had she but died! But she is gone, the honour of our family is contaminated, and I must look for happiness in other worlds than here'.¹⁸ So, here we have a view of unmarried women which assumes their sole worth to be dependent upon

one thing - is she a virgin? Nevertheless, when the 'wretched delinquent' is found by her father, and they return home, Deborah takes it upon herself to give Olivia a hard time. By now, the Vicar's horror has been assuaged, but he is not surprised by the difficulty of a reconciliation between the girl and her mother, for, 'women have a much stronger sense of female error than men'.¹⁹ All that this really signifies - in my opinion - is that Deborah has, like most other women (in various historical periods and cultures), accepted a sexist view of the nature of sexuality, and its place in estimating the moral qualities of any particular woman. For, if women are taught to envisage physical chastity as the only indicator of their own worth (and likewise, their life-chances), it is hardly surprising that many of them come to place as much - or more - emphasis upon the issue of sexual purity than men. In eighteenth-century England, such 'purity' had enormous economic, religious, and social implications. If one embraces, uncritically, dominant ideological ideas such as those surrounding sexual purity, one will be severely restricted when trying to understand the true nature of that which is deemed 'evil', 'unnatural', 'impractical' or whatever within such a framework. The fact that the notions which Deborah employs can act as oppression against her, does not modify her endorsement of them; this is not unusual, whether in the context of sexism, or in wider areas. The phenomenon of the oppressed wholeheartedly legitimating (as Weber would have it) a system of exploitation and oppression can be discerned throughout history; a contemporary example being found in the attitudes held by some black Americans regarding the virtually apartheid system of social relations between black and white which has existed - and in certain respects still does - in many parts of the

USA. Often, this accommodation evolves out of the strategies which the oppressed employ as a means of self-protection, but this conscious or expedient mode of responding to particular situations and contexts may become replaced (if only gradually) by a more fundamental incorporation of the weltanschauung held by the oppressors.

Of course, Olivia suffers for her violation of normative sexual rules, even to the point of physical decline, and, having lost her 'unblushing innocence', 'Anxiety now had taken strong possession of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it'.²⁰ This is no doubt exacerbated by her mother's tactless request for her to recite the following classic piece of sexist nonsense,

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy?
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is - to die.²¹

This is a reiteration of the 'Had she but died!' comment made earlier by the Vicar; the idea that a woman's loss of virginity prior to marriage can only be atoned for by the death of the woman involved is put forward once again. I have yet to find an example of such a drastic 'remedy' for the loss of sexual innocence being advocated for men. Not that the view expressed here by Goldsmith was uncommon in the eighteenth century, or indeed, in other epochs; Richardson had earlier used death as a cure for 'dishonour', in his Clarissa. Whilst any woman who has lost her virginity prior to being wed has, according to Goldsmith, to deal with guilt and shame, he apparently thought that it was enough - or perhaps, more than

enough - for her male counterpart or seducer to simply repent. This sort of ideological drivel is not even in keeping with Christianity, as I understand it; no matter, neither secular nor religious sophistry can disguise the callousness nor vindicate the sexism of Goldsmith's trite little poem.²²

When Thornhill offers to have Olivia married off to another, it is the Vicar's wife and daughters who argue that this should be accepted: they crumble under the threat of economic pressure which the Squire outlines, whilst Primrose remains firm against condoning 'adultery'. This is just one more example of the way in which the women of the novel are portrayed as being morally inferior to the central male character; at one point, Primrose even refers to Olivia as 'the cause of all our calamities', and this, as he later admits, is simply not true.²³ Indeed, many of the problems which beset the family are a direct result of the Vicar's folly. Having said this, it must be remembered that the Vicar - for all his faults - is consistently presented to the reader as a good man. And, his stupidity is invariably surpassed by that of his wife. When in prison, Primrose finds that his wife and daughters are of the opinion that prisoners cannot be reformed, and therefore do not merit the attention of a clergyman. And, if another example of feminine misjudgment were required, we then learn that Deborah has persuaded her eldest son to issue a duelling challenge to the Squire. Later, when Burchell again reprimands the son, George, on the subject of duelling, he is quick to forgive upon discovering that the blame lies primarily with Deborah; her mistake being just the sort of thing one might 'expect' from a woman. Nevertheless, Burchell - who has allegedly been looking for a woman who would want him rather than his money - eventually condescends to

marry Sophia. This transaction between the Vicar and the aristocrat occurs after the latter has saved Sophia from her abductors, and the clergyman states, 'And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she is yours'.²⁴ The fact that Sophia wants Burchell does not alter the sexist nature of the arrangement, nor the underlying assumption that she belongs to the Vicar, i.e., she is his property, to bestow upon whomsoever he deems appropriate.

It finally transpires that Thornhill has (unwittingly) legally married Olivia, and the Vicar is delighted with this news, for, 'she was now made an honest woman of'.²⁵ This is possibly the strongest example in the book of the formal and vacuous notion of virtue employed throughout; the fact of Olivia having been married prior to her loss of virginity solves the problem, regardless of any other considerations. Fortunately, this knowledge effects an immediate improvement in Olivia's health and morale: 'To be thus restored to reputation, to friends, and fortune at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity'.²⁶ Thornhill suffers the ultimate blow at this point, for, Burchell gives him a 'bare competence', and charges Olivia with the control of one third of the miscreant's fortune. They do not however, live happily ever after, but continue to live apart.

Much has been made of the idea that Goldsmith was against the view of romantic love/marriage held by many of his contemporaries; the usual reason given to demonstrate this opposition rests upon Goldsmith's alleged preference for a more 'realistic' approach to the topic.²⁷ Nevertheless, it would be absurd to claim that The Vicar of Wakefield is a particularly realistic novel - it is, as Allen

suggests, comparable to a 'fairy-tale'.²⁸ Moreover, notwithstanding Goldsmith's supposed scepticism about marriage, it is significant that marriage is the climax of the novel: it is used as a logical conclusion to the story. Judging by Goldsmith's comments elsewhere on marriage, his main purpose was to advocate what he took to be 'rational' love based, as Puritans were wont to stress, upon character rather than anything else. Unfortunately, his 'rational' approach in The Vicar of Wakefield seems to involve a considerable portion of sexism and near-misogyny; as A. Lytton Sells has remarked, 'In few novels are women more cruelly derided'.²⁹

Throughout the novel Goldsmith frequently offers - via Primrose - the idea that low status (and its corollaries of low income, harsh conditions etc) is as fortunate as high status. The Vicar makes rather silly comments such as, 'the poor live pleasantly', in his bid to take the sting out of the downward mobility which he and his family have suffered; such notions are, of course, often found amongst those who prosper.³⁰ However, the Vicar's remarks are not solely concerned with morale-boosting, as we shall see below, when he attempts to prove the 'equal dealings of Providence'.³¹ The family do not have to endure the kind of poverty one might expect from some of Primrose's observations, for they still fare well enough to retain a servant. And, even in their comparative poverty, 'we began to find that every situation in life may bring its own peculiar pleasures'.³² It is in this position that Primrose speaks out against 'disproportioned friendships' and 'fortune hunting', and thus seeks to discourage the family from seeking intimacy with Thornhill. So, when the Vicar finds one of his sons offering a defence of the Squire, by suggesting that Thornhill cannot be blamed for his 'mistaken' views, he

completely rejects this thesis and offers in return a brief statement of extreme voluntarism: 'though our erroneous opinions be involuntary when formed, yet, as we have been wilfully corrupt or very negligent in forming them, we deserve punishment for our vice or contempt for our folly'.³³ This sort of view attempts to locate all responsibility and all 'determinations' within the individual - it demonstrates a complete lack of awareness of the role of social structure in shaping beliefs/actions. Likewise, it does not seem to allow for genuine mistakes (not that this applies in Thornhill's case) or consider factors such as lack of information, inability to discern and so on.

Primrose tries to give the impression that it is only his wife and daughters who hold status aspirations (although this is clearly not the case), and it is significant that Burchell - the good aristocrat - shows his contempt for all such pretensions on a number of occasions, particularly in his response to the talk of the 'ladies' who impress Deborah and her daughters. Yet Primrose is left with the problem of how to deal with the fact that one of his daughters is sought by one much above her in rank, whilst the other is admired by one of apparently lower status than the family.

The most overt presentation of political ideology in the novel appears when the Vicar - searching for his daughter, Sophia - is invited to the home of a 'well-dressed gentleman'. This character proves to be an advocate of 'liberty', supporting the power of Parliament rather than that of the king. Goldsmith/Primrose wants to make a case for the king and the middle class, whilst propounding a kindergarten form of transcendental egalitarianism. Not surprisingly then, he floats the notion that, although the king is a 'sacred pow-

er', 'We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal'.³⁴ What 'originally' refers to here is not at all clear; in discussing the Levellers, the Vicar argues that, 'it is entailed upon humanity to submit, and some are born to command and others to obey'.³⁵ This is the old chestnut commonly dragged out to provide an apology for inequality and exploitation, the idea of innate abilities etc determining who leads and who is led. According to Primrose's tendentious account, the Leveller's project failed because, 'there were some among them stronger, and more cunning, than others, and these became masters of the rest'.³⁶ In fact, the Levellers were suppressed by Cromwell. It is worth noting that the form of egalitarianism attacked here by Goldsmith would not, by a mile, approach what one might consider to be minimal conditions for 'equality' nowadays.

Having argued for the sacred nature of kingship, Primrose goes on to contradict the notion by arguing that the 'generality of mankind', 'have unanimously created one king, whose election at once diminishes the number of tyrants, and puts tyranny at the greatest distance from the greatest number of people'.³⁷ This implies - wrongly - that kingly power is based upon consensus, and the result of (presumably, secular) 'election'. Moreover, it presents the sophistic propositions that monarchy erases localised tyranny, and that geographical and social distance will lessen the possibility of tyranny being characteristic of the rule of monarchy. Goldsmith then sets about making his plea for the middle class, firstly by attacking the 'great' or aristocracy; the assumption here is that the interests of the latter class lie in undermining the power of the monarch, their ambition being fuelled by their accumulation of wealth. After some

fatuous harping upon this subject the Vicar bemoans the disappearance of feudalism (this decline itself being a pre-condition for the emergence of the bourgeoisie), and speaks out against laws which supposedly enhance accumulation, and by which, 'the natural ties that bind the rich and poor together are broken'.³⁸ Just what these 'natural ties' consisted of is not explained. However, Primrose proceeds to claim that the wealthy invariably gather 'slaves' around themselves, and that the only class free from such servitude - whilst not possessing similar affluence - is the middle class: 'that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possessed of too large fortunes to submit to the neighbouring man in power, and yet are too poor to set up for tyrants themselves'.³⁹ So here Goldsmith is admitting that the rule of a monarch does not prevent local tyrants; the underlined section is noteworthy, for it points up the conservative belief that human-beings are 'naturally' selfish and unjust - there is no suggestion that even the admirable middle class would be anything other than tyrants, given the means to be so. Goldsmith proceeds to maintain that the bourgeoisie are the most important section of society: 'In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called THE PEOPLE'.⁴⁰ Goldsmith virtually equates the middle class with 'society' - a comparatively small number of the population are seen here as the creators of all that is decent and worthwhile, flanked on one side by a few avaricious aristocrats, and the unruly yet largely inconsequential 'rabble' on the other.

The Vicar opposes any extension of political rights for the above mentioned rabble (i.e., the vast majority of the population), as he

feels that this would 'drown' the voice of the bourgeoisie; he claims that should the rabble be given any part in political life, then they would act as they were directed by the wealthy: 'In such a state, therefore, all that the middle order has left, is to preserve the prerogative and privileges of the one principal governor with most sacred circumspection. For he divides the power of the rich, and calls off the great from falling with tenfold weight on the middle order placed beneath them'.⁴¹ This kind of ideology-touting presented a totally false picture of the socio-political reality of the author's period, assuming as it did, that the monarch acted as an impartial arbitrator and in this way 'administered' society. But using this false premise, Primrose further states, 'if there be anything sacred amongst men, it must be the anointed SOVEREIGN of his people; and every diminution of his power, in war or peace, is an infringement upon the real liberties of the subject'.⁴² Given this rosy view of the king, and the calculation: middle order=the people, the Vicar concludes that he has made a case for freedom. But he has simply made a case for the monarch and the bourgeoisie, and a poor one at that. At this point, it is revealed that those to whom Primrose has been proselytising are actually servants; one supposes that this device is employed to discredit the anti-monarchist position which they represent.

A remarkable instance of the Vicar's own bourgeois moralizing and political attitudes appears when he is led to believe that his eldest daughter has been married to Thornhill by a priest who had officiated at the Squire's previous 'marriages'. Olivia tells Primrose that she has sworn not to reveal the name of this priest - thus protecting him against prosecution - and the Vicar, notwithstanding the way in

which his daughter has been used, and the danger remaining for others, confirms that she must keep her promise, for, 'Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as, in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopped off to preserve the body; but in religion the law is written, and inflexible, never to do evil'.⁴³

Presumably, the Vicar takes his daughter's case to be in the realm of religion because (1) it involves marriage - a 'sacred' institution and (2) because to break a vow would be a further sin for her. So, even though disclosure may serve to protect others, Primrose urges Olivia to do that which he sees as best for her spiritual well-being, and this is reminiscent of the self-concern generated by Calvinism and other forms of radical-Protestantism. Primrose's reasoning on this topic underlines the formal and empty nature of his own stance, and epitomizes a type of diminished Christianity which - quite apart from separating religion from every other sphere of life - locates religion solely within the individual and thus signifies a retreat from both the Catholic position, and its immediate successors in radical-Protestantism. It is a peculiarly modern/bourgeois view of religion, ethics and so on, involving the privatisation of that which had previously been seen as being of social concern and relevance; the individualism of Protestantism has, by this time, become inward-looking and passive vis-à-vis the outside world.⁴⁴

Another example of the Vicar's formal conception of right and wrong occurs when he is arrested, and 'the poor' attempt to rescue him. He turns upon them, and asks, 'Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit?'.⁴⁵ Rebuking his

parishioners, he goes on to show that - notwithstanding the dangerous practical consequences which could rebound upon them - he himself accepts the 'justice' of his arrest, and is horrified that they can countenance rising up against legal authority. Such formalism ultimately rules out any action against those in power (whether the powerful act justly or otherwise), for the fact of power is taken to be its own vindication.

Once inside the prison Primrose meets Jenkinson (the con-man who had robbed the Vicar and his son at a fair), who now bemoans his criminal past: 'Ah, Sir! had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day'.⁴⁶ This is the 'honesty is the best policy' line, which completely ignores the fact that - particularly at this time - not everyone actually had the choice of whether to learn a trade or not, or even to secure the most humble of jobs. The claim behind all this is that those who commit criminal acts do so from purely individual determinations, and therefore crime cannot be seen as being structured (and indeed, generated) by particular social formations. We are left with the idea that criminals are simply wicked and/or anti-social, and never merely struggling to survive within (in this case) the ruthless process of capitalist industrialization. And the Vicar has, moreover, no idea at all of the availability and rewards of wage-labour; this is made patently obvious when he later suggests that his son, George, will be able to support the family (of five adults and two children) with what he can earn as a 'day-labourer'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Jenkinson continues to reflect upon his earlier criminal activities, and argues that to be 'suspicious' of strangers retards one's success in the world; apparently, he sees

some form of romantic naivety as preferable to circumspection: perhaps he supposes the Vicar to be a good example of this. Jenkinson claims that the reason for his past life of crime is that he was considered to be 'cunning' and, in view of this, he was, 'obliged to turn sharper in my own defence'.⁴⁸ This is possibly the most implausible account of criminalization one is likely to find anywhere in the English novel; by contrast, Defoe's implied explanation of the phenomenon in Roxana and Moll Flanders is eminently realistic.

Primrose's decision to try to reform the prisoners meets with 'universal disapprobation' from his family, who believe that such a project (apart from being impossible) would 'disgrace' the Vicar's 'calling'. Nevertheless, he braves the disapproval of his family and the jests of his audience; consequently, 'My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all attentive'. He even manages to organize some commodity-production and applies/administers a system of social control based upon rewards and punishments: 'Thus in less than a fortnight I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience'.⁴⁹ The ideas behind Primrose's 'reform' include the need for organized work to occupy the physical and mental capacities of men (women are nowhere mentioned in relation to this reform), the use of both positive and negative sanctions to ensure that discipline prevails, and the conviction that - without firm leadership and guidance - men will naturally act like 'animals'. It is the 'native ferocity' of men which must be transformed into something 'social and humane'. This is just the sort of negative picture of 'human nature' which one would expect from Tory-Anglicans,

then and now.

To make any claims which assert that human nature has this or that fixed characteristic is a futile endeavour, for such pronouncements - which are usually justified by reference to 'empirical reality' - can always be countered by alternative examples which appear to refute one's propositions. The fact of the matter is that both those who state that human nature is essentially good, and others who are convinced that it is basically evil, are only speculating in accordance with their own unproven beliefs. The supposition that clichés such as 'it's human nature' explain anything, is completely misguided; this sort of phrase only mystifies and 'fixes' dispositions, potentials and so on in a totally invalid manner. Most frequently, such conceptions of human nature are employed in ideologies (and so-called 'common sense') which represent the interests of those who have something to gain, or preserve, by fixing human nature as (a) or (b) or whatever. Ideas of this type always occur when, for example, an apology for existing power relations is required; quite bluntly, there is no such thing as 'human nature' in the usually-accepted sense of the term. Human-beings have various potentials and limitations, but the extent to which these determine their lives is (with certain exceptions) historically specific; it is only in empirical reality that human capabilities are realized, and that which may be impossible in one epoch, may be attainable - or even commonplace - in another. The way that actual human-beings act and reason is the result of a number of factors, but even the most sparse knowledge of history shows the flexible character of human existence. So, to generalize - or universalize - an example or examples of a particular kind of behaviour as somehow epitomising human nature is to suppose

that phenomena which may be particular to a certain period are omni-historical (and often omni-cultural, too). Mészáros sums up what I take to be the correct position on the issue of human nature, when he writes, 'man must be described in terms of his needs and powers. And both are, equally, subject to change and development. Consequently there can be nothing fixed about him, except what necessarily follows from his determination as a natural being, namely that he is a being with needs - otherwise he could not be called a natural being - and powers for their gratification without which a natural being could not possibly survive'.⁵⁰

Now the Vicar wants to argue that 'reform' - as opposed to severity - is the most fruitful way of dealing with miscreants, yet whilst he speaks against punishment being made 'familiar', he also states that it should be made more 'formidable'. If this means anything other than making it more severe, then the Vicar does not tell us what his alternative to severity is. He goes on to question the use of capital punishment for those whose only crime is against property. This is interesting, as it reflects Goldsmith's rejection of (and/or confusion surrounding) bourgeois conceptions of property and property-rights. In a remarkable piece of sophistry, Goldsmith claims via Primrose that, for example, a stolen horse is as much the property of the thief as of the previous owner; this, and other bizarre propositions are supposedly vindicated by reference to 'natural law', something which Primrose imagines to be demonstrated in the case of 'savages': 'Savages, that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of one another; they seldom shed blood except to retaliate former cruelty'.⁵¹ Quite apart from the invalidity of the specific pseudo-anthropological proposition being made

here, it is perhaps worth stating that any notion of natural law must ultimately remain abstract, and therefore vacuous. Laws are made by human beings, not pulled out of the air, given by the gods, or determined by nature; any laws employed by any people are socially-constructed.

Goldsmith was right to attack the fact of property being valued above life, and the ready use of this sanction by the English ruling class, but his argument is so inadequate as to ensure few converts. He fails to locate the real reasons for the fetishism surrounding property, and likewise, the reasons for its unequal distribution; all he discerns is the manner in which the sanctity of property was maintained, viz, by the punishment of anyone who violated it. So, the Vicar can only conclude that increased wealth leads to a greater fear of loss on the part of the wealthy, who therefore produce more laws which in turn produce more 'vices', and so on. The only other reasonable point which Primrose makes in his harangue is that one who has committed a crime(s) may be susceptible to reform - even this must remain no more than a hope, in view of the fact that he has no useful account of the reasons for crime. The reform idea actually rests upon the pious Christian belief that - in spite of the wicked nature of human-beings - 'few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend'; moreover, there is a pragmatic design behind the Vicar's apparently humane attitude towards offenders, for they, 'might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger'.⁵² In other words, they can die for the interests of the ruling class, but they and their like must not be allowed to have basic social or political rights. Primrose/Goldsmith has more to say on the issue of politics, but as it is so intertwined with religious ideology, I

will consider it below.

The Vicar's religious opinions are scattered throughout the novel, and offer no surprises; in the main, these views are presented in a serious manner, and are not intended to be humorous. Primrose's major exposition is to be found in Chapter XXIX. Here, he endeavours to show the 'equal dealings of Providence', beginning with the claim that, whilst there is much suffering in the world, one can only endure it. There is no suggestion whatever that anything can be done to change this sorry state of affairs, or to narrow the gap between the 'fortunate' and the 'wretched'. Moreover, one cannot know why suffering occurs, for, 'On this subject, Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation'.⁵³ Given the Vicar's beliefs, it follows that consolation or comfort is the only means by which suffering can be modified. For this purpose religion is, argues Primrose, superior to philosophy (which he assumes to be typically contradictory), as it, 'comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode'. Obviously, the Vicar is propounding transcendentalism, and claiming that human life is unimportant in itself, being significant only because it is a stage prior to 'heaven'. Having made this assertion, he proceeds to state that religion is, 'our truest comfort: for if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest'. And, 'Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuation of bliss; to the wretched, a change from pain'. In fact, as far as Primrose is concerned, the 'fortunate' do rather less well than the 'wretched', simply because, 'To the first, eternity is but a single

blessing, since at most it but increases what they already possess. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter'.⁵⁴ Additionally, the wretched have the further benefit - according to the Vicar - of suffering less than others when they actually die: 'for, after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution nature kindly covers with insensibility'. So, the wretched, being no strangers to hardship, presumably become insensitive to suffering. Primrose continues, 'Thus Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life, - greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment'.⁵⁵

From all this, Primrose concludes that, 'religion does what philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it once was to be miserable'.⁵⁶

Clearly, this sort of twaddle shows nothing of the kind: it is simply a piece of rhetoric designed to play down actual inequality and injustice via sophistry. To argue that having been miserable is to be more fortunate than having been (and remaining) happy, is rather like advocating the banging of one's head against a wall for the subsequent relief to be experienced when one stops doing it. The Vicar's line trivializes the suffering of real human-beings by implying that actual human life is unimportant. In place of an argument for real changes in the conditions structuring the lives of the poor, Primrose

only offers comfort with the promise of happiness in a purely hypothetical realm. At the same time, this account reassures the rich that the inequality which allows them to lead opulent lives whilst others endure harsh ones, is quite alright. It is just the result of Providence, and therefore inevitable and God-ordained. Consequently, the rich are under no obligation to attempt to improve the condition of the wretched. So, the sermon which Goldsmith expresses through the Vicar is a blatant apology for economic, political, and social inequality - it advocates the acceptance of oppression and exploitation by the poor, and ignores (indeed, denies) the possibility of changes being undertaken 'on earth' by human-beings. It is a case for total passivity, plus wishful-thinking, for the oppressed, in the face of glaring injustice; contemporary reviewers and commentators imagined that Goldsmith's novel would be a great comfort to those living harsh lives. Yet (apart from the fact that most of the poor could not read, still less afford to buy a book or use circulating libraries), it hard to see why any solace should be derived from the book by any persons other than the fortunate, for whom the Vicar's proselytising provides a weak vindication. Those amongst the wretched who could be satisfied by transcendental promises in preference to practical changes would, I believe, have been few and far between.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE

There are many ways of undermining a set of beliefs and practices of which one does not approve; one may impute lunacy and/or roguery to one's opponents; one may suggest that the appeal of the offending belief-system is confined to social inferiors who are, by definition, ignorant; one may seek to demonstrate that the content of an alternative *Weltanschauung* is lacking in originality - a mere re-hash of ideas which have long since been refuted and condemned as worthless. Richard Graves, in The Spiritual Quixote, employs all of these techniques against Methodism; he had some personal reasons for disliking the Methodists, for his younger brother had - to the horror of his family - been strongly influenced by the Wesleys, and Graves himself had been inconvenienced and humiliated by an itinerant preacher. However, what concerns us here is Graves as a novelist, and as a minister of the Anglican Church; it is in this context that his view of Methodism becomes relevant.

For most of the novel the hero, Wildgoose, is portrayed as a man who has suffered some form of aberration which has seriously (but not permanently) impaired his mental faculties. Having returned home from university, he engages in a - non-religious - argument with the local clergyman, Powell, and, being defeated in this, develops an extreme dislike for Anglicanism in general, and Powell in particular. This dislike is exacerbated when Wildgoose mistakenly supposes that one of Powell's sermons is directed against him and his pursuit of one of his mother's maids. As Wildgoose feels guilty on this score and cannot explain his dislike for the minister without reference to

his own 'guilt', he avoids company and thus becomes somewhat isolated and misanthropic. Even at this early stage, one is pre-disposed to think that Wildgoose is, at the very least, rather an odd character.

To make matters worse, our hero then finds (in his own house) 'an old forlorn quarto', which turns out to be 'a miscellaneous collection of godly discourses, upon predestination; election, and reprobation; justification by faith; grace and free-will, and the like controverted points of divinity: the productions of those self-taught teachers and self-called pastors of the church, in the time of Cromwell's usurpation'. Here, it is clear that Graves had no sympathy with radical-Protestantism, or with the English Revolution. Wildgoose has become somewhat deranged and gloomy by this time, and therefore, 'this crude trash happened to suit Mr.Geoffry's vitiated palate: especially as these writings abounded with bitter invectives against the regular clergy, and the established church: and with sentences of reprobation on all mankind, except a few choice spirits, called the Elect'. Having got the taste for this sort of writing, Wildgoose searches the house for more, and finds it, 'some Presbyterian, some Independent, some Anabaptist, some Fifth-monarchy men: the works of that swarm of sectaries in the last century; all differing somewhat in their principles, but all agreeing in their inveteracy against the Church of England'. Graves wants to make it clear that the works which the hero finds are rubbish, written by those with an absurd hatred for Anglicanism; moreover, this is obsolete rubbish. Nevertheless, 'This was no unpleasant food for Wildgoose's disorder. For, having conceived so great a prejudice against the vicar of the parish, he gladly embraced any system, that seemed to thwart his usual doctrine'.¹

So, the hero is attracted to these works partly because he has a disturbed mind, and partly because he holds a completely irrational and unfair prejudice against Powell. The effect of the 'Puritanical principles' which Wildgoose learns from the old tracts is that he becomes susceptible to Methodist doctrines; consequently, he is afflicted by, 'that sort of phrenzy, which we ascribe to enthusiasts in music, poetry, or painting; or in any other art or science; whose imaginations are so entirely possessed by those ideas, as to make them talk and act like madmen, in the sober eyes of merely rational people'.² At this point, 'some stragglng itinerant' arrives, and Wildgoose's 'madness' is consolidated - as demonstrated by the fact that he begins to frequent Jerry Tugwell's home, along with many of his social inferiors, 'labourers and mechanics'.³ These members of the working class are, not surprisingly, suggests Graves, interested in Methodist preaching and arguments; what is odd about Wildgoose is that usually, 'people in high life are less prone to that excess of zeal or religious enthusiasm'.⁴ Jerry, who later becomes Wildgoose's companion in absurdity, has already got the reputation of being a half-wit, notably, for his lack of 'prudence'.⁵

Wildgoose soon begins to test his oratorical skills upon those who frequent Tugwell's house, and Graves makes a point of informing the reader of the mental capacities of the hero's audience: 'though they were not capable of distinguishing nicely between his doctrine and what they heard at church; yet being delivered to them in a more familiar manner, and by a new teacher, and in a new place, it made a considerable impression'.⁶ It is novelty then, which attracts these illiterate workers to Wildgoose's harangues - they are quite ignorant of any intellectual content which his sermonizing might con-

tain; and, Graves implies, in this respect they are no different from all of the other plebeians who listen to Methodist preaching. As Wildgoose reaches the emotional pitch of his ranting, he begins to foam at the mouth and to confess to 'crimes'; these are, of course, metaphorical crimes, something which his untutored listeners are incapable of comprehending. For Graves, all this is the result of the hero having spent so long brooding over Puritan and Methodist tracts (he makes little distinction between the two), and he takes the opportunity to state that the 'strange jargon' of these groups, 'chiefly consists in applying the quaint Hebraisms of the Old Testament and the peculiar expressions of the primitive apostles to their own situations, and every trifling occurrence of modern life'.⁷

As far as Graves is concerned then, Methodism is not even to be counted as a 'sect'; it does not contain enough originality to merit even this dubious title. Such innovation as it does manifest is, moreover, illegal: 'I know of few novel opinions which they maintain, except that of the lawfulness of preaching without a legal call; and of assembling in conventicles or in the open fields in direct opposition to the laws of the land'.⁸

The theme of madness continues throughout the novel; Powell's response on finding that Wildgoose has left home to spread the gospel is to remark that, 'there is no reasoning with people who refer you to their own inward feelings; which you can no more deny than they can prove: and who take for sacred the wildest suggestions of their own fancy'.⁹ It is obviously Graves speaking here but, whilst he accepts that one cannot justifiably 'deny' another's feelings, he certainly wants to maintain that one can deny an individual's particular interpretation of such feelings; thus, the feelings of Wild-

goose and other Methodists can be labelled 'wild', the product of 'fancy'. A further example of the results of Wildgoose's 'lunacy' appears when he receives a letter from Powell, informing him of his own mother's distress; the hero is too far gone to take any notice of mere earthly problems, for, 'Enthusiasm is deaf to the calls of Nature; nay, it esteems it meritorious to trample upon all the relative duties of life. Men of this cast think nothing of any importance, but what corresponds with the chimerical notions which have possessed their fancies'.¹⁰ As Mr. Rivers finds when he tries to talk 'sense' to Wildgoose, 'reasoning with a man under the influence of any passion is like endeavouring to stop a wild horse, who becomes more violent from being pursued'.¹¹

Graves, constantly reiterating the lunatic character of his hero's enterprise, takes the idea to its logical conclusion at one of Wildgoose's meetings: a local madman (supposedly driven mad by Wesley's preaching) turns up and bawls out a stream of incomprehensible nonsense. The local people know the man to be deranged, but Wildgoose, in his stupidity, assumes this demonstration of insanity to be proof of the man's holiness. The author's point is clear: enthusiasts, such as the Methodists, simply cannot (or will not) tell the difference between what is the work of the 'Holy Spirit', and what is simply and obviously sheer mental illness. As the story progresses, even Jerry begins to think that Wildgoose is 'crack-brained', but it is not until the hero is injured by a decanter (which renders him unconscious) during one of his addresses, that he himself begins to seriously doubt his calling.¹² Luckily for him, he is taken care of by one of Graves' Anglican paragons, who is prepared to try to convince the hero against the workings of a 'deluded imagination'.¹³

The efforts of this clergyman, Greville, plus the blow on the head and the prospect of marrying Julia Townsend, eventually lead to Wildgoose's return to 'sanity', which in this instance means political and religious orthodoxy as seen by Graves. Wildgoose's lunacy has been transitory, largely a consequence of his vanity and his flouting of social conventions, in essence, acting in a way inappropriate for one of his class. Methodism can only, Graves maintains, appeal to people of low rank and little or no education and - occasionally - people of the upper or middle classes if they are stupid or mentally disturbed. It is unthinkable that any well-educated person of some social standing could be seriously attracted to any form of 'enthusiasm' for long, according to Graves. It is for this reason that the hero of the novel has to be in a state of mental derangement for the greater part of the work - even though he can display moments of lucidity in order to convey Graves' own opinions to the reader, as demonstrated by Wildgoose's conversation with Mrs. Booby.¹⁴

Having briefly considered Graves' contention that madness was a contributory factor in the popularity of Methodism, we can turn to those whom he saw as comprising the bulk of Methodist followers and preachers, viz, the 'ignorant'. Jerry stands as the prime example of Methodism appealing to ignorance: he is quick to absorb scraps of Wildgoose's rhetoric, and is particularly deferential towards any opinion which he supposes to stem from a reading of the Bible, even when it involves scripture being 'absurdly applied', as it frequently is by his master.¹⁵ In order to remind us that Jerry is something of an idiot, Graves introduces a number of incidents such as the one in which Tugwell - showing the interest in sport which the author takes to be characteristic of 'vulgar people' - mistakes a jack-ass for a stag.¹⁶ In this manner, Graves often demonstrates his contempt for

working-class people, as when he refers to the crowd at Dover's-hill Revel as, 'a mob of holiday clowns'.¹⁷ Wildgoose occasionally shows greater regard for the plebeians than does the author or most of the other non-working-class characters in the novel, as the conversation with Pottle makes clear; whilst the hero argues that the clergy are public servants, and thus to some extent answerable to the lower classes, Pottle - an Anglican minister - scorns the idea, and states that the lower classes are nothing more than gullible yet conniving 'bumpkins'.¹⁸

The inability of Wildgoose's listeners to understand what he is actually talking about is also demonstrated on many occasions, his speech to a keeper and his wife being just one example of the fact that, 'Wildgoose did not reflect upon the improbability of his audience's not comprehending his allegorical meaning'.¹⁹ Graves has no such illusions regarding the understanding of working people, as he shows in his comments on the use of calling cards, his main point being that social inferiors blindly follow conventions which they have no real understanding of; it does not occur to him that such blind imitation - were it shown to be generally the case - could also be cited to explain such plebeian attachment as there was to the Anglican Church.²⁰ But perhaps the most ludicrous instance of what the author views as working-class ignorance arises when Wildgoose preaches to a Welsh crowd, who give him a very favourable reception notwithstanding the fact that at least half of them cannot understand English.²¹ Tugwell, having observed some choice examples of Welsh enthusiasm, concludes, 'these Welsh people are all mad, I think', and one cannot doubt that Graves would - regarding Welsh, or any other Methodists - concur with Jerry's judgement. However, Wildgoose,

characteristically, believes that such acts are, 'the triumphs of Faith! these are the true symptoms of the New Birth!', and so on.²² So, ruling-class lunacy (Wildgoose being a member of the gentry) and working-class ignorance both find expression and encouragement in Methodist beliefs and practices, such handicaps being, according to Graves, a condition for the emergence of the Methodist movement, and the means by which it flourished - no rational mind could see 'enthusiasm' in any other light.

As noted above, one of Graves' major criticisms of the Methodists was that they were fighting battles that had long since been conclusively decided; it is in this sense that he saw the activities of the enthusiasts as quixotism: 'There was a time, when Providence, for wise reasons, thought fit to delegate men, invested with extraordinary powers, to publish some important truths to mankind; to warn them of approaching calamities; to combat superstitious opinions, or to reform the immoral practices, which had prevailed in the world to an enormous degree'. Therefore, 'primitive reformers' had good cause to act as they did, they were inspired by the 'Holy Spirit' to perform specific tasks,

But our modern itinerant reformers, by the mere force of imagination, have conjured up the powers of darkness in an enlightened age. They are acting in defiance of human laws, without any apparent necessity, or any divine commission. They are planting the Gospel in a Christian country: they are combating the shadow of Popery, where the Protestant religion is established; and declaiming against good works, in an age which they usually represent as abounding in every evil work.²³

Here Graves is asserting - but not proving - that the Methodists are not divinely inspired, as they claimed; that there is no need for their work, Protestantism being secure; and, he is rather misrepresenting their position by implying that their attack on 'good works'

involves a comparison of good with evil works, and not - as the Methodists were wont to argue - a conflict between doctrines of good works as opposed to 'justification by faith'. Whether true or not, none of Graves' claims amount to a refutation of Methodist beliefs; his argument that evangelical activity used to be valid, indeed essential, but is no longer so, rests upon the assumption that true Christianity has been irrevocably consolidated - an assumption which the Methodists and many others (including some Anglicans) did not share. This sort of polemical gambit is frequently employed in our own time by friendly politicians who assure us that we no longer need trades-unions, the NHS and so on - they may have been necessary in the past, but are allegedly obsolete now. Such a claim is, however, patently false, if only for the fact that it rests upon the crude and complacent belief that any reform or progress once established, can never be lost. This is obviously not so. And, we now know that the complacency of a large part of the Anglican clergy was both unwarranted, and very damaging to the Church. As Gilbert observes, 'The period 1740-1830 was an era of disaster, for whereas the Church of England had controlled something approaching a monopoly of English religious practice only ninety years earlier, in 1830 it was on the point of becoming a minority religious Establishment'.²⁴

Graves does employ variations on the theme discussed above; Mr. Graham presents the substance of the author's views in a slightly different manner. Having stated that he finds the idea of 'itinerancy' quite attractive, he proceeds to suggest that it is 'absurd' that religion should apparently be dependent upon one's position on a few unresolved points, and then argues,

I really believe, when the Methodists first set out (as Providence

often brings about salutary ends by irregular means) they did some good, and contributed to rouse the negligent clergy, and to revive practical Christianity amongst us. But, I am afraid, they have since done no small prejudice to Religion, by reviving cobweb disputes of the last century; and by calling off the minds of men from practice, to mere speculation.²⁵

Again, the charge is that Methodism raises obsolete issues; to pat the Methodists on the back for their contribution towards the revival of 'practical Christianity' is simply tendentious: by this term, Anglicans meant good works, the very doctrine which Methodists consistently opposed. Additionally, the claim that the Methodists encouraged speculation as against activism is unjustifiable; they were very keen to be involved in 'practice', but the mode of activity which they valued was evangelical rather than philanthropic (unlike good works).²⁶ It is worth bearing in mind the way in which Graves employs the character, Graham, here; his technique consists of 'soothing' prior to denouncing, and has led a number of commentators to over-estimate Graves' own 'amiability', and his ostensibly flexible and conciliatory attitude towards Methodism; more of this later.

When Wildgoose is introduced to Lady Sherwood (whom Graves represents as being rather eccentric), they discuss religion, and she mistakenly argues that the Established Church already supports all of the tenets of Methodism. Wildgoose does not contest this claim, but goes on to state that, 'the present Clergy are all departed from the most essential of those doctrines, as particularly that of Justification by Faith alone; and depend more upon their own works, than on the merits of Christ, for their Salvation'.²⁷ It can be seen that Graves continually returns to the same criticism of Methodism, and his argument shows little development throughout the novel; given the simplistic picture of Methodism which the author offers, and his ten-

dentious attempt to absorb Methodist doctrine into Anglicanism, it is hard to see how the argument could reach any level of complexity. Moreover, Graves definitely wants to keep religion simple - something which can be easily drummed into the heads of the 'vulgar people'. This can be seen in Wildgoose's conversation with Rivers; the latter almost certainly speaks for Graves when he remarks, 'I am convinced nothing is wanting, but an humble mind and an honest heart, to make us understand our duty; and the ordinary assistance of God's Spirit, to enable us to practice it'.²⁸ And, if this is all that is necessary for the lay Christian, Graves later shows us a shining example for the Anglican minister, in the person of Gregory Griskin:

Griskin was a man of the old-fashioned piety, that shewed his Faith by his Good Works. He gave much in charity, prayed often, and fasted now and then. Having the tithes in his own hands, it enabled him to keep a plentiful table, to which every sober honest man was welcome. He every Sunday invited by turns some of his Parishioners to dine with him; one or two of the most substantial in the parlour, and as many of the oldest and poorest in the kitchen. This made them pay their tithes and dues chearfully; which Griskin exacted of them punctually, but not with rigour. If a farmer had any loss, or a remarkably bad year, he made him some little allowance; and, if a cottager paid him a groat at Easter, which he could ill spare, perhaps he would give his family a six-penny loaf the Sunday following. By this means he kept up his dignity, and secured his right and the love of his parish at the same time.²⁹

For Graves, the most important thing about Griskin's relationship with his parishioners is that it does not depart from protocol and does not undermine class dominance; as indicated in the quotation above, Griskin is not a harsh man, but he deems it essential that tithes etc are paid regularly and punctually - even if he is then often ready to return that which has been given. In this way, suggests Graves, the minister not only protects his 'rights', but also reinforces the social distance between himself and his 'flock'. As we shall see below, Graves was extremely concerned that distinctions

of class and status should remain secure.

Another example put forward as a model for clergymen is that of the most important minister in the novel, Dr.Greville; Graves' description of this worthy allows him to throw another sop to the Methodists, by reiterating that they doubtless began their venture with the best intentions in the world, 'Dr.Greville was what Mr.Wesley and his associates ought to have been, and what (I sincerely believe) they at first intended to be'. But Graves must have known that the Methodists had no intention whatever of being like the fictitious Greville, for Greville, 'had a Faith, which worked by Love; or, in modern language, his belief of the truths of the Gospel made him consider as an indispensable duty those acts of beneficence which his humanity prompted him to perform'.³⁰ Once again, Graves insists that the very thing which Wesley and other Methodists were determined to attack, was the thing which they really wanted to do. And Graves' attempt to incorporate the Methodists in this way simply does not work.

We can consider Greville in greater detail, for towards the end of the novel he sums up the majority of Graves' objections to Methodism; on the charge that the Methodists violated law and ignored protocol, Greville states, 'we are commanded "to submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; to let every thing be done decently and in order:" and therefore no one has a right to break through the regulations of society, merely from the suggestions of his own fancy, unless he can give some visible proof of a supernatural commission'.³¹ Greville concedes that, 'there may be some cause of complaint against the negligence of the Clergy; and that, if the people had had plenty of wholesome food or sound doctrine, they would not be hankering after the crude trash of some of your itinerant Preachers. But does this

warrant every ignorant Mechanic to take the staff out of the hands of the Clergy, and set up for Reformers in Religion?'.³² Nevertheless, Greville's admission that some Anglican ministers may not fulfil their religious duties is purely formal and complacent, as is his 'solution' to the problem, 'Let application be made to the Bishop of the diocese'; as suggested in Chapter Two, above, the bishops were at least as guilty of laxity as the humbler functionaries of the Established Church.³³ Greville further wants to claim that such success as the Methodists have had, has not come about because of the religious content of their preaching,

As to the particular doctrines which the Methodists pretend to have revived, and on which they lay so great a stress; I do not imagine, the advantage which they seem to have gained over the regular Clergy arises from those cobweb distinctions, which, I am convinced, not one in ten of their followers really comprehend: but from the seriousness of their lives, and the vehemence and earnestness of their harangues; which may have a temporary effect upon their audience whilst the impression on their fancy lasts; and have, I believe, really awakened many indolent and careless Christians to a sober and devout life.³⁴

Graves is here contradicting himself, for - although he has consistently argued that the Methodists have revived old controversies; now he wishes to state that they have only 'pretended' to do this. However, the controversial points upon which the Methodists placed so much importance are simply brushed aside as 'cobweb distinctions', and it is suggested that their success is dependent upon the ability of Methodist preachers to arouse the emotions of their listeners. In keeping with Graves' 'softly-softly' approach, Greville magnanimously observes that the Methodists have probably had some slight good effect upon certain previously apathetic Christians; it is interesting, too, that he recognizes the 'seriousness' of the lives of some leading Methodists. At this point, Greville claims that the Methodists have misinterpreted the Anglican attitude towards 'works',

which is amusing, considering Graves' own refusal to understand Methodist doctrine:

As to the doctrines themselves; that of Justification by Faith, for instance; I know no clergyman that expects to be saved by the merit of his own works. We do not preach up the merit of good works, but the necessity of them: and unless a good man and a good Christian are inconsistent characters, I do not see how good works, which is only another name for Virtue, can be dispensed with. In short, though the negligence of too many of the Clergy may have given these Reformers some little advantage over them; yet the extravagant proceedings and monstrous tenets of many of their itinerant Preachers have given them an ample revenge.³⁵

The latter part of this statement suggests that Graves was hoping that Methodism - which he considered so low and vulgar - would be defeated by its own excesses. Whilst Greville has fewer objections to educated, middle-class preachers like Wesley, he maintains that their doctrines will attract many who see preaching as an easy alternative to 'the drudgery of a mechanic trade'; nevertheless, even the preaching of the more respectable Methodists is likely, according to Graves, to have the consequences which Graves fears, 'after prejudicing the people against their proper Pastors, they will leave them a prey to the ignorance, and perhaps much greater immorality, of illiterate Plebeians; and so will have made another schism in our Church to very little purpose'.³⁶

Graves could probably imagine nothing worse than that illiterate plebs might adopt the position of religious functionaries; the purpose of the Church is - for Graves - to teach working people moral lessons, and to keep them firmly in their places; as Greville later argues, the clergy should make their preaching more 'systematical', in order to 'teach the people their duty, and make them more willing to attend the Church; and even pay their tithes more chearfully'.³⁷ In short, they should subordinate their working-class parishioners,

whilst simultaneously convincing them that the Church is 'good value for money'.

To summarize, Graves' critique of Methodism includes the following charges: it gives free reign to whim, 'chimerical' notions, fancy etc; it puts forward obsolete arguments against long-defeated foes, and this encourages speculation and sophistry as opposed to action; it involves breaking the law and social regulations, and thus fosters social disruption (particularly amongst the working class), and schism within the Church of England. For Graves, the most important danger of Methodism was its potential for upsetting the whole system of social relations, not simply the authority of the Church. As C.J.Hill has rightly argued, 'Richard Graves was constitutionally and tenaciously conservative', as will become clear when we later examine his attitudes towards the social hierarchy.³⁸

It was the potential for religious and social upheaval which figured most prominently in the minds of most Anglican critics of Methodism. All recent commentators - whether sympathetic or hostile to Methodism - agree that John Wesley, the most influential of the Methodist leaders, was rigidly conservative in his political views but, they usually also perceive why Wesley's contemporaries thought that his flouting of Anglican authority and his conception of Christianity did contain some encouragement for the rejection of established authority in general. As it turns out, we now know that the Church of England was the only major institution to really suffer from the Methodist rejection, but many eighteenth-century Anglican critics - who were fond of claiming that any weakening of the Established Church would lead to complete chaos and anarchy - did, quite understandably, see Methodism as a threat, and therefore made efforts to

combat it. The supporters of Anglicanism who made this perception and resisted the Methodist attack had, in however vague or distorted a manner, a better grasp of the threat which it posed to the Church of England than some modern commentators are prepared to admit.

For example, R.E.Davies (himself a Methodist minister), in discussing mob violence against Methodists, argues that it was fostered by Anglican clergy and squires, 'who thought that Wesley was giving the lower orders ideas above their station'; such hostility, 'sometimes arose from the real but entirely unfounded conviction that Wesley was stirring up rebellion against proper authority'.³⁹ However, this conviction was unequivocally founded upon Wesley's own behaviour vis-à-vis 'proper authority', and the fact that he did encourage others to follow his example in disregarding Anglican authority in religious matters. Davies' description of the controversy between Bishop Butler and Wesley illustrates that Davies himself should be capable of recognising the nature of the Methodist threat to 'proper authority', for, he states of Butler, 'he was right in thinking that Wesley's activities could not be contained within the Church of England as it then was; they were subversive of diocesan and parochial discipline'.⁴⁰ As Davies admits of Wesley's claim to rightfully continue to preach at Bristol, 'legally he was quite wrong'.⁴¹ Once this is conceded, all of the apologetics of 'divine call' etc cannot alter the fact that Wesley continually disobeyed (and incited others to disobey) what Anglicans deemed 'proper authority'. Moreover, this rejection of authority by Wesley and other Methodist leaders was taken up by many working-class converts; as Davies remarks, 'many of them were brash and self-confident, as new converts are apt to be, and had no compunction about pointing out, directly or indirectly, the fai-

lings of the official pastors and the spiritual supineness of their flocks'.⁴²

Armstrong, writing of Wesley, has recently suggested that, 'the threat he produced to church order and to the social order was either ignored or not understood by him'.⁴³ But, however much it may be claimed that Wesley ignored the potential disruptiveness of his own doctrines - at least, as far as Anglicanism was concerned - it is hard to believe that he was incapable of understanding how Methodism jeopardised 'church order'. As Gilbert has pointed out, whilst discussing the Methodist societies,

There was an obvious ambiguity in the claim of voluntary agencies to be subordinate to the authority of the parochial clergy. Their very existence reflected both the partial breakdown of the organisational machinery of the Church and the increasing erosion of the prescriptive powers of its ministers, and they performed religious-cultural and social functions which the majority of the parochial clergy were capable of performing inadequately, if at all. In joining them their members expressed an implicit dissatisfaction with traditional ecclesiastical institutions.

And, regarding Wesley himself, 'From the very early years of his ministry John Wesley was aware that Methodism was confronting the Church of England with an option it could accept only by adopting extensive structural and religious-cultural changes'.⁴⁴

The bulk of Graves' objections to Methodism applied to both the Calvinist and the Arminian versions held by Whitefield and Wesley respectively; it is true that Graves heaps derision upon Whitefield in the novel, whilst treating Wesley much more tenderly, but it must not be supposed, therefore, that Graves had much sympathy for the latter's doctrines (Whitefield was, of course, a more likely target, being of lower social status; additionally, he was - by all accounts - a rather more histrionic performer). T.B. Shepherd has mistakenly assumed this to be the case, claiming that because Graves does not

attack Wesley personally, then he must virtually support him; no mention of the fact that one of Graves' characters has allegedly been driven mad by Wesley's preaching. In addition to this, Shepherd detects, 'a constant note of approval' for certain traits which Graves attributes to Methodists, thereby failing to see beyond the author's patronising and incorporating view of the Methodist project.⁴⁵ This is not, perhaps, surprising, given that Shepherd has earlier managed to completely misrepresent the first few chapters of the novel, by constructing a chronologically-distorted synopsis of the action.⁴⁶ Shepherd also seems to want to claim that, as Graves made Wildgoose one of 'good birth and education', and thus a character with whom one can have some 'sympathy', he is somehow displaying fraternal feelings towards the Methodists.⁴⁷ But there are a number of reasons why Graves should choose to place his hero within the gentry: (1) male literary heroes were typically of high status during this period; (2) the two most prominent Methodist leaders had both had university educations (notwithstanding Whitefield's low social status); (3) Graves had little sympathy with the 'lower classes', but, he thought it particularly ridiculous for any educated person to support Methodism, so, simply as a comic device, the disjunction between Wildgoose's status and his religious beliefs is understandable; (4) Graves took it for granted that plebeians would be attracted to Methodism, but to make Wildgoose's enthusiasm explicable (and to attack the Methodists), he introduces the idea that it stems from a mental disturbance. And all this, pace Shepherd, hardly indicates that the author adhered to some form of sympathetic fellow-travelling. Part of Shepherd's problem here is that he has no understanding of the importance of class and status in eighteenth-century fiction and soc-

ial organisation, unlike many of the novelists of the period. This blindness on the part of the critic points up the fact that any assessor of literature who employs a tendentious method of appraisal (seeking for non-existent sympathy to Methodism) coupled with a sloppy reading technique, will almost certainly descend into the realm of absurdity. No wonder then that Graves becomes - in Shepherd's reading - a closet-enthusiast, and Smollett, 'might well be an advocate for the need of methodism or some such movement in England'.⁴⁸ No matter that both authors saw Methodism as the prerogative of the insane, and the ignorant: a religion for upper-class lunatics, bourgeois 'old maids', and illiterate workers. The fact is that, as C.J.Hill has maintained, The Spiritual Quixote, 'is first of all the literary monument of anti-Methodism'.⁴⁹

One of the most striking features of Graves' novel is the large number of female characters who appear throughout the narrative; whilst Graves does not discard the female stereotypes which were commonly utilised by eighteenth-century English novelists, it is fair to say that he introduces rather more variety in his female characters than do other - often far more substantial - prose-fiction writers. For example, as we saw in Fielding's Amelia, the author there essentially presents the reader with one paragon against whom all of the other women appear more or less unworthy. Graves, on the other hand, whilst himself portraying paragons (of whom there are three) and wicked women, cannot be said to confine his fictitious females to these categories alone.⁵⁰ The effect of Graves' avoidance of the two-fold typology is to encourage the reader's belief in the minor female characters even though they are, for the most part, marginal to the novel as a whole. Mrs.Sarsenet and Miss Sainthill are both good ex-

amples of how Graves manages to suggest greater complexity of character than might be expected from such brief sketches. Significantly, Julia Townsend, the most important female in the narrative, is herself outside of the exemplary category. She makes comparatively few appearances for the greater part of the story, and remains all the more plausible for it.⁵¹ Perhaps the first thing to note when considering Julia in detail is Graves' description of her, which makes no use of superlatives, 'A nice critic might perhaps dispute her title to the character of a perfect beauty: but she had a sprightliness in her air, and a piercing brilliancy in her eyes, which, joined to the gloss of youth, could not fail to attract the particular regard of Mr. Wildgoose'. However, Julia is not only undistinguished as a beauty; she is also far from deferential to the hero's religious views, which she openly mocks.⁵² Although she reprimands Wildgoose for having abandoned his mother, she herself has run away from home, albeit for more immediately practical reasons, viz, because of the bad treatment which she has received at the hands of her father, stepmother, and sister.⁵³ She is, moreover, a resourceful woman for, in spite of her youth (she is around sixteen, according to Wildgoose's estimate), she has previously managed to escape 'ruin' whilst lodging at the house of a procuress in London.⁵⁴

Notwithstanding the fact that she has run away from home (usually the prerogative of vain and stupid young women, in eighteenth-century novels), Julia is quite level-headed, and is interested in Wildgoose for what are - at least by eighteenth-century standards - eminently sound reasons: his looks and his fortune. Graves explains,

I would not insinuate that Miss Townsend was of a mercenary temper (for she really was not). But though fortune alone, where the person is disagreeable, has seldom any considerable influence over the af-

fections of a young girl: yet, I believe, in conjunction with other circumstances, it operates insensibly upon their fancies, and contributes to make the person possessed of it more agreeable than he would otherwise appear; as the want of fortune frequently prevents their seeing those perfections in a man, which he is really possessed of.⁵⁵

Additionally, Graves show Julia to be subject to emotions of a type rarely found amongst literary heroines of the period, one of these being jealousy. When Wildgoose is preaching at Bristol (with Whitefield's approbation), he becomes very popular with the female Methodists, one of whom is, 'leering over his shoulder', whilst Julia is in the audience. Julia faints, or, as Graves puts it, 'was fallen into an hysteric fit', and the reason for this is clearly jealousy.⁵⁶ Graves goes on to explain that as Julia was 'fatigued with her journey, and perhaps somewhat affected at the sight of Mr.Wildgoose's gallantry to Mrs.Culpepper, it was more than her delicate constitution could well support'.⁵⁷ If any further proof were required to determine the cause of Julia's swoon, it appears when she and Mrs. Sarsenet go with Wildgoose to hear Whitefield preach; Julia does not want to go at all, and when she does she, 'absolutely refused to go into the desk (whither she was invited), because she saw the same Mrs.Culpepper there, whom we before mentioned as a constant attendant of Mr.Wildgoose, and whom she had seen him gallanting out of the desk the night before at the Tabernacle'.⁵⁸ In itself, fainting through jealousy may appear trivial or simply comical, but it is noteworthy that Graves' use of the device differs from its usual application. As Needham and Utter have argued, fainting has a long tradition in English literature, but in the eighteenth century it is typically associated with romantic heroines who faint at any sign of sexual intention on the part of male characters. There was an altruistic

alternative to such self-protective fainting, as manifested by Henry Fielding's Sophia Western, who faints when others are harmed or in danger; whilst Julia is also subject to altruistic fainting on one occasion, she is singular as a heroine who faints from jealousy.⁵⁹

As mentioned above, Julia has run away from her father and step-mother, just as Wildgoose has left his mother - and will not return home even when he learns that she is unwell.⁶⁰ Throughout the novel Wildgoose is urged to return home by Julia, Powell, Rivers and others, as all agree that he has left parent and home for no justifiable reason.⁶¹ Julia's case is somewhat different, and Graves makes a point of telling the reader why (indirectly) in the conversation between Wildgoose and Dr.Greville, once the former has repented, and stated, 'no doctrine, no religious opinion, can be true, that contradicts the tenderest feelings of human nature, the affection and duty which we owe our parents'.⁶² Greville, although pleased that Wildgoose has realised the 'folly' of his itineracy, hastens to add,

your last assertion ought to be admitted with some little restriction: as there may be some parents so unreasonably wicked, as to expect their children to prostitute their very consciences, as well as sacrifice their reason, to their absurd opinions or dishonest practices; in which case, children are evidently under a prior obligation to religion and virtue: though they should be very certain of the justice of their cause, before they venture to oppose so sacred an authority as that of parents over their children.

Julia then, is vindicated for escaping from her father's 'absurd opinions' and her stepmother's 'dishonest practices', whereas Wildgoose decamped, in Greville's words, 'merely from the blind impulse of an overheated imagination'.⁶³ Both are reconciled with their respective parents, of course, but the fact remains that in Julia's case, it is the parent who has been at fault and not the child.

Julia and Wildgoose eventually marry and, as their expectations

are moderate and realistic, live happily together; he concerns himself with his estate, whilst she spends her time, 'visiting the sick and afflicted'.⁶⁴ All this is conventional enough; nevertheless, we can see how far Julia differs from the more typical eighteenth-century heroine by considering one of Graves' minor female characters, Charlotte Rivers, who - in certain respects - epitomizes the literary paradigm for female paragons of the period.⁶⁵

Describing Charlotte, Rivers states that, 'although a severe critic might possibly spy out some trifling defect, yet, upon the whole, she had so striking an appearance, that few people could behold her without admiration'. Additionally, she was, 'every way finely proportioned, and of a natural, easy shape', whilst her eyes had, 'a brilliant lustre', and her complexion, 'rather the glossy bloom of high health, than that transparent delicacy which is generally the concomitant of too tender a constitution'. Charlotte then, in keeping with her humble origins, is healthy rather than perilously delicate; although the idea of physical fragility for women was important in the eighteenth century, various novelists (including Goldsmith, Henry Fielding, Burney) took some pains to indicate their rejection of the equation physical weakness=femininity. Apart from her looks, Charlotte's other most significant trait, 'was the beauty of her mind, which was every thing that can be conceived of sweet and amiable. Good nature and good sense, sprightliness and an artless freedom, the emanations of her charming soul, distinguished themselves in her eyes, and in every feature of her face'.⁶⁶

Predictably, this 'fair nymph' is possessed of 'native simplicity' and 'virgin innocence', plus 'native modesty' which, when coupled with the, 'delicacy of her taste, and the purity of her imagina-

tion', would apparently leave little else to be desired.⁶⁷ However, this is not enough for Rivers, who feels it necessary for Charlotte to become more refined prior to their marriage, for, 'though Miss Woodville had something naturally polite and genteel in her manner, yet I thought it would be highly necessary for her to receive some better instructions, in the common accomplishments of the sex, than were to be met with in that very retired situation'.⁶⁸ And, as a result of Rivers' endeavours, when Charlotte returns to her home she is, 'greatly improved...both in her carriage, her manner, and in the delicacy of her complexion'. So much so, that, 'The fame of Mrs. Rivers' beauty and appearance soon spread amongst the neighbouring villages'.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Charlotte's beauty and refinement do not prevent her from becoming a perfect wife and mother; Wildgoose notes that she looks upon her son, 'with inexpressible sweetness, and the air of a Madonna by Raphael or Corregio', and, furthermore, Rivers tells him, 'it is incredible, with Mrs. Rivers' economy, how small an income supplies us plentifully with all the elegancies which temperance and an unexpensive taste require'.⁷⁰

Wildgoose has attempted to speak with Charlotte about religion, on several occasions, but Rivers has fairly definite views upon the duties involved in being a wife and mother, and therefore tells him, 'my wife says her prayers, and takes care of her family, and does all the good in her power amongst her poor neighbours: but women, whose affections are employed upon their children, and their attention taken up with domestic concerns, have not time for these nice speculations'.⁷¹

Charlotte's story illustrates the model which formed the basic plot for a number of eighteenth-century novels; all that is required

to fulfil the plot conditions is that a beautiful, virtuous, intelligent, and low status girl be courted by a man who is her socio-economic superior; having overcome a number of vicissitudes (often including the prejudice of the man's friends and relatives), the couple marry, and the virtuous young beauty becomes an unparalleled wife and mother, concerned only with her husband and children plus, the local paupers. Graves' heroine, Julia, is obviously some distance from this model, being neither remarkably beautiful, nor of low status (indeed, her family are at least as distinguished as Wildgoose's); she is not particularly obedient or deferential, yet is in no need of some form of remedial training in 'feminine accomplishments'. Graves makes no mention of Julia having any children, nor of having any particular skill in the realm of household economy. Perhaps this is simply because the marriage between Wildgoose and Julia is one between equals (and therefore, cannot be considered 'imprudent'), and it is not necessary for her to display any special qualities by which the match can be vindicated.⁷²

Some further insight into Graves' views regarding women can be gleaned from the conversation between Wildgoose and Mrs.Booby; it seems extremely likely that Wildgoose here expresses Graves' opinions, for the author was undoubtedly against divorce, and Mrs.Booby's ideas are discredited along with her motives for speaking with the hero.⁷³

Wildgoose is summoned to see Mrs.Booby when he receives a card on which she has described herself as, 'A Lady, who is disgusted with the world'; her reasons for this 'disgust' later become apparent. Whilst Graves states that the lady does not seek to captivate our hero, he makes it plain that her desire to speak with him rests - at least in part - upon Wildgoose's 'agreeable countenance', and adds,

'a woman who has once been handsome, and experienced the power of her charms, seldom lays aside hopes of making conquests; but contracts an habitual fondness for admiration, and would be disappointed in not receiving that incense even from a man whom she despised'. Thus, Mrs.Booby's vanity motivates her request for an interview with Wildgoose, as much as any desire for spiritual guidance.⁷⁴

She tells Wildgoose the story of how she had been attached to a Mr.Clayton but, via the influence of her mother and Mr.Booby's wealth, has eventually come to marry Booby in spite of having no affection for him. As she and her husband have - after three years of marriage with no heir - come to despise one another, Mrs.Booby has left him to live in Bath. The reasons she gives for leaving include the charge that her husband was slovenly, solely concerned with drinking and hunting, and determined to live in the country to enjoy such pursuits. His disregard for 'genteel' company further irritates her, but, as she states, 'what rendered Mr.Booby completely odious to me, was the high opinion he had conceived of the superiority of his sex; and the arbitrary notions he entertained of the authority of the husband over us poor domestic animals, called wives'.⁷⁵

Mrs.Booby's purpose in telling Wildgoose this sequence of events is to discover, 'whether I have done any thing inconsistent with my marriage vow'; this question amazes the hero almost as much as the fact of Mrs.Booby having left her husband in the first place. However, he points out to her that as her marriage was not based upon 'mutual affection' or 'religious principle', one cannot be surprised that it has been unhappy. He then goes on to tell her, 'you have not sufficiently considered your obligation to obey the person, to whom you have, by the marriage-contract, given up, in some measure,

your natural freedom', to which Mrs.Booby replies that she would sooner give up her life than her freedom. But Wildgoose continues, arguing that such an obligation is, 'evidently enjoined by the holy Scripture, and to be deduced from that superiority which Nature seems to have given the man over the more delicate sex'.⁷⁶ Mrs.Booby completely rejects this claim of male superiority, and so Wildgoose, attempting to avoid the 'equality of the sexes' debate, states that domestic government does - like civil government - require the presence of a 'sovereign power'. To this he adds, 'And I am certain, that Religion, as well as Reason, has placed this power in the husband'. Mrs.Booby will have none of this, but Wildgoose persists, and offers the opinion that, had she submitted to her husband, and, 'acknowledged her entire dependence upon him for support and protection', she would have been considerably happier. The reasoning behind the hero's view is that if a woman presents herself as a 'poor helpless creature', rather than, 'displaying that masculine ferocity which is too common in the sex', then no man could be so 'brutish' as to treat her badly.⁷⁷

The lady has nothing other than contempt for this particular opinion, and points out to Wildgoose that she is - in view of her pin-money - perfectly capable of looking after herself; this leads the hero to speak of pin-money as 'monstrous', and he continues,

The allowing a woman a maintenance, independent of her husband, is not only destroying that mutual affection which arises from a sense of their interest being inseparably united; but is also a continual temptation to a woman to fly out on the slightest dispute: and to despise the authority of an husband without whose assistance or support she has it in her power to live in affluence and splendor.⁷⁸

At this point, the discussion turns to more general topics, including the nature of Bath and its inhabitants, but before Wildgoose leaves

Mrs.Booby, we learn that she is fully engaged in the frivolities which she affects to despise, and also the real reason for her 'disgust'. What has particularly upset her is that fact that Clayton, her former lover, has arrived at Bath with his new wife, 'a very agreeable heiress with thirty thousand pounds', and has held a public breakfast to which Mrs.Booby has not been invited. This, plus 'a bad run at cards, had made her sick of the world'.⁷⁹ Thus, the lady is discredited; however, it is worth looking at Wildgoose's comments in greater detail, as they throw light upon Graves' own opinions.

Although Wildgoose is prepared to accept that both of the Boobys have been responsible for the failure of their marriage, he has no doubt that her refusal to obey her husband was completely unjustifiable. In his opinion, a woman has an absolute duty to obey her spouse, regardless of any other considerations; initially, he bases this view on a notion of male superiority but, claiming that he does not need to employ this assumption, goes on to introduce the argument for the necessity of sovereign power in domestic life. But Wildgoose has not actually discarded the claim of masculine superiority, as he maintains that reason and religion must necessarily consider such power a male prerogative. And when Mrs.Booby scorns his argument, he attacks her for not conforming to the ideological view of femininity to which he adheres; this leads him to question her sexuality, by accusing her of 'masculine ferocity'. For the hero, women should be submissive and apparently helpless for - he erroneously claims - no man could ill-treat his dependent wife.

Wildgoose's suggestion that Mrs.Booby should have acknowledged dependence upon her husband makes little sense under the circumstances. As she has her pin-money, it would be ludicrous for her to pre-

tend to financial dependence upon her spouse. As far as Wildgoose's remarks about pin-money go, one can state that they are inappropriate here; in this particular instance pin-money cannot have destroyed mutual affection, for none was ever present. What pin-money did actually undermine was not mutual affection or consciousness of joint interest, but rather the arbitrary authority of the husband, which was based upon his economic position. The need for helplessness, submissiveness, and so on on the part of wives disappears - as Graves realised - when a married woman has sufficient economic independence to challenge her husband's economic domination. For Graves, the idea of women being in any way independent was undoubtedly an unpalatable one.

Graves' general attitude towards the social hierarchy, as expressed in the novel, appears to be that distinctions necessarily exist and must be carefully maintained. He definitely viewed the 'lower orders' with some contempt, as is illustrated by his frequent comments upon their ignorance and credulity. However, one of the aspects of rank which caused Graves both amusement and irritation, was the way in which members of one particular class or strata sometimes attempted to 'pass' as members of another group.⁸⁰ In his appearance, Wildgoose tries to minimize or obscure his own origins, which leads Whitefield's sister-in-law to term him and Jerry, 'trampers'. Graves remarks, 'And although Wildgoose had of late affected to despise all worldly distinctions, and to make light of external respect, the consequence of them; yet he was a little shocked at this unforeseen effect of his voluntary humiliation, and almost began to wish that he had travelled in a manner more suited to his station in life'.⁸¹ Thus Graves suggests that any member of the 'respectable'

classes who is so stupid as to try to conceal or disregard his or her status, deserves to suffer the consequences - which are almost certain to be unpleasant (the treatment which Wildgoose receives at the hands of Mrs. Booby's footman is a good example of this). For Graves, this sort of disregard is wrong per se, and Wildgoose himself has a dim intuition of this 'truth' when, observing Rivers' respectable and harmonious domestic situation, he can only, 'think but meanly of the present vagabond profession in which he had voluntarily engaged'.⁸²

The author touches upon the concealment of class identity in several places throughout the story, whether the passing involved amounts to demeaning oneself, or posing as one of higher status than is actually the case. If Wildgoose represents the former kind of passing, then the latter is demonstrated by Rouvell, whom Graves describes as, 'a young fellow, who, by a strange concurrence of lucky circumstances, with the help of a convenient assurance and a laced coat, had wriggled himself into tolerable company'. In fact, Rouvell has humble origins, 'he being the son of a Grocer', and was at one time a servitor at Wildgoose's Oxford college - something which he endeavours to conceal from his more recent acquaintance.⁸³ When Rouvell and Wildgoose meet outside of the former's newly-found polite company, the ex-servitor admits to his previous status, but tells the hero, 'to be sure, one would not chuse to have it mentioned amongst people of fashion'. Wildgoose disagrees, arguing that education and behaviour are the most important (and equalizing) aspects of being a gentleman; moreover, he continues, whilst humble origins and a small fortune are not 'ridiculous', being 'too anxious to conceal them, and even give the lye to them by our dress and appearance', is. Rouvell believes that the pleasures and advantages of being able to mix with

'people of distinction' fully justify chicanery, and further confides that he is thinking of taking orders to procure a good living, even though he has little concern for religion.⁸⁴ The last we hear of this character is that, having failed in his bid to marry a woman of fortune, he has married more modestly and is about to enter the Anglican Church. However, his conversation with Wildgoose simply underlines the fact that his sole motivation for becoming a clergyman remains financial: he ceases to pass as a person of fashion, only to pose as a man of religion.⁸⁵ In either role he is an impostor, and for Graves, such impostors undermine existing social relations and institutions.

Although Graves tells the reader that Wildgoose has tried to ignore social distinctions during his itinerancy, there is little evidence of this in the text. For example, whenever he and Tugwell are invited into a respectable home, Jerry invariably ends up in the kitchen.⁸⁶ And, when Jerry becomes annoyed by the attitude of a couple of locals as he and the hero enter Bath, Wildgoose can suggest to him that, 'the mob of all places were alike; and that he ought not to reflect upon a whole body of people, for the wanton petulance of a few ignorant wretches'.⁸⁷ Yet, by employing the term 'mob', Wildgoose is doing much the same thing; he assumes the existence of a class or group of people with representatives everywhere, who all conform to unruly and ill-mannered behaviour. The basis for the hero's comments here is simply that a 'taylor's 'prentice' has made an irreverent remark to them, and an elderly man has (whether knowingly or otherwise is not made clear) given them ambiguous directions. Thus Wildgoose does just what he warns Jerry against; he generalises about a lot of people from the example of one or two. 'Mob' was an

ideological category employed by the ruling and middle classes to refer to the ordinary working people, particularly, but not only, when they sought to influence events by mass protest and so on. Wildgoose's usage does not differ from that of his non-Methodist social equals, and would actually include the likes of Jerry, were it not that the latter is his servant. Essentially, 'mob' was used to designate all of those common people over whom the ruling and middle classes had no immediate control, especially when these members of the 'lower orders' showed little or no respect for their social, economic, and political superiors.

Later on in the story Wildgoose articulates his support for social distinctions in no uncertain manner. Jerry, comparing the situation of some forge-workers (whom they pass on the road) with that of Mr. Aldworth's company, remarks upon, 'how hard it was that some people should be forced to toil like slaves, whilst others lived in ease and plenty, and the fat of the land!'. Wildgoose tells him that true happiness resides in religious rather than material circumstances, and likewise that, 'there is not that difference in the real enjoyment of men, that you imagine. You only see the outside of the wealthier part of mankind; and know nothing of the care and anxiety which they suffer, which is frequently more insupportable than any bodily labour which poor people undergo'. Jerry is rightly sceptical about this proposition, and replies that if he had a really good dinner every day, he would not trouble himself with cares and anxieties. To this Wildgoose can only answer, 'but these distinctions amongst mankind are absolutely necessary; and, whilst men have the liberty of doing as they please, it cannot be otherwise'. To the hero's further suggestion that he (Jerry) would have equal provision for all, the ser-

vant rejoins, 'methinks it is very hard, that one man should have five or six hundred pounds a-year, when another mayhap has not fifty'.⁸⁸ At this point, Wildgoose introduces the idea that if everyone had £100 per annum, nobody would work for another; therefore, he continues, everyone would have to make for themselves any and every thing which they required. And this, according to the hero, means that, 'either every man must work ten times harder than the poorest man now does, or, if he were idle or extravagant, those that were frugal and industrious would again grow rich, and the others poor: which shows the unavoidable necessity of that inequality amongst mankind, with which your complaint began'.⁸⁹ Jerry can think of no answer to this, and so decides that Wildgoose may be right; after all, he muses, the Squire can afford to get drunk every day and therefore suffers from gout as a consequence: I have no such illnesses. However, whilst the hero's arguments might convince an uneducated artisan, they do not prove his thesis, as can be illustrated.

Wildgoose's claim that happiness consists of religious conviction and experience is completely irrelevant to Jerry's statement that some work like slaves whilst others live in ease. And, as Wildgoose nowhere expresses the opinion that one cannot be both materially comfortable and spiritually secure, he presumably should take the issue of material comfort as being something quite independent of religion. In which case, Jerry's comment still stands; Wildgoose has also claimed that the wealthy only appear to enjoy themselves, whilst really having a worse time than those who suffer because of physical labour. But this erroneously implies that labourers themselves have no worries: the idea is that the rich have luxury plus worry, whereas

the poor have labour, but not a care in the world. In fact, the rich had luxury, and may or may not have had worries; the poor had no luxury, plenty of hard physical labour, and an adequate portion of worries. It is therefore easy to see which group had the greatest opportunity for 'real enjoyment'.

It was an oft repeated cliché in the eighteenth century that the poor (like animals) had no cares, but the claim is nothing more than utter nonsense. Did writers such as Graves really suppose that workers who struggled hard to survive (in abysmal poverty) had no anxieties? And could an author of Graves' education believe that the cares of the wealthy were comparable to those experienced by poor people fighting to exist? I doubt this. The assumptions behind Wildgoose's speech display the contempt and callousness of the ruling and middle classes towards the majority of the population. Stripped of rhetoric, the attitude voiced by the hero is that of indifference to the suffering of the poor - particularly in view of the knowledge that to remedy their condition would involve inconveniencing the supposedly respectable classes.

Wildgoose gives no indication as to why the distinctions which he defends are necessary, but alleges that they are inevitable because, 'men have the liberty of doing as they please'; this makes little sense, for it must have been patently obvious to anyone that most men and women were in no position to do as they pleased: only a tiny elite enjoyed this prerogative. However, this spurious reference to free-choice has been introduced in order to imply that some were rich and some poor as a result of individuals possessing different moral qualities - as is revealed in Wildgoose's comments upon the hypothetical sharing-out of money. If it were true that one could do as

one pleased, one would have to conclude that the forge-workers mentioned above chose to toil like slaves; Jerry does not see the matter in such terms, as it is clear to him that they are 'forced' to do such work in order to live. Given the ridiculous premise that these workers chose to perform arduous and unpleasant labour, why should they - having received their hypothetical £100 per annum - decide that they no longer wanted to work for another? Should they choose not to continue in their work, one might conclude that they had previously been working solely in order to procure the means of survival. Any human-being who could simply choose exactly what they wanted to do would have no need of income, whether large or small; therefore, it is clear that Wildgoose has been employing a purely formal notion of choice in his rhetoric. The freedom of choice available to most of the population in eighteenth-century England was nothing other than the 'choice' associated with formally-free wage-labourers; this meant that when work was plentiful they had some slight choice as to whether to work (and live in dire need), or simply to swiftly starve to death. In practical terms, this was no choice at all.

Wildgoose's redistribution of money idea is posed within a totally ideological framework, for it is based on the bourgeois economic assumption that every 'man' is an island. Thus, Wildgoose implies that, both in his example and in the existing society, there would be no need for collective activities, and so on, merely individual producers and consumers. In such a model all activity takes place in a vacuum, as everyone pursues their rational self-interest; however, in contrast to Wildgoose's paradigm, 'Society does not consist of individuals; it expresses the sum of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves'.⁹⁰ In short, eco-

conomic models of this type hypothesize conditions never yet seen in any human society.

Nevertheless, Wildgoose soon abandons the idea that no-one would work for another in his hypothetical world, for he goes on to argue that the 'frugal and industrious' would again grow rich in such circumstances - by working for those who would not perform their own tasks. How this would be possible given that everyone had to work harder than ten men to survive, is not made clear. But what is obvious is that Wildgoose is surreptitiously arguing that those who are wealthy in the real world have become so by industry and thrift, hence the view that these worthies would - if Wildgoose's scheme were tried - soon become wealthy again. Thus Wildgoose offers the bourgeois theory of primitive accumulation under the guise of necessity, conveniently ignoring the fact that - in the real world - there was no initially-equal share-out of resources; the rich are rich because, so we are (still) told, they have worked hard, used their superior brains, and saved. But, as Marx concluded, having described this fiction of the diligent few and the majority of 'lazy rascals',

Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long since ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defence of property.

The real story of this accumulation is somewhat different, for, as Marx adds, 'In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the greater part'.⁹¹

Predictably, Graves was very concerned about the way in which Methodism might disrupt work; as Wildgoose and Jerry approach Monmouth, for example, they find that the workers along the way readily

abandon their toil in order to listen to Methodist preaching. A tailor stops working on 'a suit of cloaths which he had promised to finish that evening', whilst the blacksmith, 'leaves the Farmer's horses half-shoed', and the farmer's wife, 'leaves her cows unmilked, and her child dangerously ill in the cradle; and, with half a dozen more, who, spreading the alarm, had left their several employments, joined the devout cavalcade'.⁹² For all the importance attributed to religion by writers like Graves, devotion and religious feelings must not be allowed to interfere with secular economic tasks. Both Lady Forester and Miss Sainthill share this concern that work must remain inviolate; they support the establishment of Protestant nunneries, but would not have them allow entry to, 'young women who might be useful in the world, as servants, milleners, or mantua-makers, and other necessary employments'. The nunneries which they envisage would simply be, 'a refuge for young ladies of good families and small fortunes'.⁹³

In Graves' opinion, the labouring poor should pay attention to their work, and enjoy it like the servants of Sir William and Lady Forester, and the happy farm-labourers employed by Isabella and her husband.⁹⁴ The non-labouring poor (that is, the old and infirm, and the unemployed) should be grateful for whatever their superiors choose to give them, unlike the objects of Lady Forester's charity.⁹⁵ The Reverend Greville - who often visits the 'poor and ignorant part of his parish' - has something to say about the poor, and about rank generally, as we will see below.

Near Stratford, Wildgoose and Greville encounter a young beggar returning to his home in Shropshire, having been dismissed from service because of a long illness. Greville gives the man sixpence,

and tells Wildgoose that, 'although he did not like to encourage common beggars, he generally gave them some little matter to relieve their present distress: but not without a sharp reproof to those who appeared to be habituated to that idle practice'. This leads Greville and the hero to discuss the conditions necessary for a general 'reformation' of the behaviour and attitudes of the mass of the people:

And Dr.Greville observed 'that neither the preaching of the Clergy, nor even the many penal laws, which were daily multiplied, would avail any thing towards the end proposed, unless some alteration could be produced in the manners of the people, by the influence of their superiors: the luxury and extravagance of the great and people in high life descends, as a fashion, amongst the crowd, and has infected every rank of people. If (says he) an association were formed amongst some of our principal and most popular Nobility, to set an example of frugality and temperance, by reducing the number of their servants, and the number of dishes at their tables; and if the Prince on the throne would condescend to enforce the example, by regulating the splendor of the dress and equipages of those who appeared at Court; it would soon be established as a fashion: and that crowd of useless servants, who are now supported in idleness and luxury, and who, when dismissed from service, or married and settled in the world, propagate the vices and follies, which they have learned of their Masters, amongst the middling rank of people; these dissolute idle rascals, I say, would be left in the country, where they are wanted, to till the land; or to supply our handicraft trades or manufactures with useful and industrious hands. And we might then hope to see virtue and frugality restored amongst us'.96

As can be seen from the above, Greville believes that any improvement in his society must depend upon and largely consist of changes amongst the working people, engineered by their superiors. It is a clear indication of Greville's (and Graves') elitist opinion of such ordinary workers that he is convinced that their very faults typically arise from blind and ludicrous attempts to emulate the wealthy classes. It is on the basis of this view of the people - that they are mindless, totally pliable imitators of their 'betters' - that Greville constructs his supposed solution. His limited criticism of

the nobility and the monarchy rests entirely on the premise that their bad example has encouraged indolence and extravagance amongst the lower ranks, whilst their carelessness and vanity in retaining superfluous servants has provided luxury for these lackeys beyond their servile station. Equally disturbing, in Greville's opinion, is the fact that such servants may ultimately corrupt the bourgeoisie by introducing into that class the vices acquired in the service of the aristocracy. For Greville, it is essential that rural workers be confined to the poverty from which they so often tried to escape, in order that they might provide a sizeable (and probably 'surplus') workforce for agricultural and handicraft production.

What Greville fails to recognize, is that one of the main reasons why preaching and harsh penal laws only had a limited effect upon the poor, was simply that the poor were frequently forced to act contrary to both if they wanted to obtain the means by which to survive. Neither preaching nor laws are ever likely to prevent people from pursuing this fundamental goal. The flight from the countryside which Greville so deplores was itself an example of workers seeking new opportunities to survive in the face of the development of capitalist agriculture; this unquestionably worsened the condition of subsistence farmers and agricultural labourers, encouraging them (and sometimes literally forcing them) to search for a livelihood elsewhere. However, the underlying concern of Greville's speech here is the same as that of every character in the novel who speaks in favour of social distinctions and against Methodism: Wildgoose in his 'lucid' moments, Rivers, Greville, Griskin et al all voice Graves' opinions - as expressed both in the novel, and in his other published non-fictional writings. What is at stake for Graves is - quite

simply - social order, for, as C.J.Hill writes of Graves, 'Every reflection, direct or indirect, of his political and religious faith shows him to have been a complete status-quo-ite, entirely satisfied with existing institutions, and sincerely disturbed by anything which seemed to endanger them'.⁹⁷ Graves' desire to support and maintain existing social relations not only led him to write the novel, it likewise provided him with its basic theme.

Assessments of The Spiritual Quixote have - even since Hill's sound work - typically ignored or overlooked the purpose of the book. Whibley saw the novel as a 'comedy of manners', and Graves as a 'wise patriot'; an anonymous reviewer in the TLS claimed that Graves was an advocate of 'robust common sense', whilst the editor of the most recent edition of the novel, Tracy, repeats the idea of the author's 'common sense', and decides that Graves' views were 'moderate and conciliatory'.⁹⁸ Rymer, who maintains that Graves was definitely mounting a satirical attack upon Methodism, has therefore argued that, 'On the whole, Graves has been idealized and treated with a sentimentality which, judging by his characteristic irony of tone and self-deprecating humour, he would probably have resented'.⁹⁹ One does not have to agree with all of Rymer's further contentions about the novel in order to concede this much. However, the most extensive commentary upon Graves' life, writings, and social views, remains that of C.J.Hill, who describes Graves as, 'wholly mistrustful of democratic ideals', and, 'the levelling principle'; a 'wholehearted believer in rank and form', who, 'had a profound reverence for tradition and an obsequious respect for rank'.¹⁰⁰ As Hill concludes, 'Graves feared intellectual anarchy, revolution, and irreligion, and one, he thought, would be pretty sure to breed the others'.¹⁰¹ This

conclusion can - I would claim - be supported with reference to some of those features of the novel discussed throughout this chapter, for it is almost certain that Graves was a man who, like his creation, Greville, 'would not have truth propagated in a seditious manner'.¹⁰²

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVELINA

One aspect of Evelina is that it presents the reader with a series of sexist perceptions of women; these can be separated and placed into three different groupings: (1) the genteel or polite mode; (2) the misogynistic/'masculine' mode; (3) the exploitative-sexual mode. These distinct perspectives are not (completely) mutually exclusive; for example, statements derived from (1) may be tendentiously employed by characters who basically subscribe to (3), and so on. Fanny Burney's task is to compare these three forms of sexist ideology and to indicate to the reader her full support of (1). At no point in the novel is Burney critical of this, her chosen form of sexist oppression; unlike modes (2) and (3) which are discredited - by Evelina or those who share her outlook - whenever they appear, (1) is accepted and propounded as being morally, practically, and aesthetically correct. How do these forms of sexist ideology differ?

In keeping with other eighteenth-century literary heroines Evelina is, 'innocent as an angel, and artless as purity itself'. This opinion of Villars is shared by Lady Howard, who states, 'She is a little angel!', and further comments, 'Her face and person answer my most refined ideas of complete beauty'.¹ All agree that in Evelina's case, beauty is enhanced by good sense, and not tied - as Lady Howard suggests it more typically is - to 'folly'. In addition, Evelina has a strong sense of duty/obedience and, with Villars' encouragement, this even extends to complying with her grandmother, Mme. Duval, who is herself a discreditable and stupid woman. In this, as in everything else, Villars reiterates the importance of 'prudence' -

for women in general, and Evelina in particular.

Lord Orville, the genteel hero of the novel, holds views which mesh neatly into those of the aforementioned characters. He is apt to consider (at least some) women as 'goddesses' and likewise to refer to, 'the general sweetness of the sex'.² In contrast, Lord Merton, the standard 'bad' aristocrat of the story, perceives women as objects of sexual pleasure, and little else; he occasionally employs rhetoric about 'heavenly living objects' etc, but his fundamental attitude towards women is that of (3).³ Sexual innuendo and lust are characteristic of his stance; in its mild form, this appears in the sort of remark which he makes to a young female companion, 'how can one sit by you, and be good?...when only to look at you is enough to make one wicked - or wish to be so?'. But, more typically, 'I don't know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks way'.⁴ Merton is not alone in his view of women, as Sir Clement and Lovel hold similar attitudes - although Sir Clement takes care to express himself in a version of the polite mode; his general courtesy is, however, merely a matter of form, a means to an end.

All of the dubious characters adhering to form (3) abhor physical and/or intellectual ability in women, as can be seen from the following; Lord Merton to Lady Louisa, 'your Ladyship is merely delicate, - and devil take me if I ever had the least passion for an Amazon'. Coverley (whose position is, like that of Lovel, only hinted at) states, 'I'd as soon see a woman chop wood, as hear her chop logic'. Lovel, 'I have an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female'. Perhaps Merton's final comment in this 'discussion' best illustrates the position of those who hold to

(3), 'a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good nature; in everything else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me if I ever wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!'.⁵

By contrast, characters whose opinions come under (1) (Villars, Evelina, Orville, Howard, Mrs. Mirvan), consider health - but not robustness - and intelligence to be desirable qualities for women. Of course, Evelina is, according to Villars, a 'rustic', or, as she herself puts it, 'unpolished', but this is a result of 'innocence', a sheltered upbringing, and a lack of familiarity with urban society; it does not indicate a lack of intelligence.⁶ As Lord Orville suggests, 'credulity is the sister of innocence'; Evelina has, in addition, 'an artlessness of disposition that I never saw equalled'. Nevertheless, some measure of intellectual and moral independence is (arguably) attributed to women according to ideology (1); Villars tells Evelina, for example, 'you must learn not only to judge but to act for yourself'.⁷

Sexism (2) is virtually misogynistic and centres around the 'faults' of women as outlined by, especially, Captain Mirvan, some of whose negative assessments of women are shared by Tom Branghton. The Captain thinks that women, particularly young ones, are vacuous; speaking of his daughter (who is not allowed to freely express her opinions) and Evelina he states, 'they are a set of parrots and speak by rote, for they all say the same thing: but ask 'em how they like making puddings and pies, and I'll warrant you'll pose 'em'.⁸ In response to remarks upon 'complexion' made by Orville and others, the Captain interjects, 'the women are vain enough already; no need for to puff 'em up more', and, displaying his contempt for the flattery

lavished upon his daughter and Evelina (by sycophants representing (3)), he bluntly replies, 'I think you might as well not give the girls so much of this palaver: they'll take it all for gospel'. It must be noted however that Captain Mirvan is equally scornful of (and amused by) pretensions amongst 'fashionable' men, and is unimpressed by polite society generally, 'the men, as they call themselves, are no better than monkeys; and as to the women, why they are mere dolls'.⁹ So, Mirvan is very much the spokesman for rough and impolite - but not sexually-oriented - 'male' values; there is nothing of the sycophant or the lover displayed in his character. In fact, the main objection which his wife, daughter, and Evelina have concerning him is his outspoken and boisterous manner and his tendency to debunk, which in practice often amounts to physical cruelty. The practical jokes which he plays upon Mme. Duval amply illustrate this trait; in turn, he attacks her with smelling salts, contrives to have her soused in mud, and ill-treats and terrorizes her via a fake robbery. Therefore, he cannot be approved of by adherents to model (1), even though, for example, Villars sympathizes with him regarding his view of London etc. For the refined sexists of category (1), the Captain is just too insensitive and too impolite. Those representing (3) likewise find him uncultured and loutish; this does not, however, prevent Sir Clement from ingratiating himself with the Captain as a way of gaining access to Evelina.¹⁰

Two other characters who must be mentioned are the shabby-genteel Smith, and Tom Branghton. The former's sexism is largely in keeping with (3); a typical remark of this would-be ladies' man is, 'I always study what the ladies like, - that's my first thought. And, indeed, it is but natural that you should like best to sit by the gen-

tlements, for what can you find to say to one another?'. This prompts Tom to show his commitment to (2), 'O never think of that, they'll find enough to say, I'll be sworn. You know the women are never tired of talking'.¹¹

Smith is - partly because of the high regard which Evelina's female cousins have for him - extremely conceited, as is clear from his attitude towards Evelina. He assumes that she must find him attractive, and makes fawning statements like, 'how can you be so cruel as to be so much handsomer than your cousins?'. Smith is therefore horrified and hurt to find himself forced to dance solely with Mme. Duval (in the light of Evelina's refusal) at a public ball to which he has managed to drag Evelina. Adopting what he sees as the last resort, he speaks to the heroine of marriage which - in spite of the fact that he views it as resulting in, 'loss of one's liberty', and the 'ridicule of all one's acquaintance' - he implies may be possible between himself and Evelina. Smith's assumption is that marriage is the ultimate goal of all women, but in this, he is stating no more than that which is implicit in all of the types of sexism listed above. His big mistake is to suppose that Evelina has a romantic (or any other) interest in him.¹²

Tom Branghton's sexism is basically a rather more adolescent version of (2); he delights in being rude to his aunt (Mme. Duval), finding her interest in dancing - given her age - particularly amusing. He likewise endeavours to continually bait his sisters, whom he claims are, 'always scolding', and further adds, 'there's nothing but quarreling with the women: it's my belief that they like it better than victuals and drink'. In keeping with his generally juvenile appraisal of the world, his overall attitude towards women only in-

volves perceiving them as suitable candidates for his teasing and ignorant behaviour; like Captain Mirvan, he shows no sign of any sexual interest within his perspective.¹³

As noted previously, Evelina is a paradigm of beauty, innocence, and (in the main) good sense; as Lady Howard puts it, 'She seems born for an ornament to the world'.¹⁴ Almost everyone who comes into contact with Evelina produces some cliché about her angelic/heavenly qualities; the use of such imagery by Orville, Lady Howard, and Merton has already been remarked upon, but there are other examples, such as, 'Sweet Heaven! is this thy angel?' (McCartney, admittedly whilst 'distracted'), and, 'my angel' (Sir Clement), which illustrate this recurring theme.¹⁵ It is interesting to consider such terms as applied to women during this period, for they abound in prose-fiction. The Puritan concern with godliness and grace has, one might argue, here been replaced with a secularized and trivialized conception of of goodness/divinity. Whilst characters subscribing to (1) use 'divine' imagery to refer to 'good' behaviour and physical attractiveness, adherents to (3) equate words like 'angelic', 'heavenly' etc simply with sexual desirability. In both cases, the words have no religious meaning, and in (1), what is thought of as good or morally correct is actually no more than behaviour which conforms to the bourgeois system of etiquette. By this, I mean that the 'moral' value-system informing (1) is an ideological (in the pejorative sense) and formal position centring around discretion, prudence, circumspection and so on - an important component of the system is the notion of 'feminine delicacy'; expediency in all things appears as the highest virtue. What is necessary for one to be good, is outlined below.

To be good is to be careful and restrained; it is to act according to the norms and values of bourgeois society at its most refined, and thus to be in harmony with the more 'noble' characteristics which are supposedly present (if not always readily observable) within 'human nature'. Villars, addressing Evelina on her stance towards McCartney, states, 'Though gentleness and modesty are the peculiar attributes of your sex, yet fortitude and firmness, when occasion demands them, are virtues as noble and becoming in women as in men: the right line of conduct is the same for both sexes, though the manner in which it is pursued, may somewhat vary, and be accommodated to the strength or weakness of the different travellers'.¹⁶ So, regardless of different 'innate' traits, in certain circumstances it is both desirable and necessary for women to display what are essentially 'male' virtues (in some instances, it is also acceptable for men to possess a virtue associated with women, for example, Lord Orville's 'feminine delicacy').¹⁷ Villars' suggestion that there is one common standard of conduct for both sexes is, however, rather weakened by the equivocal qualification which he adds to it. And it is obvious that he does not - in practice - remain consistent on this point. The idea of a common code here is used to combat female 'passivity', which is, on particular occasions, felt to be 'dangerous'. Villars' comments to Evelina arising from Sir Clement's conduct show the reader what he has in mind: 'You cannot, my love, be too circumspect; the slightest carelessness on your part, will be taken advantage of, by a man of his disposition. It is not sufficient for you to be reserved; his conduct even calls for your resentment'. Moreover, he advises, 'do not, by a too passive facility, risk the censure of the world, or your own future regret'.¹⁸ Whilst passivity

is generally deemed a desirable female attribute, it must not be maintained if reputation/honour (that is, virginity) is at risk; women are allowed to be active in the defence of chastity. It is worth noting - particularly in view of Villars' position as a clergyman - that the consequence of a woman failing in this area is not, as might earlier have been the case, incurring the wrath or displeasure of God, but instead, 'the censure of the world' and 'future regret' (the latter presumably arising from one's ruined chances in the marriage market).

Villars actually affirms the existence of the double-standard applied to conduct when he warns, 'Remember, my dear Evelina, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman: it is at once, the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things'.¹⁹ But speaking of female reputation in this manner - as if it were comparable to a piece of fine china - only serves to underline the sexism inherent in this exposition of ideas drawn from category (1). For Villars, as for all others propounding this mode of sexist ideology, the only real value any single woman may have depends upon her maintaining 'unblemished' chastity and thus reputation. Evelina may fight for her 'honour', but it is unthinkable that she should fight for her rights. Commenting upon Mme. Duval's intention to force Evelina's father to fulfil his parental (that is, pecuniary) obligations via a law-suit, Villars declares such a procedure to be, 'totally repugnant to all female delicacy'. He has already indicated his position regarding Evelina and her future, 'My plan...was not merely to educate and to cherish her as my own, but to adopt her the heiress of my small fortune, and to bestow her upon some worthy man'.²⁰ Indeed, a 'worthy' man was - for any woman - considered the supreme reward for chastity

and obedience, by the supporters of sexism (1). However, any woman fortunate enough to attain this prize was faced with the problem of how to express sufficient gratitude to her magnanimous male redeemer. Evelina, commenting on her wedding day ('the most important of my life!'), writes, 'Oh Lord Orville! - it shall be the sole study of my happy life, to express, better than by words, the sense I have of your exalted benevolence, and greatness of mind!'. Recounting the marriage she states, 'This morning, with fearful joy, and trembling gratitude, she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection'.²¹ From the terms used here one might - if not aware of the source - suppose this expression of thankfulness to be directed towards God, and not simply one's spouse.

It has been suggested above that sexism (1) contains the belief that women should, ideally, have a modicum of intelligence. But Burney is careful not to allow the reader to imagine that intelligence per se is a desirable attribute when found in women. It must not appear too salient, and therefore impair 'femininity'; this is made manifest in Evelina's description of Mrs. Selwyn, 'She is extremely clever; her understanding, indeed, may be called masculine; but unfortunately, her manners deserve the same epithet; for, in studying to acquire the knowledge of the other sex, she has lost all the softness of her own'. Knowledge and a good understanding are here taken to be characteristically 'masculine', whilst women are associated with the dubious trait of 'softness'. The trouble with Mrs. Selwyn - for the apologists for sexism (1) - is that she lacks, 'gentleness; a virtue which, nevertheless, seems so essential a part of the female character, that I find myself more awkward, and less at ease with a woman who wants it, than I do with a man'.²² Evelina feels uneasy

with such a woman because, presumably, she perceives absence of gentleness in women as unnatural. One does not expect - according to category (1) - men to be gentle (although a paragon like Orville may provide an exception), but it is a fundamental requirement for any 'real' woman, being part of the trappings of submissiveness, deference, and obedience demanded of women, particularly in their dealings with men. A good example of these qualities in Evelina is, perhaps, to be found in Mrs. Mirvan who, in spite of her husband's less than polite attitudes and behaviour, manages to maintain her unswerving 'femininity'. As Orville approvingly remarks, 'She is gentle and amiable...a true feminine character'.²³

Throughout the novel one can see that Evelina's fears and problems are such because of her need to protect her reputation in the light of various hazards, and to ensure that Lord Orville receives and consolidates an appropriate impression of her worthiness. She must not simply be good, but must also be seen to be good (this is a world wherein appearance - in every sense - is of the utmost importance); as she is unfamiliar with the 'world', and in particular, the city, she has to rely on a good heart and regular advice from her mentor, Villars. Notwithstanding the fact that he is a clergyman, Villars does not trouble himself (or Evelina) with very much 'religion'; his letters to the heroine illustrate his grasp of bourgeois morality rather than any idealistic or other-worldly beliefs. For him, one's actions must be properly expedient in order to preserve one's 'image' (indeed, Burney's characters make Goffman's self-conscious actors appear positively nonchalant in their 'presentation of self'). As Villars points out in his anxious appraisal of Evelina's attempts to help McCartney, 'Where anything is doubtful, the ties

of society, and the laws of humanity, claim a favourable interpretation; but remember, my dear child, that those of discretion have an equal claim to your regard'.²⁴ No mention here of religious duty; just contingent 'ties' and 'laws' which must always be balanced against all-important 'discretion'. This epitomizes the individualistic and instrumental nature of eighteenth-century bourgeois morality, all form, and no (moral) content.

Religion then, is notable in Evelina for its absence; all of the characters in the novel who display any concern about how their actions will be judged, are preoccupied with the opinions of their fellow-mortals, and not with any religious code or deity. Secularization is surely well advanced when one can create a character like Villars who, in every instance, bows to social pressure, rather than religious ideals or convictions. For example, Villars does not want Evelina to go to London with Mme. Duval, and is convinced that such a visit would be fraught with danger for the girl. However, rather than actively intervening to prevent the visit, he merely expresses reservations to Evelina and adds, 'But alas, my dear, we are the slaves of custom, the dupes of prejudice, and dare not stem the torrent of an opposing world, even though our own judgements condemn our compliance! however, since the die is cast, we must endeavour to make the best of it'.²⁵ Such an attitude is not that of one with any moral code, religious or otherwise; in fact it is closer to that stance which a contemporary sociologist has termed 'other-directed', and indicates the passivity and compliance of this fictitious eighteenth-century clergyman.²⁶ However, the fact that Burney could present a character of this type - who appears to have been accepted as plausible or realistic - is significant. For, even if one were to

argue that the Established Church of the period was not accurately reflected in fiction, one then has to account for the ready acceptance of Villars as an authentic type of minister by Burney's audience.

The poor do not appear in Evelina, unless one counts McCartney, who turns out to be Belmont's son (and therefore, Evelina's half-brother); apart from the petite-bourgeois Branghtons, the only 'lower class' characters in the novel are servants. The most important reference to them occurs when Mme.Duval is attacked during the 'robbery', and Evelina remarks to Villars, 'Her dress was in such disorder, that I was quite sorry to have her figure exposed to the servants, who all of them, in imitation of their master, hold her in derision'.²⁷ In spite of Mme.Duval's 'vulgarity' then, Evelina still feels that it is unfortunate for her to be humiliated in front of the servants, and adds the clichéd comment about servants following the example of their employer. Mme.Duval had - prior to her first marriage - been a member of the lower classes, and this is held against her by Villars and Lady Howard, who describe her as 'vulgar and illiterate', 'low-bred and illiberal', and do not for one moment forget that she was originally, 'a waiting girl at a tavern'. Mr.Evelyn, Mme.Duval's first husband, had been urged by Villars et al not to marry her; he has paid the price for succumbing to beauty over breeding, for he died two years after the marriage.²⁸

Evelina, despite the fact that she is meant to be a 'rustic', unfamiliar with 'society', does have a strong sense of status. In her observations on Mme.Duval and the Branghtons, there is more than mere moral disapproval - there is something which can only be described as snobbery or status-contempt. Complaining to Villars about the Branghtons, Evelina writes, 'I fear you will think this London jour-

ney has made me grow very proud, but indeed this family is so low-bred and vulgar, that I should be equally ashamed of such a connexion in the country, or anywhere'.²⁹ Additionally, she is upset that Sir Clement has seen her in the company of the Branghtons and Mme. Duval, his opinion being valued because of his rank and his intimacy with Lord Orville; Sir Clement has, after all, made himself a thorough nuisance to Evelina prior to this, so her concern does not arise from any respect or liking for him.³⁰ Sir Clement harrasses Evelina on yet another occasion, causing her anxiety over what Orville might think her relationship with Sir Clement to be, and yet, when Sir Clement sees Evelina with the Branghtons for a second time, she states, 'nothing could be more disagreeable to me, than being seen by Sir Clement Willoughby with a party at once so vulgar in themselves, and so familiar to me'.³¹ This attitude on Evelina's part rests on her desire to favourably impress Orville, and, more generally, her extreme consciousness of status; both factors characterize the heroine throughout the whole piece.

On moving into lodgings with Mme. Duval, Evelina comments, 'I am sure that I have a thousand reasons to rejoice that I am so little known; for my present situation is, in every respect, very unenviable, and I would not, for the world, be seen by any acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan'.³² One can be certain that Evelina's fear of being 'seen by any acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan', stems from her desire to maintain her own status-position, not from apprehension that she might discredit Mrs. Mirvan by association. On this, Evelina's second visit to London, being in a different part of town with different companions causes her to view the place itself negatively, and to deem, 'the inhabitants illiterate and under-bred'.³³ Indeed through the whole

novel, the unpolished Evelina - who claims to think of herself as a 'nobody' - describes others in this manner; her supposed humility never prevents her from using epithets such as 'inelegant and low-bred'.³⁴ After her initial encounter with Lovel, in which she makes a few social gaffes, Evelina writes, 'I think there ought to be a book, of the laws and customs à-la-mode, presented to all young people, upon their first introduction to public company', yet we can hardly see the need for this, given that Evelina has absorbed all of the major points relating to bourgeois manners from Villars, and does not hesitate to judge those she meets according to whether or not they comply with this code.³⁵

The Branghtons are despised by our heroine as much for trying to appear grander than they are, as for anything else; their attempts to impress her she assesses thus, 'Had they been without pretensions, all this would have seemed of no consequence; but they aimed at appearing to advantage, and even fancied they succeeded'.³⁶ Likewise, when Smith tries to emulate the quality, Evelina writes, 'he was dressed in a very showy manner, but without any taste, and the inelegant smartness of his air and deportment, his visible struggle, against education, to put on the fine gentleman, added to his frequent conscious glances at a dress to which he was but little accustomed, very effectually destroyed his aim of figuring, and rendered all his efforts useless'.³⁷ In other words, the petite bourgeoisie should not - in Evelina's opinion - ape their betters; the failure of such attempts to copy are as bad (if not worse than) the intention to appear as one of higher status than is strictly one's due. This rather clashes with Evelina's own endeavour to create a good impression upon Orville (does she not try to appear 'to advantage?'), and does

not match well with her own and Villars' ideas about 'prudence' and other synonyms for appearance. One cannot doubt that most of Evelina's delights and anxieties depend upon the impression which she thinks Lord Orville has of her. For example, although Evelina does not seem to feel embarrassed at inadvertently being in the company of whores, in sight of the Branghtons, she is mortified when Orville happens to pass by and thus observes the scene. Shortly afterwards, the coach incident and Tom Branghton's subsequent interview with Orville horrify the heroine still further, 'I was half frantic, I really raved; the good opinion of Lord Orville now seemed irretrievably lost'.³⁸

In contrast to her contempt for the Branghtons and others, our heroine shows the greatest respect for the exemplary Orville, both for his personal qualities and his social position. Consequently, Evelina feels excited and anxious in the peer's presence; on first learning that he is a nobleman, she writes, 'This gave me new alarm; how will he be provoked, thought I, when he finds what a simple rustic he has honoured with his choice!'. Moreover, 'That he should be so much my superior in every way, quite disconcerted me'.³⁹ Evelina is clearly awed by the company of a social superior and therefore, 'I was quite ashamed of being so troublesome, and so much above myself as these seeming airs made me appear'.⁴⁰ Yet Evelina need not have worried, for the sophisticated qualities which she attributes to the rich lead her to conclude, 'These people in high life have too much presence of mind, I believe, to seem disconcerted, or out of humour, however they may feel'. So, 'insignificant' as Evelina allegedly feels, 'compared to a man of his rank and figure', she decides to, 'make the best of it'.⁴¹

Evelina soon discovers that not all of the persons of 'rank and figure' match up to her assumptions concerning them; at the Pantheon she becomes uneasy when she realizes that she is being openly stared/leered at by one of Orville's companions, 'I was quite surprised, that a man whose boldness was so offensive, could have gained admission into a party of which Lord Orville made one; for I naturally concluded him to be some low-bred, and uneducated man'.⁴² 'Naturally', because Evelina supposes that the quality monopolize not only money and power, but also manners, good conduct, and anything else worthwhile. However, she then hears Sir Clement refer to the offender by his title, and her reaction is one of amazement, 'Lordship! - how extraordinary! that a nobleman, accustomed, in all probability, to the first rank of company in the kingdom, from his earliest infancy, can possibly be deficient in good manners, however faulty in morals and principles!'.⁴³ So, unlike servants, whose behaviour is dependent upon example, peers may fail to emulate the 'good' qualities of the 'first rank of company' with which they are, surmises Evelina, familiar from birth. It is significant here that Evelina can be startled by Merton's poor manners, yet not expect that he - or any other noble - need be an adherent to sound 'morals and principles'. Once again, appearance is shown to be more important in Evelina's world than actual conduct or moral stance. To understand this incident, she can only think that we are all 'different', regardless of rank,

In all ranks and all stations of life, how strangely do characters and manners differ! Lord Orville, with a politeness which knows no intermission, and makes no distinction, is as unassuming and modest, as if he had never mixed with the great, and was totally ignorant of every qualification he possesses; this other Lord, though lavish of compliments and fine speeches, seems to me an entire stranger to real good breeding.⁴⁴

Thus humble Evelina, admirer of the nobility, feels no qualms about assessing the breeding of one of her social superiors.

In one respect, Evelina is a variation of the 'Cinderella' fairy-tale: the (apparently) poor girl making good.⁴⁵ Whatever Evelina's true position, as Sir John Belmont's daughter, 'she has too little wealth to be sought with propriety by men of the fashionable world', Villars tells Lady Howard.⁴⁶ Villars further recognizes that Evelina's circumstances are not compatible with London and fashionable society, as, 'The supposed obscurity of your birth and situation, makes you liable to a thousand disagreeable adventures'. Not that either Villars or Lady Howard are complacent about Evelina's situation. When he fails to respond favourably to the proposal to approach Sir John on the subject of Evelina, Lady Howard writes, 'Can it be right, my dear Sir, that this promising young creature should be deprived of the fortune, and rank of life, to which she is lawfully entitled, and which you have prepared her to support and to use so nobly? To despise riches, may, indeed, be philosophic, but to dispense them worthily, must surely be more beneficial to mankind'.⁴⁷ The idea of riches as something to be dispensed 'worthily' (or otherwise) does not, however, figure largely in this novel; unlike Pamela, Evelina does not waste time pondering the possibilities of performing 'good works'. In any case, Lady Howard is mistaken if she thinks that Villars 'despises' riches; he is extremely conscious of social and economic distinctions and, for all of his hopes that Evelina will remain unaffected by the city, and end up living in the country, he always has his eye upon the main chance. Although he has previously spoken of the need to curb ambition as, 'the first step to contentment', and so on, he immediately succumbs to Mme. Duval's economic

threats concerning Evelina and reveals his true hopes for the girl when justifying his compliance, 'The connections she may hereafter form, the style of life for which she may be destined, and the future family to which she may belong, are considerations which give but too much weight to the menaces of Mme. Duval'.⁴⁸ Clearly, Villars is far from unaware of the possibility that Evelina may marry into a higher class or rank, in spite of earlier pronouncements, and he says nothing to indicate that he disapproves of such upward mobility. Were he really content for Evelina to live simply, with no other fortune than that which he could provide, he would hardly take Mme. Duval's threats seriously. Additionally, at this point in the story, he has no particular reason to assume that Evelina will be upwardly mobile.

When Evelina is about to meet her father, Villars (who, having initially thought that nothing would come of approaching Sir John, now seems convinced that the girl will be economically and socially elevated) again expresses the hope that she will remain 'unspoiled', 'may'st thou, in this change of situation, experience no change of disposition! but receive with humility, and support with meekness, the elevation to which thou art rising!'.⁴⁹ Money and high status, whilst desirable, do have to be handled - according to Villars - very carefully; consequently, when Evelina is about to marry he prays, 'that the height of bliss to which thou art rising may not render thee giddy, but that the purity of thy mind may form the brightest splendour of thy prosperity!'.⁵⁰ Indeed, to Burney's audience, especially the women, the view that a 'good' marriage (with its corollary of upward economic and social mobility plus security) was the 'height of bliss' was doubtless acceptable, for, as Evelina herself has discovered, 'how requisite are birth and fortune to the attain-

ment of respect and civility'.⁵¹

CHAPTER NINE

HERMSPRONG

Robert Bage, it is commonly supposed, was an ardent supporter of female equality. Kelly and Faulkner are of this opinion, and Wilkins, in his introduction to the most recent edition of HermSprong, informs us that Bage believed in, 'the equality of woman with man'. Bage, continues Wilkins, 'championed the cause of sex equality'. Whilst it is true that Bage's view of women was relatively enlightened, however, it is also necessary to indicate the underlying similarity between many of the author's opinions concerning women, and those of conservative thinkers and writers during the period. Initially, we can examine Bage's portrayal of the two central female characters in HermSprong, and then turn to the more general assumptions about women expressed in the novel.¹

Bage's heroine, Caroline Campinet, is beautiful and benevolent, with a 'good' mind; she dresses modestly, and acts with 'propriety'. Gregory Glen, the narrator, views her as, 'one of the best of her endearing sex', and goes on to reveal his 'spiritual affection' for her, 'I thought of her, as of an angel I might secretly adore; not as of a woman whom I might presume to love'.² In contrast to other women, Bage suggests, Caroline is not interested in trivia and self-decoration, rather, 'her studies were confined to inferior objects - to the operations of the human mind, the right or wrong of human actions'. Yet, notwithstanding her 'studies' and the unseemly behaviour of her father, Lord Grondale, 'she had determined that it ill became a daughter to judge a father; and that filial obedience was almost the first of virtues'.³ Consequently, Caroline, whilst fully

aware of the impropriety of Grondale's relationship with Mrs. Stone, shows no outward signs of her attitude regarding his paramour.

For all of Caroline's reputed intellectual ability, she only speaks at any length upon two issues: flattery and filial obedience or duty. Her comments upon the former arise when Hermsprong becomes effusive in his praise for her; she tells him, 'I am sorry you have learnt to flatter', and when Hermsprong replies to the effect that young women oblige men to speak so, Caroline returns, 'I am sorry our sex should lay yours under the necessity of estimating female merit by a false scale'. Hermsprong temporarily wriggles his way out of this situation, blaming 'custom'; shortly afterwards, Caroline asks him, 'Is not flattery a diminution of that integrity of which you just now gave so pleasing a specimen?' Again, the hero feebly answers, 'I am told it is of the first necessity to ladies; so, to please them, one goes out of one's way sometimes'.⁴ Caroline finally extracts a promise from Hermsprong that he will abandon flattery; in fact, he remains ingratiating and fulsome in his praise for her for the duration of the novel.

Caroline is right to challenge Hermsprong on the subject of flattery; it is by definition sycophantic and involves exaggeration which frequently amounts to lying. Hermsprong (who is as much of a flatterer as any hero found in the novels under examination), who claims to be an exponent of 'the plain and simple truth', can provide no justification for flattery other than that it allegedly pleases women. But, according to his own pronouncements elsewhere, this should not be a sufficient incentive for him to indulge in something which he knows is basically contemptible. Moreover, in flattering Caroline, the hero treats her not as the paragon which he maintains that she is,

but rather as if she was susceptible to all of the nonsense associated with her sex. The patronising and insincere manner which Hermsprong often adopts towards women (particularly, but not solely, towards Miss Sumelin) was employed to preserve and sweeten the very female inequality which this hero reputedly opposes. At one point, he states, 'I cannot learn to surrender my opinions from complaisance, or from any principle of adulation', but in some of his conversations with Caroline, this is exactly what he does.⁵ Caroline herself does not remain absolutely consistent in her view of what might be seen as flattery, for, in replying to Miss Sumelin's scornful dismissal of Hermsprong's advanced opinions on 'male' and 'female' activities, she states, 'One may excuse the absurdity, supposing it to be one...for the sake of the compliment. Few men will allow us capacities for their employments'. Miss Sumelin certainly sees the suggestion that women have the capacity for 'male' tasks and occupations as anything but a compliment; Bage remarks, complacently, 'and so will ladies think the remainder of this century, let Mrs. Wolstonecraft say what she will'.⁶

Through the course of the novel it is clear that Caroline's main preoccupation is with her duty to her father. This leads her to make statements such as, 'can filial obedience ever be error?', and, 'surely it may be wrong to do a right thing, when prohibited by a father'. Lord Grondale's opinion of the matter is made plain when he tells Miss Fluart, 'What I expect from my daughter is obedience'; we are left in no doubt as to the complete and unequivocal nature of the obedience to which he refers. And he adds, menacingly, 'If Miss Campinet assumes the liberty of disposing of herself without, or contrary to, my approbation, I shall assume the liberty of disposing as

I please of the affection and property of Lord Grondale'.⁷ Grondale shows little affection for his daughter, but when Hermsprong suggests to Caroline that, 'fathers ought to be known by their cares, their affections', and questions the notion of 'obligations which are not reciprocal', she can only answer, 'does a breach on one side dissolve the obligation on the other?'.⁸ For Hermsprong, armed with 'rationalism' and contract-theory, it does; for Caroline, it does not.

After Lord Grondale has ordered Caroline to marry Sir Philip Chestrum, and threatened her with economic sanctions, Miss Fluart, 'almost persuaded Miss Campinet that fathers may be wrong'.⁹ One wonders why Miss Fluart only 'almost' succeeds, for, when Caroline has previously discussed marriage and duty with her father she has appeared to be an exponent of 'reason', which would necessarily prove him to be wrong.¹⁰ However, it is only when the arranged marriage is within hours of taking place that Miss Fluart is able to pressure Caroline into running away; left to her own devices, Bage implies, she would simply comply with her father's wishes, regardless of her own feelings. Even after this incident, Caroline writes to Grondale promising not to marry without his consent.¹¹ To this, Grondale announces his intention to disinherit her. When it later becomes apparent that Hermsprong is the rightful owner of Grondale's property, Caroline, in spite of her father's harsh attitude towards her, writes to him once again, and reiterates her promise not to marry, begging, 'to return to your house, and to my duty'.¹² Her father, who is by now critically ill and has been abandoned by Mrs. Stone, grants this request, and Caroline returns. At this point, she has made her choice between 'love' and 'filial duty'; all of the 'reason' which Bage tells us that she possesses, has played little or no part in her

decision. How convenient then, that Lord Grondale should shortly die and thus foster a resolution between the conflicting demands of love and reason as opposed to duty.¹³

Just what distinguishes Caroline from the heroines of other novels of the period is unclear; despite the 'radical' label attached to Bage and his works, in Caroline he has produced a fairly standard type, composed of all of the ingredients of beauty, benevolence, intelligence, propriety, obedience, and an adequate portion of pusillanimity. A far more radical character type was that represented by Caroline's friend, Miss Fluart, to whom we now turn.

The first insight we get into Miss Fluart's attitude is via a letter which she writes to Caroline, wherein it is obvious that she has contempt for two of what were commonly supposed to be 'female' traits, viz, sulking and scolding, as displayed by Miss, and Mrs. Sumelin.¹⁴ When Miss Fluart arrives at Grondale Hall she goes out of her way to upset Mrs. Stone, presumably as a means of punishing Lord Grondale for the impropriety of the relationship, and his disregard for Caroline.¹⁵ But Miss Fluart's major campaign is to encourage her friend against passive obedience to Grondale, and she does this by mocking the idea of 'transcendent duty', and pointing out (as does Hermsprong) the lack of reciprocity in Caroline's relationship with her father.¹⁶ Like Caroline, Miss Fluart claims to despise flattery, however, she is quite prepared to employ it herself for the purpose of tricking Lord Grondale, and initiates her onslaught upon him with 'kittenish moods', 'romps', and 'flattery and familiarity'.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Miss Fluart does not merely deal with Lord Grondale in a playful manner. She is prepared to openly defy him and to label his suppositions concerning his daughter and Hermsprong, 'the comple-

test triumph of pride and prejudice over poor common sense, that has ever fallen under my notice'. She proceeds to defend Hermsprong's behaviour towards Mrs. Garnet (Caroline's aunt), characterizes the motivations of people of rank as 'pride and avarice', argues in favour of cross-class marriages (rich women-poor men), and questions Grondale's demand for absolute obedience from his daughter.¹⁸

Following this, Miss Fluart tries to convince her friend of the tyranny of Grondale's position, and satirizes Caroline's acceptance of her father's unjust domination. Determined to attenuate the most severe aspects of his rule, Miss Fluart exerts her ingenuity for the purpose of diverting her host. Subsequently, in view of her 'prettiness' and the fact that she has £20,000, Lord Grondale falls for her. His passion is consolidated when she visits the pavilion, and panics when he attempts to kiss her; almost immediately afterwards, he proposes marriage, a subject upon which Miss Fluart is equivocal.¹⁹ Even so, she wastes no time in exploiting his affection (or perhaps, desire) for her, and soon gains permission for Caroline to accompany her to Falmouth for a month.²⁰ Grondale acts naively in most of his interactions with this young lady who, he later admits, is of far more concern to him than his daughter: 'What are a thousand daughters compared with so sweet a friend?'.²¹ But Miss Fluart does not limit herself to sporting with him; she does not miss an opportunity to tease both Hermsprong and Caroline, when the occasion arises.²²

Eventually, Lord Grondale realizes that his daughter's friend has been toying with him, and so determines, 'Miss Fluart shall feel I am not to be thus insulted with impunity'.²³ Nevertheless, when Miss Fluart appears in a last-ditch attempt to gain permission for Caroline to return to Falmouth, it is apparent that Grondale is still suscep-

tible to her attractions. This time, Miss Fluart openly rejects his offer of marriage, but perhaps he does not perceive the extent of her opposition to him and her complete disregard for his wishes until the scene wherein she masquerades as Caroline, having previously ensured the latter's swift and secret departure.²⁴

Miss Fluart then, is quite different from Caroline; apart from her 'prettiness', she is quick-witted, humorous, argumentative, sceptical, and courageous; there is no hint of feebleness or hesitation in her character. Furthermore, she is strongly independent and demonstrates some awareness of the nature of sexist oppression, as this ironic statement to Sir Philip and Sir John illustrates, 'Our obligations to men are infinite. Under the name of father, or brother, or guardian, or husband, they are always protecting us from liberty'.²⁵ The 'wedding' is possibly the most blatant example of Miss Fluart's spirit and determination; not content with outraging Grondale, she takes the opportunity to display her contempt for the sycophantic Blick, rubs salt into Grondale's wounds with further mockery, and then escapes, threatening to shoot anyone who hinders her departure.²⁶ At the conclusion of the novel Miss Fluart remains unmarried, as she intends, in the absence of another like Hermsprong; as Bage puts it, she was, 'not yet willing "to buy herself a master"'.²⁷

Wilkins, in his discussion of the characters in Hermsprong, is obviously favourably impressed by Miss Fluart; so much so, that he remarks, 'I wish Bage had made her his heroine. I do indeed'.²⁸ It might be more fruitful, however, to consider why Bage did not use such a character for his heroine. Miss Fluart is far more in keeping with the ideal outlined by Hermsprong, than Caroline Campinet is.

There are several possibilities here: (1) In spite of Bage's 'egalitarian' stance, it is conceivable that he created a conventional heroine simply because his real conception of women (or at least, desirable women) was less radical than his rhetoric. The fact that Caroline's comparative passivity was a recurring feature of eighteenth-century literary heroines, tends to suggest that Bage found this sort of stereotype acceptable; that he saw no reason for his own creation to be any more radical than the heroines found in other novels. (2) On the other hand, Bage may well have thought that an 'emancipated' female character - whilst being of interest to readers - would find little favour as a heroine. (3) Lastly, it is just possible (although extremely unlikely, given the nature of Hermesprong) that Bage sought verisimilitude in portraying the submissive manner which ruling-class fathers demanded of (especially) their daughters. I am inclined to think that (1) is the most plausible explanation for Bage's conformity, but (1) and (2) combined may indicate a truer picture. The latter could certainly be part of a rationalization of the former; one could no doubt conjure up further alternatives. Nevertheless, the purpose of raising the discrepancy between the ideal implied by Hermesprong's remarks (and Bage's supposed passion for what we would currently deem some form of 'feminism'), and the actual heroine, is not to justify speculation about Bage's thoughts, but rather to preface the claim that Caroline could be replaced by virtually any other middle-class or aristocratic/gentry heroine found in eighteenth-century English novels. By the same token, she could take the place of the heroines in, for example, Amelia, David Simple, The Vicar of Wakefield, to name but three. I do not argue that they are all exactly the same, but merely that they are more or less interchange-

able, sharing in common the qualities attributed to Caroline. In other words, Bage's 'feminist' concerns have not found any expression in his heroine, who is so completely conventional and conservative a creation, that she even faints when her life is in danger.²⁹ Judging by some of Hermsprong's general views and attitudes, he would not choose Caroline on the basis of her physical beauty alone, but, if there is anything (other than her dislike of flattery) which distinguishes her from the standard ideal woman, or if she matches up to most of Hermsprong's criteria for female excellence, then it is hard to perceive what this, or these, are.

Hermsprong's contact with the Sumelin family provides some interesting instances of how Bage portrays women. Mrs. Sumelin is not over-intelligent, but she is very vain, whilst her eldest daughter, Harriet, is, 'a perfect copy of her mother; fond to excess of the fine and fashionable, and an adorer of sweet pretty things'. Bage comments, 'It is not amongst the foibles of the dear sex that I place these propensities; for I believe it pleased God to make them a part of the constitution of their natures; and surely in his last best work there could be no imperfection'.³⁰ The author is doubtless writing with some irony in the latter part of this sentence (his reference to 'God' may likewise be flippant); even so, he does appear to be describing what he takes to be an innate 'female' (and definitely negative) trait. Sumelin's youngest daughter, Charlotte, is not portrayed in any detail, but she is a friend of Miss Fluart (with whom she later resides) and therefore, we can assume that she is not like her mother and her sister; so much for 'innate' female traits: they do not even remain constant amongst women of the same family. Miss and Mrs. Sumelin typically act in concert to oppose Mr. Sumelin,

who is depicted as something of a misogynist; the contrast between husband and wife is illustrated by their discussion of Harriet's elopement. Mrs. Sumelin's main concern is that her daughter will, 'marry so much beneath her', but Mr. Sumelin is totally indifferent on this score. To Mrs. Sumelin's claim that Harriet's lover (who is also Mr. Sumelin's employee) is a 'coxcomb', he replies, 'we must set that down as a circumstance in Harriet's favour, coxcombry being the most approved qualification of man, in the mind of woman'.³¹ Mrs. Sumelin is further angered by this apparent complacency, and resents the fact that her husband will readily forgive his daughter; her response is to scold - this is the weapon she typically uses against Sumelin.³²

Harriet, the runaway daughter, is persuaded by Hermsprong not to marry her lover, Fillygrove; in doing this, Hermsprong employs a good deal of deceit, which Bage - readily conceding that this is the case - suggests is justifiable when dealing with women, 'on certain great occasions'.³³ Even when it is obvious that Fillygrove and Harriet's 'friend' (Miss Wavel) have been deceiving her, Harriet is still reluctant to return to England and so gets 'the pouts'. Bage writes, 'A lady falls into this fit usually when reason, propriety, decorum, are against a thing which she has a great inclination to do; when she is unable to say any thing in its favour, yet cannot get it out of her head, or heart, as the case may be'.³⁴ The reason for Harriet's 'fit' is that she does not wish to endure the ridicule which she expects to suffer should she return home unmarried; this is so important to her that - having failed to captivate Hermsprong - she begins to think once again of Fillygrove. Eventually, Hermsprong gets her safely back to her family and, as her further attempts to attract him have been equally fruitless, he, 'had made her his enemy

for life'.³⁵ Bage's way of presenting this episode, in conjunction with his frequent comments, strongly suggests that he considers Harriet's stupidity and vanity to be representative of young women in general.

It is during a conversation between, primarily, Hermsprong and Mr. Sumelin that we learn more of Hermsprong's version of female 'equality'. At one point, Miss Fluart asks Hermsprong if he thinks the subject of politics improper for women, to which he replies, 'I think no subject improper for ladies, which ladies are qualified to discuss, if their fathers first, and then themselves, so pleased'. Obviously, Hermsprong is adopting a patriarchal attitude here. This leads Sumelin to claim that, 'Women have too much liberty', and Hermsprong replies that, 'English young ladies of a certain age and rank have too much liberty of person'. However, he adds, 'they have too little liberty of mind'. By this, he means that their minds are imprisoned and, 'confined to the ideas of these routs and Ranelaghs'. Here, it becomes apparent that he is concerned only with upper-bourgeois/aristocratic/gentry women; neither Bage, nor his hero, waste any time considering the liberty then available to working women.³⁶

As the conversation proceeds Miss Fluart becomes annoyed at Hermsprong's sly technique of exempting herself and Caroline from his criticisms of women, but Hermsprong continues to gush, 'be women what they may, I am destined to be an adorer...Be angry at Mrs. Wolstonecraft, who has lately abused the dear sex, through two octavo volumes; who affirms that the mode of their education turns the energies of their minds on trifles'. Mr. Sumelin's contribution at this stage consists of the assertion that the influence of women, 'is too great',

and should therefore, 'be diminished'. To this, Hermsprong replies, 'let it be diminished on the side of - charms; and let its future increase be on the side of mind'. Sumelin then introduces the notion that women have 'weaker bodies' than men, so Hermsprong (accepting the idea of female 'weakness') asks him, 'should education be brought in to increase it?', and goes on to argue that if mental and physical strength is a laudable ideal for men, why should this not be considered appropriate for women?. Sumelin can only answer that if such an ideal was pursued by women, it would make them, 'less charming figures'; Hermsprong then concludes that insofar as women share Sumelin's concern for this sort of factor, then the work of radicals such as Wolstonecraft is doomed to failure.³⁷

In Hermsprong's opinion, it is necessary for women to be better educated, and for men to demand more of women intellectually. Additionally, he advocates changes in parentally-controlled socialization, involving, 'less distinction of sex'. At this point, Sumelin - generalizing from his own experience - states, 'There are two things co-existent with women, and co-eternal; admiration of fineries and of themselves'. The hero's rejoinder is instructive: 'women would leave the lesser vanities, and learn lessons of wisdom, if men would teach them; and in particular, this, that more permanent and more cordial happiness might be produced to both the sexes, if the aims of women were rather to obtain the esteem of men, than that passionate yet transient affection usually called love'.³⁸ So, it is clear that although Hermsprong opposes Sumelin's sexism, he himself is not prepared to argue that women - with greater opportunities and, perhaps, some help from men - might emancipate themselves. He can only envisage the education of women as a process in which men must

be the teachers and women the pupils. Moreover, the aim for women which Hermsprong promotes is itself suspect, that is, to achieve, 'the esteem of men'; the hero's supposedly rationalist argument can be interpreted as meaning no more than that women could (and should) become more worthy companions for men, an idea much favoured in the early part of the century by Defoe. The rationale behind this sort of perspective depends upon increasing the usefulness and potential for intelligent companionship of women for the benefit of men; it clearly does not see intellectual and other progress amongst women as an end-in-itself or primarily, for their own good. The above conversation draws to a close with Hermsprong equivocating, and flattering Caroline and Miss Fluart, albeit 'playfully'; his parting shot to Sumelin indicates a sympathetic, yet still patronising and sexist attitude towards women; they are, he tells Sumelin, 'our equals in understanding, our superiors in virtue. They have foibles where men have faults, and faults where men have crimes'.³⁹ But, how can one seriously talk of the virtue of a group of people who are systematically denied the opportunity to make choices and to determine their own actions? Without having the status and freedom of moral agents, women cannot properly be judged as such. Insofar as eighteenth-century English women were controlled by men and subjected to what might be called 'restrictive' practices and patriarchal ideology, then they were no more than moral patients - precisely the position which was commonly attributed to them in apologies for sexist oppression.

If we consider Hermsprong in greater detail, we can find further evidence of his less than egalitarian stance towards women, however much he may be said to be sympathetic in some instances. For example, apart from his earlier arguments in which he proposed that cer-

tain 'masculine' virtues (such as intelligence) were proper goals for women, we soon find that, 'compassion for the unfortunate, accompanied with benevolence, was precisely what, in Mr. Hermsprong's opinion, raised the female character to the highest degree of perfection'.⁴⁰ But these are very conventional 'female' virtues, and Hermsprong's sentiments would doubtless have been shared by others of no radical persuasion whatsoever. Throughout the novel Hermsprong continues to indulge in the kind of flattery which he has promised to abandon, and he consistently makes what are supposed to be humorous remarks based upon blatantly sexist assumptions, such as, 'whilst I am saying agreeable things to one lady, I am saying disagreeable things to another - if another hears'.⁴¹ Underlying this sort of statement, is the implicit claim that all women are vain and jealous of the attentions of men - a common observation amongst eighteenth-century English males, and one which persists today as a popular (but spurious) supposition.

When Hermsprong recounts his past life in America he speaks of the natives with evident approval, particularly the women: 'the modesty of their young women is uncommon. They have delicacy also; and respecting men, a timidity of which here I have not seen many examples'. Modesty, delicacy, and timidity regarding men are here taken to be virtues; whether or not that be so, the praise of such attributes has little place in the construction of an egalitarian or feminist case for women. The above traits would have been applauded by the most conservative of eighteenth-century novelists, as indeed they were, by Richardson et al. When challenged by Miss Fluart for his apparent advocacy of timidity, Hermsprong claims that his main recommendation for women is not this, but the acquisition of, 'minds to reason, understandings to judge', his belief being that thus,

'propriety of action must follow of necessity'.⁴² In this way women can become, in Hermsprong's words, 'heavenly women' like, presumably, Miss Fluart and Caroline, his 'lovely hearers'.

Following on from this, the hero again introduces the notion of reciprocity/contract in order to argue that Lord Grondale has negated Caroline's obligations towards her father. Miss Fluart seizes upon this idea to question Hermsprong on the sexual double-standard, as applied to adultery. If I were your wife and you were unfaithful to me, she asks, would I then have the right to be unfaithful to you? Hermsprong replies, 'Yes, my most charming creature in the universe, yes, as far as respects myself. But, in this case, you have contracted an obligation with society also. Society does not think it-self so much injured by the lapse of the male. In short, you bear the children. To you I need not point out the important deductions from this single circumstance'.⁴³ So, whilst Hermsprong initially appears to accept and support equality here, he qualifies - or rather discards - this view by propounding the idea that women who marry enter into a binding contract with 'society'. The female obligation to this reification arises from the biological fact of women bearing children, but why this should constitute a social obligation is not made clear. If by this Hermsprong means that custom and tradition must be obeyed, then this opinion is at variance with the scorn which he typically displays towards unjust or ridiculous conventions and practices. If convention and so on is discounted, there are good reasons to argue that any other considerations are minor. As Stone has illustrated, by the end of the eighteenth century contraceptive techniques were known of (for example, the condom had been introduced one hundred years previously), even if they were not widely practi-

sed.⁴⁴ Additionally, wealthy women would certainly have been able to get their illegitimate progeny 'adopted'; this was frequently done in cases of male adultery. Alternatively, there is the argument put to Boswell, who, objecting to female sexual equality on the issue of adultery, argued for the importance of property rights and the need to ensure the legitimacy of heirs. His protagonist replied, 'that is easily answered, for the objection is removed if a woman does not intrigue but when she is with child'. As Boswell later admitted, 'I really could not answer her'.⁴⁵ The fact of the matter is that Hermsprong has argued above for the double-standard, not against it; in the course of his polemic he has shifted his focus from the idea of a contract involving husband and wife, to one between wives and a reified abstraction, society.

In the conversations so far discussed, Hermsprong has indicated that women should have the permission of their fathers (or, presumably, husbands) to talk politics; has accepted without question Sumelin's claim that women have 'weaker bodies'; has argued that men should demand more of female intellect and should therefore teach women to use their minds. Women, for their part, are advised to seek the esteem of men. Additionally, Hermsprong has patronisingly suggested that women are more virtuous than men, begging the question of restrictions placed upon them by men; we have learnt that he views benevolence and compassion as the highest of 'female' virtues, and it has been implied that all women are vain and jealous. The hero has likewise spoken in favour of modesty, delicacy, timidity and propriety (on the part of women); informing his 'contract' stance on social relations between men and women, is a rationalism which he is not prepared to apply rigorously to the double-standard. Consequen-

tly, he relies upon an idealistic and ideological 'obligation' (peculiar to women) and biological determinism. These factors, in conjunction with Hermsprong's flattery, mockery, and patronising attitude towards women make his allegedly egalitarian position look decidedly dubious. Even Bage's use of pseudo-anthropological anecdotes - a device employed in the eighteenth century to criticize European societies and assert cultural relativism - becomes a means of supporting 'feminine virtues' advocated by conservative-minded thinkers in Britain.⁴⁶ It is certainly not used to make a critical, egalitarian assessment of the plight of British women.

As a champion of women then, Bage is no better than his hero; he typically and condescendingly refers to 'lovely' and 'fair' readers, and continually indulges in gentle (but unnecessary) satirizing of women on things like, for example, curiosity.⁴⁷ A few further quotations will amplify the point, and illustrate Bage's frequent attribution of negative traits to women, as when he writes of, 'the privilege of young ladies to pout,...or indulge herself in any of those tokens of contempt and dissatisfaction which nature or custom has provided for such cases'. And, 'When young ladies choose to philosophize upon attraction, they are unusually eloquent', also, 'discretion; a quality indeed inherent in, and inseparable from, the dear sex; but deprived of a little of its original elasticity, by having passed through the hands of that great grandmother of us all, the too credulous Eve'. Lastly, 'when will young ladies learn to say nothing they ought not to say? A cynic would say, Never; but I am not a cynic. It is scarce reasonable to expect it whilst they are young, beautiful and goddesses; that time passed, I do not see the absolute impossibility of it'.⁴⁸

Most of Bage's minor female characters in Hermesprong are either weak, stupid, or in some other way discreditable. There is Miss Brown, who foolishly elopes; Miss Bentley, with her ironic attitude towards love; Mrs. Merrick who, once jilted, becomes deeply distrustful of all men for the rest of her life.⁴⁹ In addition, there is the 'weak' Mrs. Garnet (whom Hermesprong reproaches for, amongst other things, her lack of 'manly spirit'); Hermesprong's own mother, with her religious bigotry; Sir Philip Chestrum's mother, who is in turn domineering and obsequious, and Mrs. Stone, Grondale's vain and cunning paramour.⁵⁰ Moreover, whilst one of the most extreme idealist-sexists in the story, Mr. Woodcock, is satirized by Bage, Woodcock's wife is also presented as an unpleasant and stupid person. Bage outlines the ideal female as envisaged by Woodcock with a view to deriding him, particularly by comparing this ideal to Woodcock's actual wife. Nevertheless, what is here shown as a ludicrously idealistic construction of woman differs very little from Bage's portrayal of Caroline Campinet. Therefore, if Woodcock's ideal is absurd, then so is Bage's heroine. We are told that Woodcock's wife is cruel, but Bage seems to be more interested in deriding her because she, 'had been a virgin for ten years longer than the fitness of things required', that is, because she has been an 'old maid'.⁵¹ Bage's alleged sympathy for women did not then, prevent him from drawing upon a literary stereotype which was (is) obviously unfavourable to women unable or unwilling to marry. Both Woodcock and Sumelin - although they represent sexist attitudes which Bage invites the reader to laugh at - are shown as having wives whose temperaments and behaviour are so unpleasant that the virtual misogyny of the men is apparently vindicated. Bage appears to think so, as he aims to pre-

sent both men as good characters; they can be grouped, on this issue, with Greg. and Hermsprong, who themselves hold far from egalitarian attitudes towards women.

Bage's radicalism cannot even be shown to be particularly critical of religion; as noted above, Woodcock (an Anglican minister) may be a figure of fun, but he is by no means wicked, or even unpleasant. Hermsprong evidently holds a good opinion of him, and is prepared to support him.⁵² Similarly, Parson Brown - who adopts Greg. - is a compassionate and generous man, as is shown by his attempt to protect the young Greg's interests, and by his will.⁵³ The religious villain in the novel is Dr. Blick, a careerist who is also a J.P. and a lackey for Lord Grondale. Greg. describes Blick as follows: 'he united pride with meanness;...he was as haughty to his inferiors as cringing to superiors; an eternal flatterer of Lord Grondale, he did not even presume to preach against a vice, if it happened to be a vice of his patron'. Nevertheless, when Hermsprong asks Greg. if Blick is typical of the Anglican clergy, Greg. replies, 'as individuals, I think them generally worthy'.⁵⁴ Hermsprong later raises this question once more, and Greg. suggests that - apart from a little religious bigotry - clergymen are, 'in general rather amiable than otherwise'. Returning to Blick however, Greg. speaks of the minister's 'love of accumulation', and adds, 'the doctor knows it is his duty rather to govern than to teach his flock'.⁵⁵ One might argue that this was the function of all eighteenth-century Anglican clergymen, but neither Greg. nor Hermsprong make this sort of general or structural criticism of the Established Church. Consequently, Bage leaves his readers with the idea that what is at issue here is the personality or character of individual religious functionaries,

and in so doing he avoids, ignores, or fails to understand the institutionalised role of the Church in eighteenth-century England. If there is anything wrong with the Church, Bage implies, it is the fact that it contains some corrupt and selfish individuals; thus, Bage fails to locate the Church within a system of domination operating to maintain inequality between classes in favour of a small elite of aristocrats, members of the gentry, and of the upper bourgeoisie. Complicity with, and subservience to, local nobles was not simply the practice of one or two 'corrupt' ministers; Blick's conniving with Lord Grondale, his abuse of his position as a J.P., and his exploitation of Woodcock, represent a general pattern which can only be understood when placed within the context of class-domination in eighteenth-century England, and not viewed - as Bage's perspective indicates - as the selfish practices of one atypical clergyman.⁵⁶ In the character of Blick, Bage has merely given the reader a clerical villain, and not - as one might expect from a radical - a critique of the Established Church, however modest. Nevertheless, this Anglican sycophant merits some further consideration.

Blick is a clergyman who continually bemoans the lack of 'reverence' shown towards the clergy, and labels anyone who does not fully agree with his opinions an 'atheist' or political subversive. Woodcock's lack of support for him during a meeting between the ministers and Greg. and Hermsprong, leads to Blick sacking Woodcock and claiming that he is, 'tainted with principles almost republican'. This incident occurs after a heated argument between Blick and Hermsprong, in which the former argues that human nature dictates that, 'Man must fear death'. Hermsprong, who has already pointed out that the American 'savages' do not fear death, wishes to maintain that the most

important conditioning factor relating to this sort of issue is that of socialization. This is not to ignore natural determinations, for, 'Man cannot be taught anything contrary to nature. However he acts, he must act by nature's laws; howsoever he thinks, he must think by nature's laws'.⁵⁷ In this way, Hermsprong displays his relativistic position, claiming that anything which human-beings do must be natural; this is in sharp contrast to Blick's conception of a clearly discernible fixed human nature, operating independently from historical and cultural variables. So, on this point, Bage places his hero firmly within a tradition of enlightened or 'progressive' thought, whilst Blick struggles to defend conservative determinism.

Hermsprong further wishes to assert that, 'to a reflecting mind, at least death is not an evil', and this leads Blick into a tangle of contradictions, for he wants to count death an evil whilst also proposing that, 'it is enlargement of sensation. It is renovation - it is the gate of life - it is a passport to eternal joys'. As Hermsprong points out, if Blick's above statement is true, then death cannot possibly be an evil. Blick is unpleasantly surprised to find himself thus defeated, and so concludes that Hermsprong has been influenced by, 'the abominable doctrines of the French philosophers'; the scene ends with both parties annoyed, and Hermsprong telling Blick, 'I owe you no obedience; and despise you for your tyrannical and contentious spirit'.⁵⁸

Later, when a storm ravages the village of Grondale, Hermsprong tries to help the victims materially, but all that Blick can do is utter pious words and denigrate the hero's efforts, because they do not follow from 'faith'. In conversation with Lord Grondale, the minister regrets the passing of former ages, in which he supposes

servility to those of his class and profession to have been more extensive and firmly established, and helps the former to 'prove' the laudable character of consuetudinage.⁵⁹ Blick's position is further amplified by his thinly veiled support for the anniversary of reactionary riots against Dissenters which took place in Birmingham in 1791, plus his long tirade against those whom he assumes to be influenced by, 'atheistical lawgivers of a neighbouring country'.⁶⁰ For him, 'failure of respect' regarding the ruling class and its institutions (particularly the Church) threatens to lead to, 'the overthrow of all religion, all government, all that is just and equitable on earth'. But these utterances only show what Blick is, and hardly constitute an appraisal - radical or otherwise - of the role of eighteenth-century English clergymen. In a radical novel, this must be counted as a failing; the fact is that, regardless of the criticism of some of Bage's more reactionary reviewers, Bage is not really against religion at all - at least, not in this novel. Indeed, he appears to have attributed certain positive functions to it, suggesting via his hero that it teaches 'love and good will', and that the alleged acceptance of widely differing opinions in America arose from, 'their diversity of religions, which, accustoming them to see differences of opinion in a matter of the greatest importance, disposes them to tolerate it on all subjects, and even to believe it a condition of human nature'. In this section, Hermsprong seems to be claiming that it is the un-Christian nature of English politics which makes English people so supposedly intolerant, so one can hardly view him as an opponent of religion. Throughout the novel, the only 'religious' features criticized are nunneries, and - mildly - the converting zeal of Hermsprong's mother.⁶¹

But what of rank? Surely Bage - as an egalitarian - is radical on this issue? Well, there is no doubt that he wants to poke fun at the aristocracy, as can be seen from his account of the mother-dominated Sir Philip Chestrum: 'When...he arrived at the age of freedom, he found himself possessed of great wealth, without the least inclination to spend it; of unbounded pride, without the necessary judgment to correct it; of literature, not quite none; and of the smallest possible quantity of human kindness'.⁶² As if this were not enough, Sir Philip is also physically unattractive, and his father had initially been engaged in 'trade'; it is significant that Bage uses this latter fact as yet another indication of Sir Philip's undesirability - the 'stigma' of coming from a comparatively 'new' family being a consideration for the aristocracy. Sir Philip perceives his own major problem as being the fact that he cannot command the degree of respect which he thinks that his position entitles him to. He is such a snob that he cannot even bear Caroline's joking about genealogy, and so remarks, 'People of family, now there are so many levellers about, ought to be more careful than ever. Lady Chestrum says, that nowadays it is the only thing one can value one's self upon; for as to money, that is everybody's that can get it'. When Caroline points out that the same can be said for titles, Sir Philip argues that, 'it is not every scrub that can get it', and goes on to deplore the proliferation of new families, using his feeble conception of history to assert that 'honours' won in battle are superior to those resulting from finance or whatever.⁶³ The irony here is that it is only through his mother's side of the family that any such honours have been won; through this character, Bage sought to show the pretensions of many members of the aristocracy and likewise to

undermine their disdain for the bourgeoisie. However, as a criticism of the aristocracy, this sort of tactic is about as effective as the 'drunken Tory' and 'upper-class twit' stereotypes so beloved of contemporary comedians.

Sir Philip tells Caroline that he is seeking a wife with both 'beauty and elegance', and adds, 'I should like a fortune too, for wives nowadays bring expenses'. Not that he is short of money; Lord Grondale is well-satisfied with Sir Philip's rent-roll. It is simply that he is parsimonious, as noted above; this does not, however, prevent him from borrowing money for the purpose of gambling.⁶⁴ He is not, of course, the only member of the aristocracy who is shown to the reader as a stupid or unpleasant character; the scene between him and Sir John, with Caroline and Miss Fluart, shows both men to be slow-witted fools, just as the subsequent conversation which passes between these two points up Sir Philip's dependence upon his mother, and indicates that Sir John is a seducer and a rake. He is not the only upper-class seducer in the novel; the narrator, Greg., is himself Squire Grooby's bastard, the consequence of Grooby seducing one who, 'knew nothing but innocence and spinning, till my valiant father undertook to be her preceptor'. Additionally, Bage informs us that Grondale has - on at least one occasion - propositioned the wife of Mr. Wigley, at that time, his 'friend'. Failure here, plus Wigley's political opposition (twenty years later), eventually leads Grondale to attempt to ruin the Wigley family.⁶⁵

Lord Grondale provides the main target for Bage's attack upon aristocratic conduct and attitudes; describing Grondale in his younger days, Bage writes, 'He was not addicted to scruples', and when the events in the novel take place Grondale has - by his mode of living -

acquired, 'a tolerable complication of diseases'. His pastimes are drinking, gambling, and - if I interpret Bage's reference to Mercury correctly - lechery. Caroline writes of his bad company and his lack of concern for her, even though she tries to ignore the impropriety of his affair with Mrs. Stone. Grondale uses Blick (who holds his position as a result of Grondale's patronage) to punish those who displease him, whether for poaching or for political opposition.⁶⁶

When Lord Grondale arrives at the scene of Caroline's rescue by Hermsprong, his first concern is the latter's rank; in answer to the peer's enquiry on this subject, the hero states, 'As to rank, - I have been taught only to distinguish men by virtue'.⁶⁷ Such remarks, coupled with Hermsprong's noticeable lack of deference, ensure Grondale's animosity. He later dismisses the hero's charitable help to the storm-ravaged villagers as 'ostentatious charity', and is horrified when Blick informs him that Caroline and Hermsprong have been visiting the victims together: 'Together! Rank and property have lost half their value at least, in this liberal age'. Blick, not surprisingly, agrees, and adds, 'I saw at once that his charity did not flow from Christian benevolence'. Grondale concludes that it is likely that Hermsprong, 'never had a fortune to spend, and is now on the hunt for one', being convinced that the hero seeks to marry his daughter. He quickly becomes obsessed with this idea, and shortly afterwards, when he sees Caroline talking to Greg., he assumes that she is 'coquetting'. The peer is alarmed that his daughter is even speaking to Greg., whom he describes as, 'A man who ought to think himself honoured by such permission to your woman'.⁶⁸ Greg's offer of an explanation is rejected, and Grondale tells him, 'I disgrace myself by condescending to talk with you at all'. By now, Grondale

is thoroughly embittered towards Hermsprong and Greg., so Hermsprong's subsequent purchase of a property which the peer sought adds to his irritation; this leads Grondale to browbeat Caroline on the subject of the hero, and to determine, 'if I live I will drive the country of him'.⁶⁹

Predictably, Grondale is against the development of a bourgeois economy, stating, 'A fine thing, this commerce...it doubles production, and enlarges all sorts of qualities but good ones'. He even attributes Miss Fluart's sauciness to this same cause: 'The girl is a child of commerce, and thinks, to be young, to be a hoyden, and to have a fortune, excuses everything'.⁷⁰ By contrast, Bage is obviously on the side of bourgeois interests, and it is for this reason that Squire Grooby, Sir Philip, Sir John, and Lord Grondale are portrayed in such a distinctly unfavourable light vis-à-vis bourgeois 'virtues', many of which are epitomised by Hermsprong.⁷¹ The aristocratic preoccupation with maintaining rank against bourgeois parvenus characterizes the attitudes of Chestrum and Grondale (although the latter is - as his wooing of Miss Fluart shows - less discriminating in matters of rank than the former), whilst Hermsprong adheres to Bage's bourgeois version of egalitarianism. As noted above, at the first meeting between Grondale and the hero, Hermsprong states that he judges men by their virtue rather than their rank; this is reiterated and augmented throughout: 'I cannot learn to offer incense at the shrines of wealth and power, nor at any shrines but those of probity and virtue'. Moreover, Hermsprong has read Paine's Rights of Man, something which Grondale's lawyer, Corrow, hopes to cite as evidence that the hero is a foreign spy. Hermsprong's attitude towards rank is amplified when Greg. tells him that he (Greg.)

has been insulted by Grondale. 'Did you not kick the fellow?', asks Hermsprong, and, 'the son of a king would not have escaped it from me, after such an insult'.⁷²

Hermsprong is not only critical of distinctions of rank; he also casts some doubt upon the desirability of the type of society developing in England, by arguing that whilst English cities may be 'magnificent', they are also full of poverty. Moreover, he continues, such benefits as arise from the 'progress' which Greg. and Woodcock admire (viz, those in art and science), are not available to the 'common people'. Nevertheless, Hermsprong opines, such ordinary people can be happy, as long as they are, 'unoppressed by labour or poverty'. Both the common people and the 'native Americans' are at least, suggests Hermsprong, free from the boredom experienced by rich Europeans, who appear - in his view - to have lost the capacity to be happy. The hero then goes on to assert that certain European skills, such as reading, would not necessarily be of much use to the 'aborigines', as reading-matter is often neither pleasurable nor enlightening.⁷³ Education is certainly not an unequivocal good for Hermsprong, and his comparison of the English common people with the American aborigines actually implies that neither would be likely to gain anything from the acquisition of literacy and so on. It is one thing to be in favour of a broad artistic and scientific education for the daughters of the aristocracy, gentry, and bourgeoisie, but quite another to be a supporter of education for all. And Hermsprong's attitude towards the issue of mass literacy rather reinforces the claim which I made above, that the major purpose of educating young women would be to make them more agreeable and useful to ruling class and bourgeois men.

One cannot assume from Hermsprong's criticisms of English society that he is a strong advocate of social change; the social is of far less concern to him than the individual. He states that he avoids squandering money because, 'I must be independent, as far as social man can be independent'. This independence and the individualism associated with it is highly valued by Bage's hero; indeed, the independent-minded and courageous action of the servant, Smith, who opposes the injustice with which Lord Grondale treats Caroline, is sufficient to secure him regard and reward from Hermsprong.⁷⁴

When talking to Sumelin about the differences between England and America, Hermsprong expresses some scepticism about the commerce and incessant labour upon which economic and material progress supposedly depends; he also argues that - for the creation of a happier society - 'Manners must change much, and governments more'. The former, Hermsprong thinks possible, but regarding the latter, he bluntly states, 'governments do not change, at least for the better'. According to these pessimistic claims, social change is not only unlikely but also more or less dependent upon changes in individuals, rather than changes in the social structure: this sort of perspective is essentially anti-political, as it turns social issues into psychological or personal ones. For Hermsprong, the real problem is that in England there is a widespread addiction to 'pleasure and luxury', which can lead to 'political carelessness' and thus to, 'political corruption'; the solution to this is, in Hermsprong's words, 'Simple government'.⁷⁵

The conflict between Hermsprong and Lord Grondale comes to a climax in the court scene in which the peer, with the help of Blick and Corrow, hopes to establish that Hermsprong is a subversive who has

incited the miners to riot.⁷⁶ This charge, however, cannot be substantiated; a junior justice who had been present at the riot recounts Hermsprong's words to the miners, and we can see the character of the hero's radicalism by synopsising his speech to them: (1) Your wages may be inadequate for 'superfluities', but times are 'hard'; (2) Not everyone can be rich, and equality of property is impossible; (3) Any attempt to achieve such equality would involve 'scenes of guilt and horror' which would ultimately destroy you too; (4) The rich have luxury, but also diseases - your poverty is attenuated by good health, why wish for the former?⁷⁷

The above seems to me to be not the argument of a radical, but rather that of a reactionary; the unjustified assumptions that it harbours include the claim that the miners are seeking 'superfluities', and not merely a decent standard of living above the level of extreme poverty. And yet, Bage has previously told the reader that the reason for the unrest is the high cost of provisions.⁷⁸ Hermsprong, although stating that equality of property is an impossibility, does nothing to demonstrate or justify his claims. Why should the violent expropriation of the wealthy necessarily terminate in the rioters destroying one another? And, there is no reason why wealth and power should automatically lead to disease; poverty, on the other hand, has never been known for its health-giving properties, outside of ruling class and bourgeois rhetoric. This claim about the correlation between health and poverty was frequently made by eighteenth-century novelists (Richardson, Goldsmith et al), but the regularity with which it was put forward does nothing to make it any more plausible.

It is quite obvious that Hermsprong has been arguing for the sta-

tus quo; even so, the above ideological twaddle was not enough to save Bage from the harsh judgement of a nineteenth-century commentator, who wrote, 'he systematically made his novels the vehicle of all the anti-social, anti-moral, and anti-religious theories that were then but too much in vogue amongst the half-educated classes in this country'.⁸⁰ More recent critics display a variety of opinions; Allen describes Bage as having, 'thorough-going radical and French revolutionary sympathies', whilst Wilkins, in his preface to the most recent edition of Hermsprong, expresses the view that Bage was, 'a radical and not a revolutionary'. Wilkins also admits to being puzzled as to why Sir Walter Scott - who apparently thought that Herm-sprong was Bage's best work - did not select the novel for Ballantyne's 'Novelist's Library'. As Hermsprong is generally taken to be Bage's most radical novel, and Scott was never known for his 'progressive' opinions, it is curious that Wilkins should detect a mystery here. Some twentieth-century critics assure us that Bage was a decent fellow after all; Faulkner, for example, suggests that Hermsprong's stance towards the miners illustrates, 'Moderation of political outlook', and goes on to write of the hero's 'Burkean sentiments'. Burke and moderation are a combination which would not have occurred to this writer, but no matter; at least Faulkner recognizes that, 'Bage's attitude is more bourgeois than revolutionary: he is anxious to avoid disturbances and strengthen "civil order"'.⁸¹

Kelly rightly perceives that Bage was articulating largely middle-class values, and also seeks to explain why Bage was seen - by his contemporary critics - less harshly than other radical writers. Firstly, Kelly suggests that this was because Bage was humorous, and that this made his 'social and political criticism', 'advantageously

ambiguous'. Later on, Kelly adds to this claim, the idea that Bage escaped censure because he was geographically distant from, 'the centre of political passions in London'.⁸² One explanation which Kelly does not accept is that Bage was not very radical, for he states, 'it is entirely wrong to see him as a secret conservative'. Regarding the humour of Bage's work, I think that Kelly is missing a fundamental point, for, he further claims that if one considered the novels in their social context, and left out the humour, then one would appreciate just how radical Bage really was.⁸³ The short answer to this sort of statement is, that Bage himself did not leave out the humour; his humour may have had a somewhat different effect to that which Kelly attributes to it. That is to say, rather than Bage being seen as a radical, whose sense of humour ensured that even his political opponents were charmed by his work, it may be more useful to surmise that - partly because of his humour, in conjunction with his articulation of bourgeois values, and the comparatively conservative content of his pronouncements on social hierarchy - Bage was not considered to be in earnest: his humour did not so much 'soften' his political views, but rather emptied his work of political content.⁸⁴ One cannot then, consider Hermesprung (or any similar work) apart from the humour in the text because, the writer's decision to employ humour itself has political implications. Perhaps Kelly is right to warn us against labelling Bage a 'secret conservative'; it is more fruitful to see him as a bourgeois radical who yet adhered to a number of openly conservative tenets, which have largely been ignored or have eluded twentieth-century bourgeois critics (Allen, Wilkins, Kelly), or, have been counted as 'moderation' (Faulkner), or 'civilized tolerance' (Sutherland), and applauded. Tripathi does not fall into

either trap; he writes of Hermsprong, 'the hero's sympathies for the French Revolution are equivocal, and he is as much for law and order, as much for King and Constitution as a thoroughbred Tory might be'. And, 'The freedom that Bage and his class were asking for meant no more than the extension of their privilege vis-à-vis the Government and the ruling oligarchy'. As Tripathi correctly states, 'Hermsprong's defence in the trial scene is a recantation, a loud disclaimer of genuine or alleged jacobinical principles and sympathies'.⁸⁵

When we left Hermsprong, he was pacifying the miners; he goes on to show that he is not only against their collective protest ('rioting'), but is also an avid supporter of the monarchy. One of the crowd accuses Hermsprong of being a spy for the King, 'and no better than your master'. Hermsprong, the egalitarian, physically attacks this individual and then tells him, 'so to revile your King is to weaken the concord that ought to subsist betwixt him and all his subjects, and overthrow all civil order'.⁸⁶ If there were no other evidence to indicate the limited extent of Hermsprong's radicalism and his support for certain deeply conservative opinions and institutions this would, I maintain, be sufficient to illustrate the hero's acceptance of the established order. To cap this, Bage - for all of his apparent sneers at the aristocracy - then reveals that Hermsprong is of noble birth, the true owner of Grondale's estate.⁸⁷ In spite of these factors, Allen has argued that the novel is, 'a completely intransigent attack on feudalism and the notion of aristocracy'.⁸⁸ I count such 'intransigence' as something less than complete, and would take Bage to be only one step removed from many members of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie who - whilst wishing to attack the

supposed depravity of male aristocrats - remained firm monarchists, envious of the privileges and power of the aristocracy. In general, this bourgeois critique had more than a touch of jealousy about it; but it was almost always the moral standards of the elite which were condemned, and not the high status or power of people of rank. The problem, as seen by the bourgeois commentators of the eighteenth century, was simply that the wrong people had power and wealth; they were not opposed to the existence of inequality in all major spheres. Genuinely radical and vigorous critiques of the monopoly of wealth and power (along with the construction of theories which could inform structural changes and new forms of social relations), have typically been the prerogative of radicals outside of the mainstream bourgeois positions - those whom the bourgeoisie themselves would label 'revolutionaries'. And, as a number of twentieth-century literary critics have been anxious to point out, Bage was no revolutionary.

In order to be absolutely fair to Bage, and to more fully understand his position within eighteenth-century radicalism, it is instructive to compare the views expressed in Hermesprong with those of William Godwin, and Thomas Paine - two of the foremost radicals of the period. Firstly, on the issue of 'simple government' (which Hermesprong advocates, without giving any details), we can agree with Veitch when he writes, 'Burke said that the simple governments were radically defective. Godwin, on the contrary, held that, in government, every departure from simplicity was an evil to be deplored'.⁸⁹ Paine, writing not merely of government, but of 'simple democracy', argued that it was impractical in the modern world, and that the solution was 'ingrafting representation upon democracy'.⁹⁰ Whilst Godwin admitted that violence could lead to important socio-structural

changes, he further claimed that, 'revolutions, instead of being truly beneficial to mankind, answer no other purpose, than that of marring the salutary and uninterrupted progress, which might be expected to attend upon political truth and social improvement'. This dislike of violence, and his belief in the power of 'reason', led Godwin to assume that there could and would be inevitable but gradual progress in his society. He concluded, 'The only method according to which social improvements can be carried on, with sufficient prospect of an auspicious event, is, when the improvement of our institutions advances, in a just proportion to the illumination of the public understanding'.⁹¹ Hermsprong, although he does not accept the idea of 'progress' quite so readily, likewise eschews violence and bases his hope for reform upon reason.

In contrast, Paine, though a supporter of reason, implicitly recognized that force might be required to effect the 'general revolution in the principle of government' which he advocated. Force was at least partly vindicated in view of the fact that, 'Sovereignty, as a matter of right, appertains to the nation only, and not to any individual; and a nation has at all times an inherent and indefeasible right to abolish any form of government it finds inconvenient, and establish such as accords with its interest, disposition, and happiness'.⁹² The issue of sovereignty brings us back to Hermsprong; he supports the monarchy, and argues that 'civil order' is dependent upon 'concord' between the king and his subjects. Neither Godwin nor Paine thought monarchy desirable; the former considered it to be 'founded in imposture', and stated that, 'The true interest of man, requires the annihilation of factitious and imaginary distinctions; it is inseparable from monarchy to support and render

them more palpable than ever'.⁹³ Paine, who was unswervingly hostile to the institution, wrote of, 'Monarchical sovereignty the enemy of mankind', and added, 'That monarchy is all a bubble, a mere court artifice to procure money, is evident (at least to me) in every character in which it can be viewed'. Paine maintained that, 'We must shut our eyes against reason, we must basely degrade our understanding, not to see the folly of what is called monarchy'.⁹⁴

Hermesprong - himself an aristocrat - does not, for all of his alleged egalitarianism, oppose the institution of aristocracy. Yet, Godwin remarked that, 'The features of an aristocratical institution are two; privilege, and an aggravated monopoly of wealth. The first of these is the essence of aristocracy; the second, that without which aristocracy can rarely be supported. They are both of them in direct opposition to all sound morality, and all generous independence of character'.⁹⁵ Paine argued that whilst a title was, in itself, 'perfectly harmless', 'All hereditary government is in its nature tyranny'; he likewise contrasted 'government by election and representation' to that of 'monarchy and aristocracy', and observed that they represented the direct opposition of 'Reason and Ignorance'.⁹⁶

To return to the 'independence' mentioned by Godwin, above, it is worth noting that he also suggested that, 'individuality is of the very essence of intellectual excellence', and claimed, 'He is the most perfect man to whom society is not a necessary of life, but a luxury, innocent and enviable, in which he joyfully indulges'.⁹⁷ Hermesprong has a similarly individualistic view of the matter (in spite of the fact that he supports aristocracy, which Godwin - as noted above - thought antithetical to 'independence of character'), but Paine clearly opposed such a position when he suggested that,

'The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all parts of a civilized community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds it together'. Moreover, 'man is so naturally a creature of society, that it is almost impossible to put him out of it'.⁹⁸ In short, Paine did not accept the naive and ill-considered individualism of Godwin and Hermsprong.

Hermsprong, as we have seen, is for religion, but not for religious conformity; both Godwin and Paine shared this approach.⁹⁹ Godwin even discussed the issue of how far death could be seen as an 'evil', and possibly provided the inspiration for a discussion on the topic between Blick, and Bage's hero.¹⁰⁰ Of the three, only Paine believed that workers should be allowed to pursue the best deal which they could get for the sale of their labour; he opposed statutory wage-control, and remarked, 'Why not leave them as free to make their own bargains, as the law-makers are to let their farms and houses? Personal labour is all the property they have'.¹⁰¹

Godwin, although stating nothing specific on the issue of female emancipation in his Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, argued against 'The evil of marriage, as it is practised in European countries', and suggested that, 'The abolition of the present system of marriage, appears to involve no evils' (an argument not strengthened by his own subsequent marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft).¹⁰² We have already considered the limitations of Hermsprong's position on female emancipation, but when we turn to 'An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex', a piece probably not written by Paine himself, but published in a magazine of which he was the editor, and indicative - as Foner maintains - of his interest in the subject, we find a considerably more radical approach.¹⁰³ The author states that, 'If we take a

survey of ages and of countries, we shall find the women, almost - without exception - at all times and in all places, adored and oppressed'.¹⁰⁴ She/he goes on to consider the plight of American Indian women, and points out that they 'are what the Helots were amongst the Spartans, a vanquished people, obliged to toil for their conquerors. Hence on the banks of the Oroonoko, we have seen mothers slaying their daughters out of compassion, and smothering them in their hour of birth. They consider this barbarous pity as a virtue'.¹⁰⁵ This contrasts markedly with the idyllic picture of American Indian life drawn by Hermsprong - though it may explain the 'timidity regarding men' which he attributed to such women! The author concludes,

Even in countries where they may be esteemed most happy, constrained in their desires in the disposal of their goods, robbed of freedom of will by the laws, the slaves of opinion, which rules them with absolute sway, and construes the slightest appearances into guilt; surrounded on all sides by judges, who are at once tyrants and their seducers, and who, after having prepared their faults, punish every lapse with dishonor - nay, usurp the right of degrading them on suspicion! Who does not feel for the tender sex? 106

This is a far more forceful attack upon the oppression of women than appears in Bage's Hermsprong.

From the foregoing comparison, it is clear that Paine was the most radical of these three 'egalitarians'; the fictional Hermsprong was closer to Godwin's position than that of Paine, but nevertheless, even Godwin's views on the aristocracy, monarchy etc appear advanced compared to those of Bage's hero. In judging Hermsprong and thus - to some extent - Bage, one must consider the fact that some English and Scottish radicals had been subjected to severe persecution immediately prior to the publication of Hermsprong (although Godwin had published his 'Enquiry' without too much trouble). The 'Two Acts' of 1794, facilitated legal prosecution, for, 'The first made spoken

and written words, although not followed by any overt act, a treasonable practice; the second forbade all public meetings of which notice had not been given by resident householders'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as Veitch goes on to point out, 'The cause of reform was discredited in England because reformers were thought to approve of violence in France', and one may well sympathize with Bage for not wishing to be seen to advocate the sort of violence which had - by 1796 - horrified many of those in England who had initially welcomed the French Revolution.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, I think that one must ultimately conclude that Bage was not - compared to his radical contemporaries - very radical himself, and was nowhere near as radical as some subsequent commentators would like us to believe.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

In all of the novels discussed above, we have seen evidence of the tendency of our novelists to construct an idealized model of the good woman; the qualities of the heroines so created may be displayed in their practical activities, such as philanthropy, loyalty, obedience and so on, but more generally such women are seen to constitute a powerful moral force within the society, virtually by their very existence. Morally, heroines are usually at least the equals of their men, as in David Simple, The Spiritual Quixote, Evelina, and Hermsprong, and in some cases, they are actually morally superior, as in Pamela and Amelia. Even in Goldsmith's somewhat misogynistic The Vicar of Wakefield, there is one representative of female sense and moral worth in the character of Sophia. In three of the works (Pamela, Amelia, The Spiritual Quixote), the moral strength of the heroine plays a major part in 'converting' and subsequently supporting the major male character. In all of these prose-fictions, the heroine's moral worth ensures that she will be viewed 'meritocratically', and will eventually be rewarded with a good man and - frequently - upward social mobility; material rewards for the heroine appear in all of the novels except The Spiritual Quixote and Hermsprong (and in the former, minor heroines receive such a reward). It is worth remembering that our authors did not employ the same criteria when assessing 'worthy' low-status male characters: their moral goodness was apparently not thought to be a good enough reason for social elevation. However, on the basis of individual excellence women could justifiably - according to our authors - be incorporated into a higher class than that of their origin. It must be stressed here

that the conception of social mobility found in these works was one of elevating the individual, as a favour or reward, and did not imply any concession to the working or middle classes as a right. Women could thus be - in a limited manner - the focal point of a certain amount of class-compromise; compromise which was possible (and much blunted) in view of the fact that it occurred in the form of a purely individual reward given to a particular individual, by a single member of the ruling class. In this way, our authors could write about social mobility without actually challenging the overall status quo; they offered, perhaps, some gratification for individual ambition, whilst denying the idea that they were challenging the social order, and avoiding the issue of what we would currently call 'class conflict'. The writers may have seen moral worth as a good thing in itself, but the praise and adoration bestowed upon most of the heroines was usually accompanied by socio-economic advancement.

I have argued above that the most fundamental feature of the heroine in the novels examined was her laudable moral character; this was more important than the performance of any practical tasks, including giving alms to the poor. Heroines were not expected to be active in the wider world, and were certainly not considered fit to engage in economic or political activities, or anything else which might be thought to compromise 'female delicacy'; therefore, outside of the moral and domestic spheres, the heroines were confined to a largely passive existence. Even Pamela - who is possibly the most 'active' of the heroines - is confined to struggling over her 'virtue', and here she reacts, rather than initiates action. Generally, these exalted heroines were elevated beyond any meaningful activity in the outside world: this was the price she paid for the changing

(and more favourable) assessment of her moral worth, and her socio-economic success. This was a form of exaltation which denied the exalted any genuine power, and the reward itself was dependent upon the heroine's acceptance of dependence upon - and continuing obedience to - her male 'benefactor'. The very independence which, for example, Pamela displays in opposing B., must be much modified prior to her absorption into the gentry; she cannot maintain the same degree of independence and moral autonomy - the quality which supposedly distinguished her from other women, and made her so attractive to B. - but must eschew it in order to claim her reward. Seen in this light, the exaltation of the heroine looks less like the victory of female excellence within a romantic context, less like the breaking-down of class-barriers through the power of 'love', and more like the the possession and control of desirable women (regardless of class) by means of socio-economic bribery, the containment, or harmless channelling of middle-class aspirations, and the maintenance of existing political, social, and economic relations.

As noted above, both Watt and Spacks have commented upon the novelty of Richardson's portrayal of a servant-girl who holds chastity to be a prime value. I have suggested that he synthesized this and associated values and qualities to construct a fairly innovative paradigm for women generally. That the ideal outlined by Richardson (and subsequently adopted by the majority of eighteenth-century prose-fiction writers) was new - particularly in its application - can be supported with reference to the treatment of women in earlier English literature. Haskell, for example, has described the contrasting images of women of different social positions in the literature of the late Medieval period thus, 'if a woman were poor she was expected

to be more vulnerable to temptation than a woman of higher birth; if she were a queen she was expected to be a shadowy sketch of the Virgin'.¹ Richetti, writing of the same period, states, 'The Virgin Mary and her sisters merely served by their rare purity to emphasize the grossness of the type, of women in general; they were the pure exceptions who proved the filthy rule'.² Clements and Gibaldi, in their study of the novella, argue that the sixteenth-century view of women contained in this form included the idea that they were typically shrewish, deceitful, sexually promiscuous and so on, and could best be controlled by frequent beating. This theme only begins to decline, they suggest, when women themselves adopted the novella, 'metamorphosing the once predominantly misogynistic genre into a vehicle for propounding their own strongly feminist ideas'.³ Latt, considering the English literature of the seventeenth century, has pointed out that, 'women most often appear either as models of generalized virtue or as examples of the feminine roles of daughter, wife, and mother. When women are not shown in a domestic context, they are presented as models for men as well as for women'. This is interesting, as there is little evidence of women appearing as models for both sexes in eighteenth-century prose fiction; as mentioned previously, Watt has specifically noted the separation of male and female roles in the literature of the period, and I have commented upon this in the chapter on Pamela. Regardless of the rhetoric of authors such as Richardson, the idealized women of the eighteenth-century novel constitute a model for women, not for both sexes. As Latt goes on to point out, 'Orthodox religious thought maintained that women were intellectually inferior to men and had a greater carnal susceptibility'.⁴ Women were still generally considered to be

intellectually inferior to men in the eighteenth century (although this dogma was weakened throughout the period) but, in contrast to previous literature, they were also - as Watt has argued - considered to be less subject to sexual desires than men. This indicates a major reversal in the imagery applied to the respective sexes. There can be no question that the portrayal of women in eighteenth-century English literature differed markedly from that found in most previous English literature; it is worth mentioning that there is even a cleavage between literature of the eighteenth century prior to Richardson, and that which was produced during and after his lifetime. Defoe's Moll and Roxana were, for example, particularized versions of the older female stereotypes, bearing little resemblance to the heroines who were to follow. Therefore, Richardson's re-modelling of the literary image of women during the period, and its importance for subsequent prose fiction cannot, I suspect, be too strongly emphasized.

Although the post-Richardson heroines of the eighteenth-century novel differ from their predecessors, they do not vary greatly one from another. There are differences, but these are outweighed by the similarities which I have remarked upon throughout this thesis. At this point, we can briefly sketch the salient issues peculiar to women in the novels discussed, and perhaps assess the progress (or otherwise) indicated by the handling of these issues.

Pamela extends the possibility of physical chastity, moral elevation, and socio-economic advancement to a wider range of women; David Simple lists injustices against women, particularly those arising from economic dependence, such as parental pressure upon spinners to force them into economically-oriented matches. Amelia of-

fers an alternative conception of female innocence to that proposed by Richardson, attacks (particularly female) adultery, and also somewhat undermined the idea that a good woman could not marry a man who was her social inferior. Fielding likewise viewed 'failings' related to physical chastity in a rather more sympathetic manner than did many of the other novelists. With The Vicar of Wakefield, we find the most extreme emphasis upon physical chastity, coupled with near-misogyny concerning allegedly feminine ideas, attitudes, and actions. The Spiritual Quixote, whilst presenting a heroine subject to jealousy (and therefore, arguably, more 'realistic' than many of the others), also contained a blatant attack upon female economic independence, and upon divorce initiated by women. Evelina contains the notion of a common standard of behaviour for both men and women (and indeed, Lord Orville probably lives up to as rigorous a code as that adhered to by the heroine), but it is not consistently applied. Additionally, Burney does outline three specific types of male conduct towards women (thus avoiding the more simplistic good/bad model), and indicates to the reader which one has the most to recommend it. Bage's heroine, Caroline, in Hermesprong, differs from the other heroines insofar as she is more concerned with filial duty (and, unlike Pamela, acts upon her belief in the obligation to obey one's father), and rejects the flattery of the hero. Other heroines - such as Evelina - may be sceptical of male flattery from dubious characters (such as Sir Clement), but they typically thirst for hyperbole from heroes. Bage's Miss Fluart is by far the most novel female character in all of the works examined here; she is as resourceful as a Roxana, but with neither the lax morals nor the near-inhuman calculation of the latter. She is prepared to challenge men both in-

tellectually and physically, and thus displays qualities which all of the other writers would have considered too 'masculine' to be appropriate for a woman.

As can be seen from the above outline, there is no unbroken progress from Pamela to Hernsprong, as far as the support of female emancipation is concerned; the novel which occupies the mid-way position, for example, The Vicar of Wakefield, is completely antithetical to the serious examination of women and issues relating particularly to them, and it propounds harsher criteria for judging them than even Richardson's Pamela. The authors almost all supported the view that women should be confined to the domestic sphere and the realm of morality; with the exception of Henry Fielding, they welcomed - with definite reservations - an increase in the education of women; all implied that women are somehow inferior to men, and thus sought to justify the subjugation of women, and all - with the exception of Sarah Fielding - tacitly or blatantly argued for the maintenance of economic dependence on the part of women. Above all, the novelists valued the physical chastity of women very highly, and, appear to have agreed that moral excellence - as they perceived it - provided sound justification for the exaltation of the individual heroine.

Religion appears in the novels examined as worthy cause, with the Established Church being favoured above all other forms; apart from Graves, the authors were not religious 'chauvinists', but it is only in Hernsprong that one finds religious pluralism strongly and openly advocated. In the opinion of our authors, the primary social function of religion was to comfort and pacify the 'lower orders', not least by providing an apology for the wealth and power of their so-

cio-economic superiors. Thus social order could be maintained, 'chaos' and 'anarchy' could be kept at bay, and reform stifled - the very discussion of it being considered an incitement to law-breaking, violence, and other assorted evils. All of the ministers who populate these novels - whether good, like Dr Harrison, or bad, like Dr Blick, argue with greater or lesser enthusiasm for the preservation of the status quo. Harrison, perhaps the most vigorous critic of his society to appear in the works, himself only argues for a cleaning-up of some of the corrupt practices which are illustrated in the novel. Fundamental changes in the distribution of wealth and power played no greater part in the thinking of our fictional clergymen than they did in the thought and practices of actual eighteenth-century English clergymen. The widespread fear of social disruption which haunted the ruling class of the period was much exploited by ministers of the Church, who constantly repeated the argument that any weakening of the Church would eventually lead to the total collapse of the whole society, that is, to a re-structuring of social relations which would not be beneficial to the ruling class and their allies. Therefore, the part which the Anglican Church and its functionaries played in maintaining social order in fact, was to some extent reproduced fictitiously in eighteenth-century prose-fiction, by writers who were definitely sympathetic to the Established Church.

The major concession which our authors were prepared to make regarding the status quo was the incorporation of individual working and (more frequently) middle class women into the ranks of their social superiors. Apart from this, social mobility was not promoted in the novels; in Graves' work, even geographical mobility was attacked. His character, Greville, wished to confine agricultural and

handicraft workers to the rural areas, regardless of their desires or needs. He does not mention the fact that it was the extreme poverty and hardship characteristic of such areas which drove workers into the towns, in search of more lucrative employment, and fully prepared to risk being tainted by the urban 'vice' which all of the authors rail against in their works. The oft repeated warnings against the towns, and the ideological contrast between an idyllic countryside and the evil and squalid cities, itself indicates the antagonism of our authors to the changes which were taking place in eighteenth-century England. And, far from being simply exponents of bourgeois ideas against the corruption of an entrenched ancien-régime, these authors - although influenced by the doctrine of individualism - certainly did not represent the vanguard of bourgeois thought during the period. In Chapter One, above, I quoted Tawney, who argued that the organic conception of social relations had been replaced by individualism by the middle of the seventeenth century; whether our novelists believed in the organic view or not, they definitely promoted a version of it (with concessions to individualism) in their fiction. The main framework within which they wrote, was that of class-compromise and incorporation, not conflict. The incorporation of individual excellence allegedly built bridges between the classes, it did not foster competition and hostility between them. This approach on the part of the novelists may well have been related to the comparative weakness and fragmentation of the bourgeoisie during the eighteenth century; they were neither confident nor powerful enough to seriously challenge the ruling class at this point. For this reason, it may be argued, they were content to accept the existing order, avail themselves of such (social, political, and economic) opportuni-

ties as did exist, and to promote class harmony as being in their own interests.⁵ The most significant political developments relating to bourgeois power did not occur until the following century, and therefore the demands and aims of the eighteenth-century middle class were typically fairly modest; the more radical stance associated with small sections of this class makes only a fleeting appearance in the novels under consideration, and then only in Bage's Hermsprong. The mainstay of bourgeois criticism of the ruling class to be found in these works was, as suggested previously, the alleged lechery of male members of the quality; every author in this study made a nod in the direction of this convention. But, 'convention' is exactly what this sort of criticism had become, and there is as much of an attack on the elite regarding this issue in Pamela, as there is in Hermsprong, written fifty-five years (and two major revolutions, American and French) later. Although the power, confidence, and political capability of the bourgeoisie did develop throughout the period, our authors continued to support the doctrine of social deference, harmony, compromise, and incorporation; to this end, they created prose-fiction which upheld the status quo, and provided vindications for the vested interests of those who enjoyed political and economic power at the expense of the vast majority of the English people.

I have suggested above, in Chapter Two, that one can best determine the nature of the novels discussed by examining their content, particularly the *Weltanschauung* which they appear to promote. In the individual analyses of the novels, which I have sought to interpret in the light of historical evidence relating to class, women, and religion in eighteenth-century England, I have attempted to show that these examples of prose-fiction share a marked degree of themat-

tic unity. When one considers the underlying similarities found in the novels, bearing in mind the differences in the quality of writing, the diverse personal situations of the authors, and the fact that the works span a period of nearly sixty years, the homogeneity of both content and authorial assessment appears more noteworthy. Given this, factors such as a writer's social origins, and even the actual literary form employed in a work, become secondary considerations; the content of the novels seems to provide a more relevant starting-point from which the student who views prose-fiction as a dialectical or interactive component of literate societies can proceed. Crude estimates of the class-character of a piece of prose-fiction which insist upon the sole priority of a writer's social origins have never enjoyed much popularity, and now appear quite obsolete; they simply provide some of the material from which reactionary critics such as Spearman can - in true 'Popperian' fashion - assemble pathetic straw-men which can then be mercilessly torn to shreds.⁶ This is obviously a futile exercise, but unfortunately, Spearman retains just enough plausibility amongst some otherwise perceptive critics, to merit brief consideration here.⁷ I will confine myself to a few comments; as Spearman wants to attack what she takes to be 'Marxist' and 'sociological' theories of literature (avoiding, almost completely, reference to any particular critic or theorist), it would be a good idea for her to actually read, for example, Marx. On page two of her critique, she informs the reader that Marx believed history to be 'determined by technology'; on page three, she alleges that Marx thought that, 'the whole course of history, intellectual and artistic as well as political, is determined by the class struggle'. This will not do; the two claims are contradictory, and the use of the

term 'determined' implies that Marx was himself a 'determinist', which he was not.⁸ Spearman goes on to state, 'An assertion that the style and content is determined by the social context may seem to account for change'. But it does not, claims Spearman, because it does not explain why one can enjoy a work which is historically remote, or even one written by a 'reactionary', whilst holding 'advanced' (that is, left-wing) political views. Of course, claims about the relation of literature to its social context do not pretend to explain the phenomenon which Spearman describes, and the fact that such claims do not do so hardly constitutes a refutation of connections which a critic may discern between a work and its social background. The answer to this question - which seems to puzzle Spearman so - is that some of us are able to enjoy work which does not vindicate or flatter our own political opinions, simply because we are interested in what other human beings - from different cultures or different historical epochs - have to say about their experiences, beliefs, fantasies and so on. Spearman then argues, 'If literature is tied to a particular social setting, how is it that no literature which is incomprehensible to us has been found'.⁹ I think that two issues are being collapsed into one here; firstly, if one were to say that, e.g., Restoration comedy was 'tied' to its social setting (terms which I would not employ myself), this would mean no more than that Restoration comedy was written and performed as a dominant dramatic form during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Some Restoration comedy is performed in contemporary Britain, but such a form does not arise in the twentieth century, and is not characteristic of the drama of our own age. Restoration comedy is clearly not incomprehensible to us for a number of reasons; we know something of the background to such

comedy, and therefore understand certain social conventions, ideas and practices which were current during the period, and - perhaps more importantly - we continue to employ what is essentially the same language as those who wrote, performed, and enjoyed this particular dramatic genre. Secondly, assuming that we have sufficient data, we can not only understand such a dramatic work, but can - moreover - translate any written language which we have so far discovered, even when it is the product of societies far more culturally, historically, and geographically removed from our own. But this does not show that there are not significant differences between our society and other societies: it only illustrates the fact that we are rational beings and can come to understand something about other rational beings, even when their social, intellectual, and other capabilities and determinations differ greatly from ours. We share with past peoples the task of interpreting a common reality (regardless of our intellectual, technological, and other advances), and we likewise employ the same form of reasoning which characterizes any rational being.

Pace Spearman and other insensitive and turgid critics, who suppose that a literary tradition arises from and develops within a hermetically-sealed vacuum labelled 'art' or 'culture', having no connection whatever with any component of a social formation apart from the individual artist or 'genius', I wish to maintain that we must understand the socio-historical background to literature in order to understand the works themselves. Having done this, one can consider the individual literary work in its social context, and can proceed to look for similarities and discrepancies between it, and other works produced during the period which one has chosen to study.

This procedure does not produce an all-embracing theory of literature, but it is a method which can be applied to the literature of any historical period, geographical location, or culture. I hope to have demonstrated the validity of such an approach in the preceding attempt to make a sociologically-informed assessment of the treatment of class, women, and religion in English prose-fiction between 1740 and 1800.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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22. Mingay, op. cit., p.264.
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41. George, op. cit., p.172.
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45. Cowie, op. cit., p.17.
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CHAPTER TWO

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4. Ibid., p.166.
5. Ibid., p.175.
6. Ibid., p.264.
7. Ibid., p.75.
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11. Ibid., p.355.
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13. Richardson, op. cit., p.234.
14. Ibid., p.427.
15. Ibid., p.215.
16. Ibid., p.229.
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18. Ibid., Volume 2, p.168.
19. Ibid., p.12; p.23; p.41.
20. Ibid., p.189; p.193.
21. Ibid., pp.320-2.
22. Ibid., p.233. Pamela claims that her main concern is that B. might have to suffer 'rude jests'.
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24. Richardson, op. cit., p.57.
25. See B.Kriessman, Pamela-Shamela, University of Nebraska Studies: New Series 22, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960), for a survey of responses to Pamela.
26. Richardson, op. cit., p.188.
27. Spacks, op. cit., p.213.
28. Richardson, op. cit., p.395.
29. Ibid., pp.406-9.
30. I.Konigsberg, Samuel Richardson and the Dramatic Novel, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1968), p.17.
31. Stone, op. cit., pp.329-30.
32. Konigsberg, op. cit., Watt, op. cit., and A.D.McKillop, The Early Masters of English Fiction, (Kansas, 1956), all see the influence of Puritanism on Richardson as being quite considerable.
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34. Walzer, op. cit., p.193.
35. Richardson, op. cit., p.302.
36. Walzer, op. cit.,p.193.
37. Richardson, op. cit., p.4.
38. D.L.Ball, Samuel Richardson's Theory of Fiction, (The Hague, 1971), p.253.
39. Richardson, op. cit.; see, for example, p.214 and pp.401-2.
40. Ibid., see especially Volume 2., pp.392-3.
41. Ibid., pp.412-13.
42. For useful discussions of Puritan diaries and journals, see O.C.Watkins,The Puritan Experience, (London, 1972).
43. Ibid., pp.18-24.
44. Richardson, op. cit., p.44.
45. Spacks, op. cit., p.8.
46. It is usually argued that Richardson was against the 'double-standard', particularly in the light of his later work, Sir Charles Grandison.
47. Richardson, op. cit., p.451.
48. Richardson was probably influenced by criticisms of his calculating morality, as he ensured that Clarissa could not be subjected to the same attack.
49. Watt, op. cit., p.159; p.150.
50. Ibid., pp.183-5.
51. All 'respectable' women were assumed to support the project.
52. Watt, op. cit., p.185.
53. Ibid., p.181.
54. Ibid., p.182.
55. Example was considered to be very important by prose-fiction writers during this period, as shown by their frequent stress upon, for instance, the way in which the behaviour of employers was thought to determine the conduct of servants and others. Richardson, as noted above, did not think that women were typically highly virtuous, but rather believed that they could be if they acted in keeping with a strict code of conduct specifically

55. designed for them. One literary consequence of this is that Richardson tried to represent Pamela as being both a 'natural' or 'realistic' character, yet at the same time a woman who had attained - morally - as much as one of her sex might hope to achieve. Pamela purports to show how a woman from a humble background can excel if she strives for what the author himself assumed to be a standard of conduct seldom found in the society, and even less often amongst women of Pamela's class.
56. Richardson in Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson, edited with an introduction, by J.Carroll, (Oxford, 1964), p.202; p.203. In the same letter, Richardson mentions pain in childbirth as another part of the 'punishment'.
57. M.Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson, Dramatic Novelist, (London, 1973), p.63.
58. I know of no interest peculiar to women which Richardson supported.
59. Richardson in Carroll, op. cit., p.178.
60. Watt, op. cit., p.187; Spacks, op. cit., p.198.
61. Richardson, op. cit., pp.260-1.
62. Ibid., p.57.
63. Ibid., p.93.
64. Ibid., p.157; p.174; p.179.
65. Ibid., p.218.
66. Ibid., p.244; pp.437-8.
67. Ibid., p.24; p.44; p.45; p.159.
68. Ibid., p.143; p.162.
69. Ibid., p.205.
70. Ibid., p.239; p.314; p.394.
71. Ibid., pp.435-41.
72. Ibid., p.253; pp.234-5.
73. Ibid., p.271.
74. Ibid., p.308.
75. Ibid., p.331. For Pamela's codification of B.'s 'rules' see pp.406-9.
76. Ibid., p.316.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Alter in Rawson, *op. cit.*, p.560.
2. S.Fielding, *op. cit.*, pp.249-50.
3. *Ibid.*, p.285.
4. *Ibid.*, p.134.
5. *Ibid.*, pp.33-4. This woman subsequently experiences little discomfort when she has to change her religion in order to marry a wealthy Jew.
6. *Ibid.*, p.176.
7. *Ibid.*, p.180.
8. *Ibid.*, p.178.
9. *Ibid.*, p.179; p.182.
10. *Ibid.*, p.286.
11. *Ibid.*, p.280.
12. *Ibid.*, p.248.
13. *Ibid.*, p.285
14. *Ibid.*, p.32; p.52; p.64.
15. *Ibid.*, p.86.
16. *Ibid.*, p.101.
17. *Ibid.*, pp.129-30.
18. *Ibid.*, pp.99-100.
19. *Ibid.*, p.113.
20. *Ibid.*, p.169.
21. Although Camilla has had some brief experience of begging. *Ibid*, p.167.
22. *Ibid.*, pp.108-9; p.151; p.200; p.181.
23. *Ibid.*, p.191; p.254.
24. *Ibid.*, p.35 and p.114; p.36 and p.46; p.45; p.65; p.142; p.271.
25. Needham and Utter, *op. cit.*.
26. S.Fielding, *op. cit.*, p.146.

27. Ibid., p.12, p.19, and p.146; p.171 and p.288.
28. Ibid., pp.77-81; p.118; p.279; p.300.
29. Ibid., p.189.
30. Ibid., p.63; p.252.
31. Ibid., pp.167-8.
32. Ibid., p.251.
33. Ibid., pp.304-5; p.304.
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35. Ibid., p.304.
36. Ibid., p.314, quoted by the author.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. J.Cleland in Rawson, op. cit., p.121.
2. See M.C.Battestin, The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art, (Middletown, Connecticut 1959), for a full discussion of Fielding's 'Latitudinarian' position.
3. H.Fielding, op. cit., p.62.
4. Alter in Rawson, op. cit., p.573.
5. See R.Paulson, Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England, (Newhaven and London, 1967), p.113., where Paulson points out that Parson Adams - in Joseph Andrews - 'is unable (from simplicity and goodness) to recognize malice when it appears'. Clearly, Fielding's conception of innocence was very different to that held by Richardson.
6. H.Fielding, op. cit., p. 84; p.117.
7. Ibid., Volume 2., p.310.
8. Ibid., p.187.
9. A.L.Barbauld in Rawson, op. cit., p.212; p.214.
10. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.13.
11. Ibid., Volume 2., p.166; p.186.
12. Battestin, op. cit., p.121.
13. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.187.

14. Watt, op. cit., p.183.
15. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.278.
16. Ibid., Volume 2., p.278; p.279. As Harrison is implicitly claiming that duelling is 'caused' (and supported by) women, and that such conduct is not really feminine, it is clear that he defines 'feminine' according to some ideal of his own - and not according to what he takes to be the attitudes/actions of real women.
17. H.Fielding, op. cit., p.283.
18. Ibid., Volume 2., p.97.
19. Ibid., p.170.
20. Alter in Rawson, op. cit., p.565.
21. This is just one of countless examples which indicate the folly of viewing Fielding as playing libertine to Richardson's 'Puritan'.
22. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.172. The assumption here is that it is the adultery of married women that constitutes the main problem - there is obviously less concern for the adultery of married men.
23. G.Rudé, Hanoverian London, (London, 1971), p.72.
24. Jarrett, op. cit., p.112.
25. H.Fielding, op. cit., p.108. In Tom Jones, Fielding had suggested that 'frivolity' was the worst characteristic of the quality, rather than vice.
26. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.p.132.
27. It likewise points to his scepticism for change occurring as a purely internal process, within the individual - even though the conclusion to Amelia might appear to contradict this.
28. Alter in Rawson, op. cit., p.560. See Chapter 6, below, for a fuller discussion of 'human nature'.
29. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.159.
30. Ibid., p.9.
31. Ibid., Volume 2., p.107., emphasis added.
32. Ibid., Volume 2., p.131.
33. Ibid., Volume 2., p.228. This sort of analogy had been much used prior to the rise of individualism - it was not compatible with the atomistic view which informed individualist ideology.

34. Ibid., Volume 2., p.229.
35. Ibid., Volume 2., p.229.
36. Ibid., Volume 2., p.230.
37. Ibid., p.241.
38. Ibid., p.125.
39. Ibid., Volume 2., p.304.
40. Ibid., Volume 2., p.49, emphasis added.
41. Ibid., Volume 2., pp.25-6, emphasis added.
42. Ibid., Volume 2., p.50.
43. Watt, op. cit., pp.185-6.
44. Cross-class marriages were considered dubious by many eighteenth-century commentators (even when a man of some status married downwards); Fielding himself suffered much adverse comment relating to his second marriage - which is ironic, considering that he had attacked Richardson (in Shamela) for encouraging unequal matches.
45. H.Fielding, op. cit., Volume 2., p.50.
46. Ibid., Volume 2., p.134.
47. Ibid., p.150.
48. Ibid., Volume 2., Volume 2., p.50. We believe Amelia, whilst we may doubt the similar claim made by the heroine of Richardson's Pamela.
49. Ibid., Volume 2., p.304.
50. M.Price, 'Fielding: The Comedy of Forms', in Rawson, op. cit., pp.395-423, (p.415.).

CHAPTER SIX

1. Compare R.H.Hopkins, The true Genius of Oliver Goldsmith, (Baltimore, 1969), and S.Bäckmann, This Singular Tale, (Berlingska Bocktryckeviet, Lund, 1971).
2. As Hopkins points out, the Vicar tends to see his children in a somewhat 'economic' light, Hopkins, *ibid.*, p.186.
3. Goldsmith, op. cit., p.6.
4. *Ibid.*, p.7. I believe that one of Goldsmith's aims is to show that the disasters which occur stem from the fact that Primrose avoids his duty regarding the control of his wife and children;

4. he seems to be suggesting that Primrose is simply not strict enough in this respect.
5. Ibid., p.18.
6. Ibid., p.20.
7. Ibid., p.24.
8. Ibid., p.26.
9. Ibid., p.24.
10. Ibid., p.35.
11. Ibid., p.44.
12. Ibid., p.46.
13. Ibid., p.47.
14. Ibid., p.58.
15. Ibid., p.66.
16. Ibid., p.69.
17. Ibid., p.96.
18. Ibid., p.97, emphasis added.
19. Ibid., p.145.
20. Ibid., p.147.
21. Ibid., p.154.
22. It is a curious but recurring paradox that, on the one hand, Christians have frequently taken as a 'Christian' view the image of women presented in the old testament (and the writings of St. Paul) : that is, the fundamentalist notion of women as innately lascivious, untrustworthy, guilty of Original Sin etc, and have deduced from this that women are incapable of moral judgment or action, being determined by their wanton nature. This constitutes part of the justification for treating women as moral patients. On the other hand, terms such as 'shame', 'guilt', 'sin' etc have been liberally applied by these same Christians to the ideas and actions of women. Such terms would make sense if, and only if, women were moral agents, and therefore accountable for their actions. They cannot be both moral patients and moral agents at the same time.
23. Ibid., p.158.
24. Ibid., pp.195-6, emphasis added.

25. Ibid., p.216.
26. Ibid., p.214.
27. Bäckmann, op. cit., takes this sort of view.
28. Allen, op. cit., p.82.
29. Lytton Sells, op. cit., p.266.
30. Goldsmith, op. cit., pp.11-12.
31. Ibid., p.188.
32. Ibid., p.20; p.23.
33. Ibid., p.36.
34. Ibid., p.106.
35. Ibid., p.107.
36. Ibid., pp.106-7.
37. Ibid., p.107.
38. Ibid., p.108.
39. Ibid., p.109, emphasis added.
40. Ibid., p.109.
41. Ibid., p.109.
42. Ibid., p.110.
43. Ibid., p.158.
44. The more active strand of individualism had shed its religious trappings, in the main, by this time; in its secular form, it was expressed by the bourgeois doctrine of economic individualism.
45. Ibid., p.160.
46. Ibid., p.163.
47. Ibid., p.166.
48. Ibid., p.170.
49. Ibid., pp.172-3, emphasis added.
50. Mészáros, op. cit., p.166.
51. Goldsmith, op. cit., p.174.

52. Ibid., p.175.
53. Ibid., p.188.
54. Ibid., p.189.
55. Ibid., p.190. Such advantages cannot be 'in this life'.
56. Ibid., p.190. No doubt Goldsmith wanted to reassure any of his wealthy readers who might have been disturbed by Christ's statement, 'a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven', (Matthew 19. 23-4.).

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Graves, op. cit., p.19, emphasis added.
2. Ibid.,p.20, emphasis added.
3. Ibid., p.21.
4. Ibid., p.22.
5. Ibid., p.23.
6. Ibid., p.26.
7. Ibid., p.27.
8. Ibid., p.30.
9. Ibid., p.49.
10. Ibid., p.76, emphasis added.
11. Ibid., p.227.
12. Ibid., p.378; p.428.
13. Ibid., p.446.
14. Ibid., pp.154-5. The 'quixote' convention necessitates the hero being deluded, but Graves is doing more than simply following a literary convention - the work is meant to be an attack upon Methodism, at least as much as it is meant to be an 'entertainment'.
15. Ibid., p.32; p.38.
16. Ibid., p.45.
17. Ibid., p.50.
18. Ibid., p.62.

19. Ibid., p.114. This is supposed to be a function of (a) Methodist jargon, and (b) working-class ignorance.
20. Ibid., p.146.
21. Ibid., p.269.
22. Ibid., p.295.
23. Ibid., p.40, emphasis added.
24. Gilbert, op. cit., p.27.
25. Graves, op. cit., p.128, emphasis added.
26. On this point, it might be argued that the Methodists held a more specifically 'Protestant' position than the Anglicans.
27. Ibid., p.176, emphasis added.
28. Ibid., pp.225-6, emphasis added.
29. Ibid., p.350.
30. Ibid., p.432, first and fourth emphasis added.
31. Ibid., p.449. From the viewpoint of Graves and other Anglicans, it is a good thing that the Established Church was not required to demonstrate the correctness/holiness of its own doctrines and practices by means of 'visible proof'. Indeed, if religious belief was generally dependent upon such rigorous criteria, one wonders if anyone would subscribe to any religion.
32. Ibid., p.450.
33. Ibid., p.452.
34. Ibid., p.451, emphasis added, with the exception of the word 'gained'.
35. Ibid., p.451.
36. Ibid., p.451.
37. Ibid., p.462.
38. C.J.Hill, op. cit., p.122. Graves' criticisms were not unique to him - they were levelled against Methodism by many other Anglicans. Overton, has listed what he takes to be the major reasons for Methodism being 'unpopular' amongst Anglicans, and one can see that all of Graves' objections are included plus several others which he, apparently, did not consider valid (viz, 2B; 6; 8, below): (1) Methodism disturbed the status quo; (2) It promoted A) Puritanism or B) Romanism (the former attributed to Whitefield, the latter to Wesley); (3) It drove people mad and created disorder; (4) Methodist leaders were themselves frequently

38. duped by their followers' enthusiasm; (5) Early Methodist theology was considered crude and dogmatic by cultured commentators; (6) Methodists refused to leave the Established Church; (7) Ordained Methodist ministers broke their promise to obey their (Anglican) superiors by pursuing Methodism; (8) Methodist leaders were gulling their followers in order to amass wealth for for themselves. See Abbey and Overton, op. cit., Volume 2., pp.135-144.
39. R.E.Davies, Methodism, (Harmondsworth, Pelican 1964), p.84, emphasis added.
40. Ibid., p.76, emphasis added.
41. Ibid., p.76.
42. Ibid., p.124.
43. A.Armstrong, The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700-1850, (London, 1973), p.103.
44. Gilbert, op. cit., p.19.
45. T.B.Shepherd, Methodism and the Literature of the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1940), p.215.
46. Ibid., p.213.
47. Ibid., p.216.
48. Ibid., p.220. In Shepherd's account, Smollett's Humphry Clinker, is, 'as much an apologia for Methodism as it is a criticism'! See Shepherd, p.224.
49. C.J.Hill, op. cit., p.16.
50. When one has duly listed Graves' paragons: Ophelia, Charlotte, Isabella, and likewise the wicked ones: Widow Townsend, Mrs. Skelton, Lady Ruelle, and Charlotte's stepmother, there are a lot of female characters left over, who occupy a variety of positions along the continuum of 'good' and 'evil'.
51. One might argue that Julia is one of the most realistic heroines to appear in the eighteenth-century English novel, for Pamela, Amelia, Evelina et al are, whilst being of considerable literary importance, uniformly transcendent in view of their manifold virtues. It is noteworthy that Graves, whose political conservatism was undeniable, should have produced such a character. If one compares Julia with Caroline, the heroine of Bage's Hermsprong, it is clear that although Julia does not represent just another example of unworldly excellence, Caroline does. Graves the conservative has achieved some sort of verisimilitude where Bage - who was undoubtedly more radical both in his general political attitudes and his view of women - has merely created in accordance with the conventional picture of female virtue. What is important here is not the literary skill involved in character

51. creation - for both authors were capable of portraying both paragons and plausible women - but rather the choice of whether or not to make one's heroine approximate to a real woman.
52. Graves, *op. cit.*, p.78.
53. *Ibid.*, pp.80-2.
54. *Ibid.*, pp.87-96.
55. *Ibid.*, p.99.
56. *Ibid.*, p.237.
57. *Ibid.*, p.238.
58. *Ibid.*, pp.239-40.
59. *Ibid.*, p.432. See Needham and Utter, *op. cit.*, pp.140-64, for a full discussion of fainting and its significance in the English novel.
60. Graves, *op. cit.*, p.76.
61. *Ibid.*, p.76; p.78; pp.104-5; p.227; p.239; p.304; p.435; p.444.
62. *Ibid.*, p.448.
63. *Ibid.*, p.449. Greville's notion of the proper relationship between parent and child is an indication of how far certain seventeenth-century Puritan ideas had come to be accepted within the Established Church - his view reflects the attenuated contradiction within Puritan ideology regarding the assertion of patriarchal authority on the one hand, and individual autonomy on the other.
64. *Ibid.*, p.473.
65. According to Hill, Charlotte Rivers (née Woodville) is modelled upon Graves' own wife, and the whole story of Mr.Rivers is almost certainly autobiographical, as is that of Ophelia and Mr.Grahame. See C.J.Hill, *op. cit.*, p.132, and, for a detailed account of the parallels between Graves' life and the content of his novel see pp.61-71.
66. Graves, *op. cit.*, p.188, emphasis added.
67. *Ibid.*, p.190; p.194.
68. *Ibid.*, p.200.
69. *Ibid.*, p.217; p.218.
70. *Ibid.*, p.203; p.222.
71. *Ibid.*, p.226.

72. Graves was certainly concerned to make an apology for what were regarded as imprudent matches; both his relationship with Utrecia Smith, whom he jilted, and his later marriage to Lucy Bartholomew were assessed as such by his contemporaries. See C.J.Hill, op. cit., pp.61-71.
73. Graves, op. cit., pp.149-157. C.J.Hill, op. cit., p.124.
74. Graves, op. cit., p.145; p.148.
75. Ibid., p.173.
76. Ibid., p.154, second emphasis added.
77. Ibid., p.155, second emphasis added.
78. Ibid., p.155.
79. Ibid., p.157.
80. See E.Goffman, Stigma, (Harmondsworth, Pelican 1968).
81. Graves, op. cit., p.69; p.70.
82. Ibid., p.224.
83. Ibid., p.159; p.160; p.168.
84. Ibid., p.172; pp.172-3.
85. Ibid., pp.411-15.
86. Ibid., p.61; p.185; p.341, for examples.
87. Ibid., p.183.
88. Ibid., p.310.
89. Ibid., p.311, emphasis added.
90. K.Marx in D.McLellan, editor, Marx's Grundrisse, (St Albans, Herts 1971), p.89.
91. K.Marx, Capital, 3 Volumes, (London, 1974), Volume 1., p.667; p.668.
92. Graves, op. cit., p.280.
93. Ibid., pp.386-7.
94. Ibid., pp.378-9; pp.416-23.
95. Ibid., pp.380-1.
96. Ibid., pp.461-2.

97. C.J.Hill, op. cit., p.122.
98. C.Whibley in his introduction to R.Graves, The Spiritual Quixote, 2 Volumes, (London, 1926), Volume 1., p.xii; p.xix. Anon, 'Richard Graves', in ILS, 11th May, 1922, p.298. C.Tracy in Graves, op. cit., p.xvii; p.xvi.
99. M.Rymer, 'Satiric Technique in The Spiritual Quixote: Some Comments', Durham University Journal, 1972-3, Volume 65., pp.54-64 (p.54).
100. C.J.Hill, op. cit., pp.122-3.
101. Ibid., p.125.
102. Graves, op. cit., p.449.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Burney, op. cit., p.20; p.21.
2. Ibid., p.108.
3. Ibid., p.107.
4. Ibid., p.111; p.274.
5. Ibid., p.361.
6. Ibid., p.19; p.28.
7. Ibid., p.240; p.346; p.164.
8. Ibid., p.109.
9. Ibid., p.109; p.77; p.112; p.113.
10. Ibid., p.77; p.65; p.146; p.116.
11. Ibid., p.77.
12. Ibid., p.221; p.223; p.224.
13. Ibid., p.220.
14. Ibid., p.123.
15. Ibid., p.183; p.343.
16. Ibid., p.127, emphasis added.
17. Ibid., p.261.
18. Ibid., p.161; p.164.
19. Ibid., p.164, emphasis added.

20. Ibid., p.127; pp.126-7, emphasis added.
21. Ibid., p.379; p.387; p.406, emphasis added.
22. Ibid., p.268.
23. Ibid., p.289.
24. Ibid., p.217.
25. Ibid., p.164.
26. See D.Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, (New York, 1953).
27. Burney, op. cit., p.148.
28. Ibid., p.12; p.14; p.13; p.14.
29. Ibid., p.94, emphasis added.
30. Ibid., pp.40-8.
31. Ibid., pp.97-101; p.100; p.206.
32. Ibid., p.171.
33. Ibid., p.172.
34. Ibid., p.223.
35. Ibid., p.83.
36. Ibid., p.174.
37. Ibid., p.219.
38. Ibid., p.248.
39. Ibid., p.30, emphasis added.
40. Ibid., p.31.
41. Ibid., p.32; p.34.
42. Ibid., p.106, emphasis added.
43. Ibid., p.106.
44. Ibid., p.113.
45. Needham and Utter, op. cit., argue that this is a recurring theme in English prose fiction. It may be that the parallel between this sort of novel and the Cinderella story is closer than they think; the Opie's collection of fairy-tales, shows that in most of the tales drawn from Cinderella, the heroine is - like Evelina - not a poor girl, but rather from a noble or royal family. See

45. I. & P. Opie, The Classic Fairy Tales, (London, 1980), pp.152-9.
46. Burney, op. cit., p.18.
47. Ibid., p.16.
48. Ibid., p.163.
49. Ibid., p.338; it is interesting to note Villars' use of the anachronistic 'thee', 'thou', and 'thy' (here and below), which is presumably employed to lend 'seriousness' to this utterance.
50. Ibid., p.405.
51. Ibid., p.294.

CHAPTER NINE

1. G. Kelly, The English Jacobin Novel, (London, 1976), p.40; p.60. P. Faulkner, 'Man as He is Not', Durham University Journal, 1964-5, Volume 57., pp.137-147, (p.140). V. Wilkins in his introduction to Bage, op. cit., p.v.; p.viii.
2. Bage, op. cit., p.15; p.17; p.16; p.17.
3. Ibid., p.68; p.69.
4. Ibid., p.72; p.73; p.74.
5. Ibid., p.72; p.73., emphasis added.
6. Ibid., p.139., emphasis added.
7. Ibid., p.101; p.105; p.106.
8. Ibid., p.172.
9. Ibid., p.190.
10. Ibid., p.184.
11. Ibid., pp.215-16.
12. Ibid., p.231.
13. Ibid., p.246.
14. Ibid., pp.51-3.
15. Ibid., p.81.
16. Ibid., p.85.
17. Ibid., p.86; p.91.
18. Ibid., p.103; pp.104-5.

19. Ibid., p.110; p.111.
20. Ibid., p.113.
21. Ibid., p.121.
22. Ibid., pp.144-6; pp.155-7.
23. Ibid., p.176; pp.180-2; p.183.
24. Ibid., p.189; p.210.
25. Ibid., p.191.
26. Ibid., p.211; pp.212-14; p.215.
27. Ibid., p.247.
28. Ibid., p.x.
29. Ibid., p.18.
30. Ibid., p.30, emphasis added.
31. Ibid., p.27.
32. Ibid., pp.27-8.
33. Ibid., p.57.
34. Ibid., p.64.
35. Ibid., p.65; p.67.
36. Ibid., p.135, emphasis added.
37. Ibid., p.136, emphasis added.
38. Ibid., p.137, emphasis added.
39. Ibid., p.138.
40. Ibid., pp.142-3.
41. Ibid., p.144.
42. Ibid., p.170, emphasis added.
43. Ibid., pp.172-3, emphasis added.
44. Stone, op. cit., pp.415-24.
45. Quoted in Ibid., p.318.
46. See P.D.Tripathi, The Doctrinal English Novel, (Calcutta, 1977), pp.194-9.

47. Bage, op. cit., p.53.
48. Ibid., p.69; p.87; p.122; p.201.
49. Ibid., p.6; p.8; p.15.
50. Ibid., p.98; p.168; p.148; p.14; pp.67-9; p.83; pp.123-4.
51. Ibid., pp.45-6; p.46.
52. Ibid., p.44, for a list of Woodcock's virtues; see also p.239.
53. Ibid., p.10.
54. Ibid., p.14; p.46.
55. Ibid., p.44.
56. Ibid., p.14; p.45.
57. Ibid., p.46; p.41.
58. Ibid., pp.41-2; p.42; p.43.
59. Ibid., p.70; p.83; p.84.
60. Ibid., p.92. For an account of these riots see, The Life of William Hutton, edited by L.Jewitt, (London, 1872).
61. Bage, op. cit., p.93; p.207; p.238; p.164; p.167. On p.207, it is clear that Grondale recognizes Blick for the self-seeker that he is.
62. Ibid., p.126.
63. Ibid., p.125; p.127.
64. Ibid., p.175; p.190.
65. Ibid., pp.90-3; pp.194-5; p.2; pp.198-9.
66. Ibid., p.13; p.12; p.45; p.14.
67. Ibid., p.21.
68. Ibid., p.75; p.76; p.77.
69. Ibid., p.78; p.79; p.80.
70. Ibid., p.83.
71. Tripathi, op. cit., considers Hermsprong to be a portrait of bourgeois 'man', but I think that he perhaps overstates his case.
72. Bage, op. cit., p.73; p.202; p.91.

73. Ibid., p.87; p.88; p.89.
74. Ibid., p.94; p.117; p.119.
75. Ibid., p.133; p.134; pp.134-5.
76. Ibid., pp.220-2. The reader only learns of the 'riot' in this indirect manner.
77. Ibid., p.225.
78. Ibid., p.219.
79. It may be worth noting that the miners are particularly against Grondale (a pit-owner), and determined to pull his house down. As we later discover, all of Grondale's property rightfully belongs to Hermsprong.
80. Anon., Review of Scott's Lives of the Novelists, in the Quarterly Review, 1826, Volume 34., pp.349-378., (p.367).
81. See Allen, op. cit., p.102; Wilkins in Bage, op. cit., p.v; Faulkner, op. cit., p.143.
82. Kelly, op. cit., p.34; p.27; p.61.
83. Ibid., p.29; p.27.
84. In this context, a contemporary anecdote comes to mind; two right-wing politicians are discussing their opponents on the 'Left': 1st Politician, 'What is the difference between socialists and communists?' 2nd Politician, 'The communists really mean it!'. One does not have to accept such a view in order to take the point behind it - much of what passes for 'radical' ideas and practices poses little threat to the established order, and many defenders of this order fully realize the fact.
85. Tripathi, op. cit., p.198; p.208.
86. Bage, op. cit., p.226.
87. Ibid., p.227.
88. Allen, op. cit., p.102.
89. G.S.Veitch, The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform, (London, 1964), p.265.
90. T.Paine, The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, collected and edited by P.S.Foner, 2 Volumes, (New York, 1945), pp.369-75.
91. W.Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, (with selections from Godwin's other writings), abridged and edited by K.Codell Carter, (Oxford, 1971), p.138, emphasis added. This is not, of course, a 'method'.

92. Paine, op. cit., p.341, emphasis added.
93. Godwin, op. cit., p.197; p.199.
94. Paine, op. cit., p.342; p.374; p.373.
95. Godwin, op. cit., p.200, emphasis added. Godwin obviously recognised the importance of property, and the part that it played in creating and maintaining inequality, but he would not have it forcibly re-distributed.
96. Paine, op. cit., p.286; p.364; p.338.
97. Godwin, op. cit., p.300; p.302, emphasis added.
98. Paine, op. cit., p.356; p.358. It is interesting to note that Paine makes use of the 'chain' idea here, albeit in a secularized manner.
99. Godwin, op. cit., p.226. Paine, op. cit., p.442.
100. Godwin, op. cit., p.137. Godwin and Bage did meet on two occasions, but they were not close friends.
101. Paine, op. cit., p.431.
102. Godwin, op. cit., p.302; p.303.
103. See 'An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex', in Paine, op. cit. pp.34-8.
104. Ibid., p.34, emphasis added. This writer, at least, recognizes the connection between adoration and oppression.
105. Ibid., p.35.
106. Ibid., p.36.
107. Veitch, op. cit., p.326.
108. Ibid., p.125.
109. Bage could, for example, have been much more radical on the issue of female emancipation, without much fear of persecution.

CONCLUSION

1. A.S.Haskell, 'The Portrayal of Women by Chaucer and his Age', in M.Springer, editor, What Manner of Woman, (Oxford, 1978), pp.1-14 (p.7.).
2. J.J.Richetti, 'The Portrayal of Women in Restoration and Eighteenth Century English Literature', in Springer, op. cit., pp.65-97 (p.67).
3. R.J.Clements and J.Gibaldi, Anatomy of the Novella, (New York, 1977).

4. D.J.Latt, 'Praising Virtuous Ladies: The Literary Image and Historical Reality of Women in Seventeenth-Century England', in Springer, op. cit., pp.39-64 (p.40; p.43.).
5. I do not argue that this was a unified and concerted strategy, but simply that this sort of view probably commended itself to the majority of the bourgeoisie.
6. D.Spearman, The Novel and Society, (London, 1966), p.275.
7. See Kinkead-Weekes, op. cit., p.463.
8. Spearman, op. cit., p.3; p.5.
9. Ibid., p.3; p.5. For further (and somewhat over-generous) criticism of Spearman see D.Craig, 'Towards Laws of Literary Development', in D.Craig, editor, Marxists on Literature, (Harmondsworth, Pelican 1975), pp.134-160.

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