



**IN PURSUIT OF VIRTUE:**

**The Moral Education of Readers  
in Eighteenth-Century Fiction**

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### **Declaration**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university; nor, to the best of my belief, does it contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text or in the footnotes.

Derek C. STAMOULIS.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying.

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## PREFACE

The aim of this dissertation is to establish that writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction had a definite didactic aim in their writing - that of inculcating virtue upon the minds of readers and attacking vice. Finding that the deficient method of sermons, tracts and instruction manuals had failed to persuade individuals either to maintain, or pursue, virtue, these writers developed a new form of writing which, while assimilating readers into the text, preserved the autonomy necessary for readers to decode the moral instruction. Only by presenting readers with narratives based upon real-life situations and allowing them, through the use of their own sagacity, the opportunity of working out the instruction for themselves, with some guidance from writers, could it be hoped that individuals would improve their own morality and, by so doing, help reform the corrupt behaviour and manners of contemporary society. Consequently, it would seem appropriate to describe such works, in which the moral instruction and narrative were "inseparable" for a full appreciation of the meaning of the text, as novels of moral instruction.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part focuses upon the history and theory of moral education, the function of rhetoric and the impact that philosophers such as La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes, Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Butler, Hutcheson and Hume had upon the development of a literature that concerned itself with developing individuals into more virtuous beings. The second part of the dissertation examines the part that the theory of moral education played in the following works: Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, Fielding's *Miscellanies*, *Joseph Andrews* and

*Tom Jones*, Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*. Even though each of these writers wrote to entertain readers, his primary aim was to instruct readers to pursue "the excellency of virtue . . . and true wisdom". Only after this had been achieved could individuals be rewarded with true happiness.

In relation to the use of quotations, I have normally brought spelling and typography of primary sources into line with modern usage, except where it may obscure the meaning of the original. Punctuation has been kept as in the original. In reference to the works of Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, I have cited the editions from which the quotations have been extracted both within the chapters and in the Bibliography.

In terms of writing this dissertation, I am indebted to the encouragement, guidance and help offered me by Dr. Michael Tolley of the University of Adelaide. Michael's acute insights into the literature of the period and his constant readiness to offer critical opinion proved invaluable to me during the period of writing this work. I am also grateful for the assistance given me by Dr. Michael Meehan of the Flinders University of South Australia, particularly in the initial stages of my work. Michael's knowledge of the literary history of, and criticism about, the period was greatly appreciated. Also, I am grateful for the assistance and encouragement accorded me by the staff of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Adelaide. Finally, I am most indebted to the members of my family for the encouragement and support they have given me over the time it has taken me to research and write this dissertation, even when this work has infringed upon family time. In particular, I would thank my grandmother, Elizabeth Ann Croser, for always providing the inspiration for the pursuit of my academic studies.



## Introduction

Although literature is not always written to inculcate directly some particular moral theory or set of values, there is little doubt that, behind the façade of the mid eighteenth-century novel, there lay an implicit moral aim to instruct readers. In this sense, education and ethics could be described as "natural bedfellows",<sup>1</sup> or inseparable concepts for a full appreciation of the novel. Each of the writers, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, acknowledged that his works had as their central aim the moral education of readers. Despite their essential differences, each writer could see that the morals of contemporary society were based not on virtue but on its opposite, vice. Thomas Sheridan highlighted the problem when he blamed corrupt behaviour and manners on a deficient system of education. He commented:

I am much deceived if it will appear calculated to promote knowledge and virtue; on the contrary, I believe, it will be found to be the true source of all our follies, vices, ignorance, and false taste.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, the education system could be partly blamed for the "universal corruption of manners"<sup>3</sup> in the eighteenth century; however, there existed for writers the more pressing problem of how to improve the society in which they lived, and how to encourage their readers to pursue virtue. It was this task that each of the above writers undertook. The role of writers, therefore, became a twofold one: firstly, to expose the inherent vice

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Aitken, *English and Ethics* (Ontario: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1976), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Sheridan, *British Education: or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1756), Book I, Chapter I, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Book I, Chapter I, p. 3.

within society; and secondly, to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. In 1725, James Arbuckle had summarised this role when he commented that, in their employment, writers should always have "the Publick Good for the chief Motive of [their] Writing".

He continued:

To impress my Readers with a just Sense of Life and its Enjoyments; to make Virtue appear in its native Beauty and Lustre; to shew the Weakness and Folly of vicious Courses; to prevent the ill Effects of superstitious Imaginations, and popular Delusions; to recommend universal Benevolence, publick Spirit, and the Love of our Country; to correct a false Taste of Writing, and banish Nonsense, Indecency and Impertinence from the publick Diversions.<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to this, however, some critics<sup>5</sup> have suggested that any didactic purpose is secondary to the mimetic intention of the author. This would constitute a misreading of the essential purpose of the greater part of the literature of the period; namely, that writers should aim at educating readers in morality. Correctly outlining that "Good education [was] calculated to promote good dispositions",<sup>6</sup> Adam Ferguson added that the object of morality, or moral education, was "the virtue of those who act".<sup>7</sup> Each of the writers named above also argued that the chief means of remedying the ills and vices in contemporary society lay not in a simple listing of maxims, telling people how they must live their lives, such as La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère had advocated, but rather in a new imaginative approach to literature, in which the moral aim was couched in a realistic and truthful representation of everyday life. The novel provided writers with this medium.

In his *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams defines didactic literature as that literature which is "designed to expound a branch of theoretical or practical knowledge, or to present in an impressive and persuasive imaginative form a moral,

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<sup>4</sup> James Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays on several subjects, lately published in the Dublin Journal in Two Volumes* (Printed by J. Darby and T. Browne in Bartholomew-Close, 1729), No. 39 (December 24, 1725), Volume I, pp. 324-325.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Friedman, *Form and Meaning in Fiction* (Athens, U.S.A.: The University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Kincaid & W. Creech, and J. Bell, 1773), Part IV, Chapter II, Section vi, p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Part VI, Chapter I, p. 214.

religious, or philosophical thesis or doctrine".<sup>8</sup> Such literary works, he continues, need to be distinguished from the purely imaginative, or mimetic, works "in which the materials are selected, ordered, and rendered not for the sake of presenting and enforcing knowledge or doctrine, but as ends in themselves, for their inherent human interest and appeal". Mimetic fiction, therefore, differs from didactic literature in that, rather than having as its purpose the exposition of a specific philosophical doctrine, it recreates an imitative and truthful representation of the world and everyday life, as ends in themselves. Although writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel attempted to portray a realistic and truthful representation of everyday life, this was not their *raison d'être* for writing; instead, their primary aim was to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. In order to achieve this, writers provided readers with a new form of rhetorical discourse. They replaced the older, indoctrinating literary style of the sermon with a new, imaginative and persuasive literature, which had its basis in everyday life. In addition, they accompanied this transition with the formation of a new language, which directly reflected the life of the day.

In this innovative form of writing, didactic and mimetic intention supported one another. Thus, it followed that, in order to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue, writers should persuade them to modify their ways by citing examples of virtue and vice in such situations as might daily confront them. Samuel Richardson highlighted this change in the direction of writing when, in a letter to Lady Echlin, in 1755, he wrote:

But [I] am afraid, Instruction without Entertainment (were I capable of giving the best) would have but few Readers. Instruction, Madam, is the Pill; Amusement is the Gilding. Writings that do not touch the Passions of the Light and Airy, will hardly ever reach the Heart.<sup>9</sup>

Under such circumstances, the sermon, so long used by moral philosophers to promote virtue, no longer held a place in a society which required of its philosophers and moral

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<sup>8</sup> Meyer Howard Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3rd edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p.322.



educators a form of instruction firmly grounded in the life of the day. Sheridan provided the most convincing comment of the didactic intention of literature when he wrote that:

Nothing therefore can delight or move the heart of man so much as a lively representation of the actions and sufferings of others, arising from qualities to which he finds something congenial in himself. And what instruction can be of such advantage to him, as that which improves him in the knowledge of human nature, the use whereof he must daily and hourly experience in every action of his life?<sup>10</sup>

Despite Frye's warning against classifying "literary works into documents illustrating Noble Notions",<sup>11</sup> literature and moral education do, in fact, complement each other. Individuals should not read Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, for example, simply as a document on the history of Theban kingship; rather, they should read it in relation to a moral aim, that of instructing, or educating, readers against immoderation and excessive pride. Frye highlights the dilemma that this fusion between literature and morality causes in his study of William Blake, where he notes that:

According to Blake, no such dilemma exists: if it were possible to delight without instruction, there could be no qualitative difference between painting the Sistine ceiling and cutting out paper dolls; if it were possible to instruct without delighting, art would be merely the kindergarten class of philosophy and science. There is nothing to be said for the shivering virgin theory of art, according to which art is a fragile evocation of pure beauty surrounded by rough disciplines such as theology and morals and in constant danger of being polluted by them. There is nothing to be said either for the thus-we-see theory which finds the meaning of art in a set of moral generalizations inferred from it. The work of art suggests something beyond itself most obviously when it is most complete in itself.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the presentation of situations in the works of Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie also represented something more than an imaginative evocation of society as an end in itself, for underlying the presentation were the didactic aims of each of the writers. Thus, literature provided them with a means of objectifying the moral issues of their society in order to raise discussion, promote reflection, and finally achieve moral improvement.

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<sup>10</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, Book III, Chapter IV, p. 299.

<sup>11</sup> Northrop Frye, *On Teaching Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 418.

In terms of defining "moral education", readers should search beyond the narrow definition of "the best Defence of Christianity",<sup>13</sup> attributed by such philosophers as Thomas Morgan, to a more appropriate and wider definition of the means by which individuals can best pursue virtue and, by consequence, achieve ultimate happiness. In this sense, moral education is akin to the study of ethics. Moral educators should aim to make their readers aware of the need to escape the confinements of their unconscious social conditioning, not by teaching them "a course of self-denial",<sup>14</sup> but by promoting a moderate, prudent and virtuous life. Each of the writers, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, forced his readers to think carefully about issues concerning life and morality. Although each adopted a different method of instruction, each allowed his readers to assimilate themselves into the world of the text, albeit in varying degrees, so that readers could participate, in an active manner, in the moral situations which confronted both the protagonist and other characters within the novel. Thus, by leading them through a series of imaginative representations from everyday life, writers forced readers to discern objectively their "ultimate life goals". In turn, writers acted as guides for readers in their pursuit of virtue, directing to their attention the good and worthy, and persuading readers of the validity of their own moral arguments. Pelham Edgar, in his analysis of the works of Henry James, comments that, beneath James' artistic purpose, "there lies a moral intention at once distinct and measurable". He continues:

His intense interest in how people behave implies necessarily a standard of values for human conduct, and when we have ascertained what this standard of values is we are in full possession of his ethical system.<sup>15</sup>

The same can be said for mid eighteenth-century novelists who, beneath their artistic purpose, also had "a moral intention at once distinct and measurable".

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* (London: Printed for the Author, 1737), Preface, p. iv.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Highmore, *Essays, Moral, Religious, and Miscellaneous* (Printed for B. White, at Horace's Head, in Fleet-street; and J. Walter, at Charing-Cross, 1766), Volume I, p. 146.

<sup>15</sup> Pelham Edgar, *Henry James: Man and Author* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 329-330.

If writers are to educate effectively the minds of readers through the presentation of scenes from everyday life, they must adopt an appropriate rhetorical discourse. As the purpose of rhetoric is to persuade readers of the validity of the moral doctrine of writers, it follows that rhetoric should concern itself with method, and owe its existence to the fact that human affairs cannot be justified absolutely. The novel uses this form of discourse because it is primarily concerned with the thoughts, feelings, motives and the behaviour of individuals, concepts that have no absolute value, but rather derive their value from the writers and readers, themselves. Therefore, it is important that writers do more than just present readers with a story that is representative and truthful of the society in which they live; they must also arrange the elements of that story so that the moral instruction makes an indelible imprint on the minds of readers. George Campbell highlighted the purpose of rhetoric as a means of exhibiting:

. . . a tolerable sketch of the human mind; and, aided by the lights which the poet and the orator so amply furnish, to disclose its secret movements, tracing its principal channels of perception and action, as near as possible, to their source: and, on the other hand, from the science of human nature, to ascertain with greater precision, the radical principles of that art, whose object it is, by the use of language, to operate on the soul of the hearer, in the way of informing, convincing, pleasing, moving, or persuading.<sup>16</sup>

With readers of mid eighteenth-century literature unwilling to be mere receptors of moral doctrine, as many had been at the turn of the century, it was important that writers chose a rhetorical method that provided the best means of persuading their readers about the validity of their moral views.

Although the study and practice of rhetoric had been a common pursuit of writers from, at least, the time of Aristotle, it began to take on a far more prominent role during the course of the eighteenth century. Sheridan highlighted its importance in the process of education when he quoted St. Augustine who, in his work on Christian doctrine, recommended and enforced its practice "by the strongest arguments". He noted:

Since it is by the art of rhetoric that people are enabled to establish true and false opinions, who shall dare say that truth should be without arms in the persons of those who are to defend it against falshood[sic]? Can it be

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<sup>16</sup> George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 7th edition (London: n.p., 1776), pp. vii-viii.

believed that those who endeavour to enforce a false doctrine should be skilled in the art of conciliating to themselves the good will and attention of their hearers by their address, and that those who support the cause of truth should not be possessed of this skill? . . . Since therefore eloquence, which has a prodigious power in persuading people either to false or true opinions, lies open to all who are inclined to make use of it, what can be the reason that the good do not employ themselves in acquiring an art so necessary for the defence of truth?<sup>17</sup>

Although Sheridan was aware that rhetoric could be employed for both good and evil purposes, he asserted that it was an essential art for writers to possess, if they were to defend virtue. In fact, it was widely assumed that, during the eighteenth century, rhetoric was the only real means of promoting virtue in a corrupt society. Sheridan's comments upon the delivery of orators could be applied readily to the "delivery" of writers. He observed:

For the quality of our compositions is not of so great moment, as the manner in which they are delivered; because every hearer is affected according to his sensations. On which account, the strongest argument that an orator can produce will lose it's [*sic*] effect, if not supported by an emphatical delivery. For all the passions necessarily droop, if they are not inflamed by the tone of voice, the turn of countenance, and indeed the carriage of the whole body. And happy are we when we have accomplished all this. <sup>18</sup>

From this, it should be seen that the primary aim of writers was to select a rhetorical mode that would best persuade readers to accept the validity of their conclusions. The task of rhetoric, therefore, became one of modifying the existing political or social systems. For this reason, the art of rhetoric was indispensable to moral educators - writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction.

Often, in order to support their moral aims, writers will employ satire. Satire, not to be confused with comedy, which has as its end a sincere laughter, aims at diminishing a subject to a level of amusement, which is accompanied by a feeling of resentment, indignation, or scorn. Attended by its auxiliary, ridicule, writers use satire as a corrective of human vice and folly. However, as an excessive or indiscriminate use of satire can result in severing the bond of association between writers and their readers - a bond which is imperative between educators and the educated - writers of the mid eighteenth-

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<sup>17</sup> Sheridan, op. cit., Book I, Chapter XVI, pp. 117-18.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Book I, Chapter XV, p. 87.

century novel had to temper their use of satire so as to persuade readers to accept their moral hypotheses. Often, successful writers, such as Fielding, allowed their characters to make themselves appear ridiculous by what they did, said, and thought in the narrative. In other cases, writers intruded into the world of the text in order to highlight something ridiculous about the actions or words of characters. However, it was important that writers permitted readers to retain their autonomy in judging the behaviour and manners of characters, and that they refrained from an excessive use of satire for fear of losing the approbation of readers. Although Douglas Frame suggests that satire is "the rejection of existing creeds and formulas because they are only partial views, and cannot satisfy the writer's demand for an honest confrontation with life",<sup>19</sup> satire was more than simply a device for rejection; rather, it was used for exposing the flaws and deficiencies within society. James Arbuckle summarised the function of satire when he commented that "the true End of Satire and Raillery is, or ought to be, the Amendment of Those who are the Objects of it".<sup>20</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, most writers had overlooked personalities, in favour of qualities and traits of human behaviour, as objects of satire.

Another means by which writers can establish a relationship between themselves and their readers, and which has immense bearing on rhetoric, is through the medium of language and style. In order to persuade readers to accept their arguments and beliefs, writers should use a language and style that is readily accessible to their readers. James Boyd White, in his analysis of the relationship between writers and their readers in literature, notes that writers always give themselves a character in what they write. This is most readily apparent in the tone of voice that writers adopt, in the attitudes that they invite their readers to have toward the world or toward the various people or ideas in it, and in the honesty with which they address their readers.<sup>21</sup> Each of these factors influences the response of readers to the arguments of writers. If writers are successful

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas Frame, "The Moral Import of English Studies," in *English Journal* 62 (No. 2, 1973), p. 237.

<sup>20</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 48 (February 26, 1726), Volume I, p. 409.

<sup>21</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meanings: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 15.

in the moral education of their readers, they should have led readers through a process of instruction - beginning with their assimilation into the world of the novel. Readers should never be simply outside observers and judges of the characters and the events within the novel; rather, they should be participants within the action, always perceiving and responding to situations with approval or disapproval, and always judging from within. The real success of the novel, therefore, lies in the ability of writers to involve their readers in the progression of their work - by leading them through a series of events; by placing them in the same situations as the characters within the novel; by introducing them to a set of characters intimately connected to their moral aims; and, at the same time, through the art of rhetoric, by not allowing their readers to deviate from their moral intentions. At the novel's conclusion, ideal readers should realise and share the views of the author. White accurately defines this "ideal reader" of literature when he asserts:

The ideal reader of [literature] would thus not say at the end merely that he now "believed in" certain propositions for "certain reasons." He would see the world differently, would think, speak, and act differently. He would have mastered a language of fact, motive, and sentiment that would affect his conduct and his feeling forever. The text . . . means to offer [its reader] an education that will equip him differently for life.<sup>22</sup>

This was also the function of moral instruction in the mid eighteenth-century novel - an instruction aimed at equipping readers more appropriately for their virtuous stations within society, and, eventually, enabling them to attain eternal happiness.

Thus, the study of literature and the study of morals were inextricably linked in the works of Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie. These writers not only aimed at persuading readers of the validity of their arguments, but sought to maintain objectivity in their art. They believed that the narrative presentation should allow readers the degree of autonomy necessary in making up their own minds in relation to their assertions; for, they realised, as Warnock notes, that readers could neither "be bullied [into accepting] what is good or bad for people, what is harmful or beneficial",<sup>23</sup> nor indoctrinated against their wishes. It was the narrative which was to provide the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.184.

<sup>23</sup> G. J. Warnock, *Contemporary Moral Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 60.

substantive basis upon which the judgements of readers were to be based. Furthermore, writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, in moving away from the writers of maxims and sermons, advocated, with Pope, that "the proper study of mankind [was] man".<sup>24</sup> Indeed, only by such means could they have achieved their didactic aim of instructing readers to pursue virtue.

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<sup>24</sup> Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man* (Epistle II, Section i, l.2), in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (1963; rpt. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1977), p. 516.

**PART ONE**

**MORAL INSTRUCTION:**

**THE HISTORY and THE THEORY.**



**Chapter I                    The Theoretical Aspects of Moral Education:  
   Its Aims and Background**

Before examining the relationship between literature and moral education, it is necessary to establish the aims and function of moral instruction and ethical theory. As human beings are born into a community and an ongoing culture, from which they learn the attitudes, customs, habits, laws, values, and behavioural patterns required for survival in that group, it can be assumed that the primary aim of moral education is to teach individuals the skills and values necessary for leading a good and virtuous life. Allan Bloom, in his recent criticism of how the modern higher education system in the United States of America has "impoverished the souls of today's students", argues that:

Every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain. . . .  
It wants to produce a certain kind of human being.<sup>1</sup>

Such a contention holds equally true for writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel. However, unlike Bloom's criticism of American students and their educational system, which supports a theory of separateness,<sup>2</sup> eighteenth-century writers adopted an approach which focused on the inseparability of individuals from their peers and their society. Rather than accepting that selfish and vicious passions were a natural and tolerable part of the nature of all individuals, eighteenth-century writers promoted the need for common enterprise and common good among their readers. In their view, the

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<sup>1</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of today's students* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

maintenance of a virtuous disposition not only contributed to an individual's personal happiness, but also furthered the "publick good". M. V. C. Jeffreys summarised the task of educational writers when he commented that education involved teaching individuals how to live "the whole life of a community".<sup>3</sup>

Modern theorists in the field of moral education have highlighted four approaches that can be applied to the study of morality. With the exception of the "traditional ideological approach", the others, if taken in isolation and applied to the study of morality in fiction, seem deficient. However, by incorporating some parts of the other theories into the traditional approach of moral education, readers can gain considerable insight into the didactic aims of eighteenth-century writers: namely, to develop in readers certain ethical standards necessary for the common good; and, to develop a means by which readers should assume full responsibility for their own actions. According to the first approach, the "values-clarification approach", the role of moral educators should be to help learners clarify their own values. This method requires that writers present value issues for the consideration of readers, without imposing any set values. In grappling with the issues, readers are forced to bring their own values to the surface in order to solve the dilemmas. As a consequence, readers can either accept, reject, or modify their own values. Although this approach forces readers to participate in clarifying their own values, it often does little more than highlight the moral preferences of individuals, and reveal an underlying relativism which is insufficient as a basis for moral education.

The second approach, the "cognitive-developmental approach", expounded by Lawrence Kohlberg and based on the research of Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, emphasises that all individuals go through certain stages of moral thinking, each accompanying their cognitive growth, and each stage differing in structure from the previous one.<sup>4</sup> Kohlberg suggests that the consequences of grappling with moral

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<sup>3</sup> M. V. C. Jeffreys, *Glaucon: An Inquiry into the Aims of Education* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd., 1957), pp. 6-7, 10-18.

<sup>4</sup> Kohlberg suggests that each person goes through six fixed stages of moral thinking, beginning at the age of three; the first two at the preconventional level, the next two at the conventional level, and the final two at the postconventional level of moral reasoning. Most adults would be in stages three or four. Lawrence

dilemmas not only has a positive effect on the moral development of individuals, but enables them to move upward to the next stage. Writers, using this approach, maintain a neutral role, that of introducing dilemmas and directing their course in the narrative. Through the use of rhetoric, they force readers to confront moral issues. Underlying this approach, however, is the assumption that readers already possess a sense of virtue, and that certain judgements are either right or wrong. The approach, therefore, tends to neglect two issues: firstly, that some moral dilemmas can not be resolved absolutely; and secondly, the part played by non-cognitive factors, such as the emotions, the will, habits and individual choice in influencing moral behaviour.

The third theory, the "cognitive-analytic approach", based on the research of John Wilson, also stresses moral reasoning, but without acknowledging the developmental structure of Kohlberg. This approach requires that educators instruct their learners in the process of solving moral problems, not by indoctrinating them with the answers, but by teaching them a way of proceeding when confronted with ethical issues. The aim of writers, following this theory, is to equip readers with logical thinking skills so that they can avoid sole reliance on emotional responses or prejudices when they are confronted with moral problems. This theory establishes laws based upon ethical principles, because dilemmas are solved rationally. Furthermore, the advocates of this method of moral education propose that moral reasoning can be taught in a broadly similar way to that of the sciences. Thus, once having acquired the skills, individuals need to be given continual practice in solving similar moral problems, prior to advancing to the next dilemma. As is the case with Kohlberg's theory, this approach, ignoring as it does any non-cognitive factors which can influence the moral judgements of individuals, is too limited in describing accurately the didactic method of writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction.

The fourth approach, the "traditional approach", assumes that individuals can be

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Kohlberg discusses this in greater detail in his article, "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology" in *Review of Child Development Research I*, ed. M. L. Hoffman & L. W. Hoffmann (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964).

taught moral values. Traditional moral education, like life, provides readers with stories and models upon which they can base their own lives. In theory, the original story provides a medium for promoting a message, and once that message has been decoded, then readers can dispense with it. However, this is not totally valid in relation to writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel, for whom the story became a crucial element in their art of instruction. The traditional approach to moral education is based on four assumptions: firstly, that there is a right and wrong way of behaving; secondly, that individuals learn correct behaviour by being trained in it; thirdly, that individuals need models of virtue to imitate; and fourthly, that individuals can find such models in stories illustrating virtuous behaviour. For the advocates of this approach, individuals do not have to concern themselves with proving that virtuous traits are better than vicious ones, for this is part of common sense. At the same time, however, they argue that training is as necessary to virtue as it is, for example, to sport, which means that individuals should practise virtue until it becomes habitual. Consequently, the more exposure readers have to virtue, the better.

For writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, the "traditional approach" theory best describes the intent behind their developing a new form of didactic discourse. As moral tests come under non-ideal circumstances in real life, writers were obliged to present the narrative realistically, so that the scenes could provide a sound moral training ground for readers. Writers, therefore, had to motivate readers to pursue virtue. Theoretically, virtually all individuals could readily appreciate the abstract hypothesis that virtue was its own reward; however, this was not always so conceivable, in practice. Consequently, writers had to present readers with models and goals which were not only attainable, at least to some degree, but which also highlighted the worthwhileness of pursuing a life of virtue. It was not necessary that readers should see the whole sense of their lives in every occurrence within the narrative; rather, the requirement was that writers presented characters and issues as they appeared in the real world. The narrative not only had to encompass fully the complexities of moral life, rather than remain abstract, but also had to test the values of readers and force them to

make judgements upon the situations that evolved before their eyes. In this way, the novel of the mid eighteenth century aided the moral development of its readers.

It was this last approach to moral education that most accurately described the didactic methods of Richardson, Fielding, and Goldsmith. By providing readers with models of behaviour in real-life situations, these writers, along with Henry Mackenzie later in the century, presented readers with narratives that had direct significance for their own moral development. Although they propounded certain values via their rhetorical discourse, they could not be criticised for indoctrinating readers in the same way as writers of maxims and sermons had done, because readers were always allowed to maintain their autonomy during their reading of the text. Consequently, readers were always free to accept, modify or even reject the moral propositions of each of the authors. The movement, which allowed readers autonomy in decoding the meaning of the text, however, occurred only gradually during the eighteenth century. Although the maxim approach of La Rochefoucauld and the indoctrinating styles of such writers as Hobbes and Mandeville had become less noticeable by the fifth decade of the century, they had not disappeared; even Samuel Richardson's fiction contained elements of indoctrination. However, in the years following 1740, with the advent of the works of Fielding and Goldsmith, the autonomy of readers, albeit with some guidance from writers, became paramount.

As morality concerns itself with good and bad behaviour, and virtues and vices, it is the task of educators, and writers, to help perpetuate within individuals those values which best promote the "common good" of society. Whereas indoctrination attempts to suppress the freedom of thought and investigative faculties of individuals, moral education aims at allowing them the autonomy necessary to explore and to criticise the complexities of all arguments, prior to either accepting or rejecting them. Hare correctly expresses the effect that indoctrination has on individuals when he argues that it only occurs when one is trying to stop the growth in others of the capacity to think for

themselves.<sup>5</sup> Indoctrinated beings, therefore, hold beliefs as being certain without supportive evidence. They differ from autonomous beings in their inability to supply a reason for what they do. If asked, for example, a question why individuals should not lie, indoctrinated individuals, in a response devoid of reason, reply, "Because we have been told not to". The reply of more enlightened and morally educated individuals would be something similar to, "Because it may cause others undue hardship or emotional pain, or deprive them of the right to make a moral choice based on facts". Moral education, therefore, should result in individuals being able to think for themselves, a point adequately summarised by Hare in his comment that:

At the end of it all, the educator will insensibly stop being an educator, and find that he is talking to an equal - an educated man like himself - a man who may disagree with everything he has ever said; and . . . he will be pleased.<sup>6</sup>

Writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel also expected that readers, under their guidance, would conclude their reading of novels as educated beings or "equals". Thus, by allowing readers to maintain their autonomy during the course of the text, writers forced them to accept full responsibility for their own actions and moral choices, once the instruction had concluded.

According to philosophers and writers of the mid eighteenth century, the blame for the corrupt standard of morals, so prevalent in contemporary society, could be placed squarely upon the deficient level of moral instruction that individuals received during their elementary schooling. Consequently, being able to distinguish virtue from vice, these writers took upon themselves the task of modifying the affections and selfish natures of individuals. By disciplining the imaginations of their readers, writers believed that they could also develop, simultaneously, both the reflective and perceptive capacities of readers. Although they were unable to lay down universal laws of conduct which had to be obeyed in all circumstances, writers still offered readers some assistance in realising the supreme good. In this sense, morality, with its emphasis on the study of moral

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<sup>5</sup>R. M. Hare, "Adolescents into Adults", in *Aims in Education*, ed. T. H. B. Hollins (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

conduct and moral judgements, became synonymous with the concept of ethics, for both sought to inform readers of what was in their best interests. Thus, the end for writers of moral instruction was not the promotion of some remote ideal; rather, it was the recognition that they had effected some change, for moral betterment, within their readers. The ancient poet, Persius, summed up the nature of this end in the following words:

Compositum jus, fasque animi, sanctosque recessus  
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.<sup>7</sup>

Ideally, once this had been achieved, the vision of readers should be identical to that of writers. Underlying this assumption, however, is the qualification that writers, who take upon themselves the task of educating readers in morality, do, in fact, appreciate fully the basic moral axioms of their own social systems, axioms which Myer Fortes accurately stresses are "implicit in the categories of values and behaviour which [individuals sum] up in concepts such as rights, duties, justice, amity, respect, wrong, and sin".<sup>8</sup> Shaftesbury emphasised this point when he commented that writers, who assumed the role of moral guides for readers, must first know their own characters. He commented:

He who deals in characters must of necessity know his own, or he will know nothing. . . . For in this sense, Wisdom as well as Charity may be honestly said to begin at home. There is no way of estimating manners, or apprising the different humours, fancies, passions, and apprehensions of others, without first taking an inventory of the same kind of good within ourselves, and surveying our domestic fund.<sup>9</sup>

As ethical and moral values establish a peace and order within a social group, conducive to the group's security as a whole, it is to be expected that a sense of obligation will induce all individuals to conform to the rules of moral conduct placed upon them.

There are several factors which influence the development of values within

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<sup>7</sup> Persius, *The Satires of Aulus Persius Flaccus* (London: W. Bulmer & W. Nicol, 1821), Satire II, ll. 73-74, p. 78. Translation:

A soul composed of human and divine duty,  
A mind pure within, and a heart steeped in generous honour.

<sup>8</sup> Meyer Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 346.

<sup>9</sup> Shaftesbury, *Advice to an Author*, Part I, Section ii, in *Characteristics*, ed. J. M. Robertson (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 124.

individuals. The first of these begins in childhood, when children receive their initial moral instruction from parents. James Arbuckle stressed the importance of this early moral upbringing when he emphasised that parents were "oblig'd" to inculcate virtue into the minds of their offspring. He continued:

The proper Education of Children is of so great concern to the Preservation and Honour of Families, and to the Prosperity and just Government of the whole Commonwealth, that I think there is nothing deserves to be more seriously or nicely consider'd, either by Parents or the Government.<sup>10</sup>

As children become older, the reputation of parents for omniscience declines in face of the opinions of others, who begin to exert a far greater influence on their minds. In addition, elementary schooling should also be designed to help children become moral beings. Provided that the key figures in each of the above influences have had sufficient moral training themselves, they should have a positive effect upon the moral development of children. If, alternatively children received deficient moral instruction from within their own families or from the schooling system, then, by the time they reached adolescence, their moral judgements would be clouded by personal interest. Thus, when forced to make moral choices, these individuals would choose on the grounds of self-interest, rather than on what was in the best interests of the "common good". This problem was addressed by writers who, throughout the eighteenth century, constantly criticised the moral instruction received by individuals in their formative years as not being conducive to the pursuit of a life of virtue.

In 1648, Thomas Tryon<sup>11</sup> had set the tone for this criticism of moral education during the eighteenth century, when he argued that piety rather than academic attainment was a necessary qualification of a good teacher. Although the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge interviewed teachers for full-time employment, the fact that there was neither a method for training teachers nor any requirement that teachers inculcate in their pupils anything other than work skills meant that individuals completed their elementary schooling with little moral instruction. Mary Fletcher, in *A Letter to the Rev.*

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<sup>10</sup> James Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 2 (October 16, 1725), Volume I, pp. 233, 236.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Tryon, *The Advice of W. P. to Mr. Samuel Hartlib, for the Advancement of Some Particular Parts of Learning* (London: 1648).



Mr. John Wesley, in 1764, wrote:

Our Method of educating our Children is this. As our Design is to fit them for good Servants, we endeavour as early as possible to inure them to Labour, Early Rising and Cleanliness. <sup>12</sup>

Although some better schools taught reading, writing, arithmetic, the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism, albeit learned by rote, the majority of the schools did little more than prepare individuals for work and teach some doctrinal form of religious instruction. Victor Neuburg, for example, in his work on *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England*, notes, in relation to reading, that:

In charity schools it was taught, not in order to extend the intellectual powers of poor children, but in order that they might read the Bible and thereby remain content and grateful for their humble role in a society whose system of rigid social stratification had been ordained by God.<sup>13</sup>

Even towards the middle of the eighteenth century, there were those who believed that reading was the key to understanding theological matters. While encouraging individuals, particularly women, to pass their leisure hours in literary pursuits, Watts, writing in 1741, argued that:

[The] greatest Blessing that we derive from Reading, is the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God has conveyed down to us the Discoveries of his Wisdom, Power and Grace, through many past Ages.<sup>14</sup>

Although Mandeville had advocated, some years earlier, this doctrinal learning as a means of keeping the the class system intact, in his *Essay on Charity Schools*, many other writers criticised this form of learning for its inability to do anything more than teach individuals a series of stock moral phrases which could be disregarded if, and when, they conflicted with their selfish passions. There were numerous examples of characters who, in the works of Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, uttered benevolent and virtuous phrases, while harbouring thoughts of a most malevolent nature within their breasts. It was this recognition, that the moral instruction of individuals had been

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<sup>12</sup> Victor E. Neuburg, *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England* (London: The Woburn Press, 1971), p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Isaac Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind*, Two Volumes (1741; rpt. London: J. Buckland, 1782), Volume I, Ch. II, pp. 29-30, Ch. IV, pp. 41-50.

neglected during their schooling, which contributed to the development of the new and investigative literature, aimed at both maintaining the autonomy of its readers and teaching them how to apply virtue to their lives.

Francis Fox's *An Introduction to Spelling and Reading*, with lessons arranged so "as to convey some necessary knowledge to the minds of children and their parents", offered a change in the approach to moral education. Fox advocated that children should read books other than just the Bible, "to instruct them in particular duties, or to warn them against particular sins". Fox was the first educator of any significance to combine, in his texts, moral instruction with lessons in reading, such as the following extract from his *An Introduction to Spelling and Reading*:

Sir Philip Sidney, who was admired and loved for his wisdom and valour all over Europe, his last words were; 'Govern your will and affection by the will and word of your creator: In me behold the end of this world and all its vanities'.<sup>15</sup>

Although reading supports a conservative influence upon society, by maintaining the beliefs of the average person, it is evident that it also promotes a much greater spread of learning and exchange of ideas, particularly among members of the working class. John Clare, writing as a result of his travels in the rural districts of England, in the seventeenth-thirties, commented that he saw, in a farmer's house, a Bible, an almanac, *The Whole Duty of Man*, and a number of chapbooks.<sup>16</sup> Although not all farmers were members of the poorer class, such evidence would suggest that, rather than being simply ignorant and unable to read as a number of critics argue, members of the poorer class were able to read and comprehend what was presented before them.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Francis Fox, *An Introduction to Spelling and Reading*, 7th ed. (London: J. Rivington, 1754), Lesson 66. As Fox lived between 1675-1738, the first edition of his work would have appeared some considerable time before his death. His theory would have been known to the writers under discussion in this dissertation, and most likely would have influenced the direction and nature of their discourse.

<sup>16</sup> Neuburg, op. cit., p.94.

<sup>17</sup> Among others, R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader* (London: 1957), speaks about the low literacy rate and ignorance among the masses, while Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, Ch. II (London: Penguin Books, 1981), also asserts that a working class reading public did not exist in the eighteenth century. It is true that many of the masses were unable to write, but reading was given high priority on the curriculum from the earliest point in a child's education. From this, it can only be assumed that many of the poorer class could read sufficiently well in order to,

The ability of the poor to read is also supported by the fact that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, from its beginning in 1699, in addition to publishing numerous tracts addressed to soldiers, sailors and coachmen, had distributed Bibles, prayer books and tracts to "publick Houses in and about London and Westminster", and even to prisoners in Newgate. One anonymous writer in the Society, in a pamphlet titled *A Representation of the Present State of Religion* (1711), wrote that:

[a] great Variety of plain and useful Discourses have been distributed among the meaner Sort for their more easy Improvement.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, titles have been found that support the evidence for a literature directed specifically at the working class, titles such as *The Compleat Servant-Maid, or the Young Maiden's Tutor. Directing them to qualifie themselves for any of these employments, viz. waiting-women, house-keeper, chamber-maid, cook-maid, laundry-maid, house-maid, scullery-maid.*<sup>19</sup> Even in the country, the circulation of both chapbooks and provincial newspapers, the vocabulary of which was accessible to any individuals who had attended elementary schooling, had increased significantly during the seventeen-thirties. Often, these books focused upon the heroes of early ballads, such as Robin Hood and Chevy Chase, but there were also many unauthorised abridgements of works by writers of considerable renown, such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Although unsophisticated in content and style, chapbooks included some elementary moral instruction for readers. Apart from chapbooks, the only other literature available to the poor were cheaper pieces of journalism and religious tracts.

In response to this increased size of the reading public, especially in relation to the masses, a new form of moral instruction, strikingly similar to the "traditional approach" theory to moral education, was developed. This new form of instruction, based on educating readers during the course of the text, obliged individuals to investigate moral issues for themselves. Refined by the writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel, this approach became the most popular medium for morally educating readers. Towards the

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at least, understand the meaning of sentences constructed in a simple way.

<sup>18</sup> Neuburg, op. cit., p.101.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

end of the century, even Hannah More argued that, if they were to be made more palatable for unsophisticated readers, theological and moral issues had to be disguised. This mode of disguising moral issues only re-echoed what writers, such as Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, had been doing for many years; that was, morally instructing readers by means of the narrative. This new form of novel addressed the problems associated with the sermons and tracts. Rather than indoctrinate readers with notions of what constituted the "good life", the novel allowed readers, themselves, to discern virtue from vice. No longer were they simply passive receptors of moral doctrine imposed from above; instead, readers were able to scrutinise morality as it really appeared in daily life, make judgements of their own in relation to moral issues, and, more importantly, take an active role in their own moral development.

The deficient standard of moral education, however, was not only confined to the masses. Some years before the middle of the century, Daniel Defoe, in *The Compleat English Gentleman*, had attacked the way in which the education of the wealthy had overlooked the teaching of virtue in favour of pursuing self-gratification. Observing that individuals were only concerned with fulfilling their appetites and desires, Defoe argued that education should aim at producing "a mind fortify'd with virtue and solid judgement against the fopperies and follies of the age".<sup>20</sup> He attributed a substantial part of the blame for the corrupt moral standards of the wealthy upon their selection of morally deficient tutors as educators of their children. In his criticism of these "murderers of the children's morals",<sup>21</sup> Defoe echoed the thoughts of Henry Peacham who, as early as 1634, had commented that for every "one discrete and able teacher, you shall find twenty ignorant and carelesse". Among the many problems associated with the corrupt moral education of "gentlemen", Defoe included:

4. That a love of pleasure being substituted early in the minds of children born to fortunes and estates extinguishes the love of learning, which might otherwise by early instruction have been kindled in the mind.
5. That an early love of pleasure is an invincible obstacle to a love of vertue

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<sup>20</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Compleat English Gentleman* (1729; rpt. London: Published by David Nutt, 1890), p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 87.

as well as to a love learning; and that as one makes them simple, so the other makes 'em wicked.

6. That folly as well as learning may be acquir'd, and men become fools by the help of educacion [*sic*] just as others learn to be wise. . . .

9. That all the mischeifs [*sic*] of a young gentleman's education are occasion'd by a neglect of the most early instruccions: The principles of vertue, religion, and subjeccion to government are to be planted in the minds of children from the very first moments that they can be made capable of recieving [*sic*] them, that they may be sure to have the first possession of their minds, and may have some time to take root, before the tast [*sic*] of pleasures and a loose to levity and folly can have access to supplant them.<sup>22</sup>

Defoe concluded his observations by likening the effect of tutors upon children to a "violence [perpetrated] upon Nature", and "a kind of rape committed upon the genius of the child".<sup>23</sup>

Another issue about which Defoe expressed concern, in relation to the education of gentlemen, was that of travel. Many writers in the early part of the eighteenth century had accepted Locke's theory, that travel was "thought to finish the work of education and to complete the gentleman", literally. Although, for example, Chesterfield supported the notion of travel in order to complete the education of young gentlemen, he, like Locke, was also constantly aware of the need to alert individuals, through the use of letters written to his kinsfolk, to the dangers that could result from acts of imprudence. Despite considerable debate over the most appropriate age at which to send young men abroad to further their education,<sup>24</sup> travelling was still seen by the majority of the upper class as a necessary complement to the early training of the "gentleman". The young squire in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*<sup>25</sup> typified the gentleman who travelled in order to complete his education. However, instead of returning from his tour of the continent as a more complete man, in terms of Chesterfield's notion of virtue, he returned a man of accumulated vices. Goldsmith too, in his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite*

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>24</sup> Chesterfield suggested that, ordinarily, the time of travel was from sixteen to twenty-one years of age. Locke had suggested that individuals be sent abroad, either at a younger age, under the guide of a tutor of sound moral principles, or when older, when they were able to govern their own passions.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press), Book III, Chapter vii, pp. 244-251.

*Learning*, observed that many Englishmen stayed abroad in order to maintain a life of continued debauchery.<sup>26</sup>

For many writers, travelling had failed to complement moral instruction; rather, it had promoted what Sheridan described as "a relish, and pride . . . in manly vices".

Sheridan continued:

To put them [gentlemen] out of their parents view, at a great distance, under a governor, when they think themselves to be too much men to be governed by others, and yet have not prudence and experience enough to govern themselves, what is it but to expose them to all the greatest dangers of their whole life, when they have the least fence or guard against them . . . but to collect valuable stores of knowledge, and to treasure up wise observation, demands the skill and experience of more advanced years; it requires much longer residence, close attention, and painful researches into places far from the common road, and the vulgar haunts of men. It is evident that there can be no greater evil than sending our youth abroad at so improper and dangerous a season.<sup>27</sup>

According to this view, travel promoted affectation and selfishness. Sheridan's view was supported by the French writer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who, although he admitted that a few men may be improved by travel, commented that the majority were affected adversely. He continued:

There are very few people who are really fit to travel; it is only good for those who are strong enough in themselves to listen to the voice of error without being deceived, strong enough to see the example of vice without being led away by it. Travelling accelerates the progress of nature, and completes the man for good or evil. When a man returns from travelling about the world, he is what he will be all his life; there are more who return bad than good, because there are more who start with an inclination towards evil. In the course of their travels, young people, ill-educated and ill-behaved, pick up all the vices of the nations among whom they have sojourned, and none of the virtues with which those vices are associated.<sup>28</sup>

Alternatively, as Chesterfield implied, those who travelled with a desire to learn and improve themselves, and who avoided the vices placed before them, could return from their travels far more virtuous and wiser individuals. It was this notion that was partly

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<sup>26</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning*, Chapter XIII, in *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), Volume I, pp. 330ff.

<sup>27</sup> Sheridan, *British Education: or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain*, Book I, Chapter II, pp. 23-25.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Jaques Rousseau, *Émile*, tr. Barbara Foxley (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1984; first published 1762), Book V, pp. 418-419.

responsible for inspiring writers, such as Fielding and Goldsmith, to adopt the journey motif as a didactic technique in instructing their readers to pursue virtue. However, like Defoe, they criticised the defects in the moral education of individuals as being responsible for the "generall depravity of manners". Defoe commented that:

First, his vicious, debauch't father omitted [*sic*] the instructing his son; the uninstructed, untaught son grows vicious and debauch't, because he is untaught and uninstructed in the wayes of wisdom and knows not the beauty and excellency of learning and of virtue. . . the weakness of his moralls derives from the weakness of his head, and he follows mean and scandalous vice from his meer ignorance of virtue and true wisdom.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to his attack upon the deficient moral instruction of young men, Defoe also criticized openly the education of "ladies" for producing a love of affectation and pleasure, rather than a love of virtue. Criticism of a similar nature had also been dealt with in an early copy of *The Spectator*, in which Steele's Celimene had written to "Mr. Spectator" on the subject of "fine breeding". In a letter, riddled with satire, Celimene asks for some "Advice in Behalf of a young Country Kinswoman" of hers "who [had] lately come to Town, and [was] under [her] Care for her Education". She continues:

She is very pretty, but you can't imagine how unform'd a Creature it is. She comes to my Hands just as Nature left her, half finish'd, and without any acquir'd Improvements. When I look on her I often think of the *Belle Savage* mention'd in one of your Papers. Dear Mr. SPECTATOR, help me to make her comprehend the visible Graces of Speech, and the dumb Eloquence of Motion; for she is at present a perfect Stranger to both. She knows no Way to express herself but by her Tongue, and that always to signifie her Meaning. Her Eyes serve her yet only to see with, and she is utterly a Foreigner to the Language of looks and Graces. . . . I have bestow'd two Months in teaching her to Sigh when she is not concern'd, and to Smile when she is not pleas'd; and am asham'd to own she makes little or no Improvement.<sup>30</sup>

Celimene's education in "fine breeding" undermined the values presented by writers of moral instruction. Her education of her kinswoman would not only result in another lady of affected, selfish and vicious manners, traits about which writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel complained, but most likely produce another prospective victim for the snares of the man of the world. In his reply to Celimene's letter, Mr. Spectator

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<sup>29</sup> Defoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 66 (16 May 1711), in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965), Volume I, p. 281. Future references to *The Spectator* will be from this edition.

emphasises that the "general Mistake" in educating young women is, that "in our Daughters we take Care of their Persons and neglect their Minds".<sup>31</sup>

Defoe supported Steele's conclusions, yet added that, as a result of this attitude, women had ignored the moral education of their own children. He continued:

To talk to a lady at this time of day of meddling with her children's education, forming their young minds by the most early instructions, and infusing infant ideas of religion and morall virtue into their souls, ridiculous stuff! You may as well talk of suckling them, a thing as unnatural now as if God and Nature had never intended it, or that Heaven had given the ladyes breasts and milk for some other use.<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, knowing that women of the upper class had been reared in ignorance and folly, without any hope, or want, of correction, Defoe endeavoured to remind readers of the value and importance of moral instruction. He argued that the minds of individuals had to be instructed from "as early as possible [in] a lov of virtue".<sup>33</sup> In support of the "traditional approach" theory to moral education, Defoe emphasised that moral instruction, like speech and vice, could be learned "from imitacion", and, that where virtue was deficient, individuals should "sett about the work of informing and instructing [themselves] with such helps and such assistance as . . . may be had as well from books as from men of learning".<sup>34</sup> This, argued Defoe, could possibly repair the damage done by "the want of early teaching". Even though *The Compleat Gentleman* resembled the style of the tract in its advancement of moral instruction, it played a significant part in influencing writers of the mid eighteenth century about the role that the novel could play in the moral education of readers.

By 1756, Thomas Sheridan had stressed the need for greater moral education in reforming the deficient manners, morals and tastes of contemporary society. Criticising those authors, who continually "flatter[ed] the passions of corrupt men", Sheridan blamed them for "the general bad taste which is allowed to prevail".<sup>35</sup> Adopting Defoe's

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>33</sup> Defoe, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 236-237.

<sup>35</sup> Sheridan, op. cit., Book II, Chapter V, p. 169.



argument, he attempted to outline the part that literature, as one of the arts, could play in the process of moral education. He commented that:

The great ends of all these arts being the same as those of oratory, viz. "to delight, to move, and to instruct," (under which last head I include every thing which tends to better the heart as well as to improve the understanding) the points should be constantly kept in view both in the choice of subjects for imitation taken from human nature, and all means to display them borrowed from that, must with mankind obtain a preference, and have a stronger influence than from the whole universe besides.<sup>36</sup>

Observing that the masses tended to imitate the examples of the wealthy in both manners and morals, Sheridan emphasised that immediate attention should be given to correcting the vices of the wealthy. Sheridan also expressed a similar view in relation to the effect of imitation in literature, for when virtue was overlooked solely for the pleasures of the imagination and for delight, the whole moral fibre of society would be undermined.

Outlining the good from the bad functions of art, he continued:

Nothing can convey instruction with delight, ennoble the mind, or enlarge the heart so much, as good poems, plays, pieces of oratory, painting, and sculpture, representing great and glorious actions and persons. Nothing can so effectually debauch the mind and corrupt the heart, as the prostitution of these arts to lewd and sensual purposes.<sup>37</sup>

Sheridan argued that true writers, in contrast to the many who were "prostituting" themselves to the "prevailing ignorance and want of taste" of the age,<sup>38</sup> should apply themselves to the cultivation of virtue. Some years later, Rousseau, in his treatise on education and morality, *Émile*, emphasised the change in the nature of moral education and the part that literature could play in it, when he stressed that *Émile* must learn rather than be taught, and that his progress should be guided by discovery, rather than indoctrination. Rousseau continued:

Let the child do nothing because he is told; nothing is good for him but what he recognises as good. . . Do not teach the child many things, but let him perceive only accurate and clear ideas . . . it matters little what he learns provided he understands it and knows how to use it. . . I am therefore convinced that to make a young man judge rightly, you must form his judgement rather than teach him your own.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Book III, Chapter IV, p. 298.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Book III, Chapter XII, p. 362.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Book II, Chapter XIV, p. 225.

<sup>39</sup> Rousseau, *Émile*, Book III, pp. 141, 150.

Like Kohlberg, Rousseau suggested that individuals went through certain stages in their moral development. However, in spite of some limitations in Rousseau's notion of what constituted ideal education, his belief that individuals learned through experience and observation, rather than through indoctrination, supported the movement away from the traditional sermon and tract to a form of writing which aimed at instructing readers in the pursuit of virtue. Although Rousseau stressed that, in order to form the mind, experience must come from real life representations, writers such as Richardson, Fielding and Goldsmith felt that the novel, by portraying representations based in reality, could also provide sound moral instruction for readers.

The end of moral education, then, should be the production of both good individuals, those who are virtuous and the wise, and good citizens, those who are useful members of their society.<sup>40</sup> Sheridan expressed this end in the following manner:

In all well-regulated states, the two principal points in view in the education of youth ought to be, first, to make them good men, good members of the universal society of mankind; and in the next place to frame their minds in such a manner, as to make them most useful to that society to which they more immediately belong; and to shape their talents, in such a way, as will render them most serviceable to the support of that government, under which they were born, and on the strength and vigour of which the well-being of every individual, in some measure depends.<sup>41</sup>

Asserting that it was the duty of all individuals to pursue virtue, Sheridan argued that it was the task of educators, and writers alike, "to persuade men to practise [virtue]" until "practice ripen[ed] into habit".<sup>42</sup> Believing that the evils of the "present mode of education" arose more from its defects than its faults,<sup>43</sup> he recommended the habitual practice of virtuous behaviour in order to help individuals distinguish between virtue and vice. By doing so, he believed that all individuals would seek to pursue virtue in preference to the affected and temporary illusions associated with self-interest.

Rousseau also criticised the way in which present education had left humanity

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<sup>40</sup> Sheridan, *British Education: or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain*, Book I, Chapter III, p. 26.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Chapter I, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Chapter XV, p. 62.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Chapter II, p. 20.

unprotected against vice. Using the example of a young man, educated in the country to shun vice, Rousseau tested the strength of his morality by transposing him to Paris, where he was exposed to affectation and corrupt manners. Rousseau described the transformation in his protagonist's disposition in the following passage:

Take a young man carefully educated in his father's country house, and examine him when he reaches Paris and makes his entrance into society; you will find him thinking clearly about honest matters, and you will find his will as wholesome as his reason. You will find scorn of vice and disgust of debauchery; his face will betray his innocent horror at the very mention of a prostitute. . . . See the same young man six months later, you will not know him; from his bold conversation, his fashionable maxims, his easy air, you would take him for another man. . . . How greatly he has changed in so short a time! . . . Wholly absorbed in a situation so novel to him, the young man retires into himself to enjoy it, and trembles for fear it should escape him. . . . These changes are merely the result of changed ideas. His heart is the same, but his opinions have altered. His feelings, which change more slowly, will at length yield to his opinions and it is then that he is indeed corrupted. He has scarcely made his entrance into society before he receives a second education quite unlike the first, which teaches him to despise what he esteemed, and esteem what he despised; he learns to consider the teaching of his parents and masters as the jargon of pedants, and the duties they have instilled into him as childish morality, to be scorned now that he has grown up. He thinks he is bound in honour to change his conduct; he becomes forward without desire, and he talks foolishly from false shame. He rails against morality before he has any taste for vice, and prides himself on debauchery without knowing how to set about it.<sup>44</sup>

The young man succumbs to the tastes and vices of contemporary society because he has not been taught how to maintain virtue. In the same way as Defoe had done, Rousseau also emphasised the effects that leaving the security of home could have upon travellers. The young man, unable to think for himself and defenceless against this false morality, is unable to discern the good from the bad; therefore, he succumbs to corrupt manners and tastes.

Describing *Émile* as a treatise on the goodness of humanity, Rousseau intended to show how vices, initially alien to the human constitution, were introduced into, and eventually distorted, the good-natured dispositions of individuals. He commented that:

God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. . . he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rousseau, op. cit., Book IV, pp. 295-296.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Book I, p. 5.

Although he believed in the essential nature of man's goodness, Rousseau could see that ill-equipped individuals were easily deceived by society's debased manners, and consumed by self-interest. It was therefore necessary, by means of moral instruction, to direct the energies of individuals toward attaining higher goals. In addition to protecting their natural goodness against the contamination of corrupting influences, moral education should, by promoting the virtuous life, allow individuals to achieve true happiness. *Émile's* tutor, emphasising that virtuous beings are motivated in their duties by the public good, offers his pupil the same advice that mid eighteenth-century writers offered their readers when he says, "learn to be your own master; control your heart, . . . and you will be virtuous".<sup>46</sup> However, Rousseau argued that the acquisition of prudence and wisdom was necessary for individuals to pursue true virtue and happiness, as these decreased "the difference between [one's] desires and [one's] powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between the power and the will".<sup>47</sup>

Effective moral instruction achieved this equilibrium for individuals. Sheridan summarised the need for moral instruction, when he wrote that:

Should a master, after having instructed his pupil in the rules of grammar, leave him to make his own way thro' the classics, as well as he could, without assisting him in his progress, and pointing out to him the use and application of those rules as he went along, could he ever with reason expect to find him a good scholar? And shall less care and pains be thought sufficient to make a good man? Is it easier, after having learned the rudiments of knowledge, and morality, for a man to guide himself right in the labyrinths of wisdom, and steer, unpiloted, a steady course of virtue, through the shoals, the rocks, the quicksands of life, and, in a vessel without ballast, stand the swelling tides of corruption, and the storms of passion, than to understand a Greek or Roman author? And yet, absurd as it may seem, such is our practice. At the very juncture, when the uses of all he has been reading ought to be pointed out to him with the utmost care and attention, in order to encourage him to go on in his course, to reap the fruit of his toils; at that most critical time of life, when the passions begin to be too strong for reason, even when guarded to the utmost, is the young gentleman left to himself without a guide, without assistance, to follow the bent of his inclinations.<sup>48</sup>

Sheridan's criticism of the defects of contemporary moral education was shared by the writers of the novel of moral instruction. These writers, who included Richardson,

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Book V, p. 437.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, p. 44.

<sup>48</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, Book I, Chapter II, pp. 21-22.

Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, also attacked the way in which individuals had been left to their own resources in a society of corrupt manners and tastes. Consequently, these writers assumed the role of educators, instructing their readers in the "good life" while, at the same time, entertaining them. For writers, the best form of moral instruction consisted in assimilating readers into the world of the text, setting up moral situations based on real life, and forcing them to participate in the judgement process.

Although the first part of the eighteenth century was riddled with criticisms about the form that moral education should take, there was far less disagreement about its end. Moral education should instil goodness and virtue into characters, and motivate them to conform to the beneficial modes of behaviour in all situations. Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, argued that morality should aid individuals in ordering their lives, individually and collectively, so as to live the best possible life. The objective of moral education, therefore, became the discovery and promotion of both private and public good. Moral education had to be aimed at developing, what Aristotle described as, "a firm and unchangeable character" where, irrespective of the pain or pleasure involved in performing any obligatory moral acts, individuals would do what was morally required of them, simply because they had been trained correctly in morality.<sup>49</sup>

Writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction contributed to the moral development of their readers by providing them with scenes in which virtue ultimately triumphed over vice. In addition, they attempted to portray good characters as models of virtue, characters upon whom readers could develop their own natures. Although they also aimed at correcting the faults of the vicious, these writers were always aware that individuals could not act contrary to their true natures. Whereas good individuals would always perform virtuous acts because they possessed virtuous dispositions - that is, their innermost desires and intentions were aimed at promoting good - bad ones could never be called good, even when performing seemingly virtuous acts, because their innermost desires and intentions were activated by self-interest. There was no virtue associated

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<sup>49</sup> Aristotle, *Ethics*, trans. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1975), §1105a, pp. 30-31.

with self-love, when it assumed selfishness; virtue necessitated that individuals acted virtuously toward others from a sense of duty. Sparshott suggests that one is not "a good man unless his actions are a manifestation of a good character".<sup>50</sup> As such, individuals were morally good only in so far as they did their moral duty to others.

The serious writers of fiction in the mid eighteenth century saw it as their duty, in promoting the cause of virtue, to present society fully, with all its affectation and foibles, so that they could demolish these vices before the very eyes of their readers. Only when this had been done could they persuade readers that virtue alone brought with it true happiness. James Arbuckle, in 1725, had emphasised the method required of writers, when he warned them not to propagate maxims without the use of example.<sup>51</sup> Instruction, accompanied by example, would lead readers to happiness. He continued:

Tho' Happiness, and the Search after it be the Business and Study of all Mankind, and nothing is of greater Importance to us in Life, than to be rightly inform'd wherein it consists; yet such is the Weakness of the human Understanding, that tho' there can be but one Way to be *happy*, there are as many different ones pursu'd, as there are unsettled Notions in the World about Matters of mere Speculation, that do not concern us at all. And because most of these, however fair and beautiful in the Entrance, and so laid out as to present abundance of gay Prospects to the Imagination at first, are yet full of Perplexities and Dangers, there is the greatest Necessity for our carefully exploring the Paths of Life, that we may not be disappointed of the Ends of our Journey. Every Man is for regulating his own March, and flatters himself that he acts according to *Reason*, and the *Nature of Things*, when perhaps he is only indulging a particular whimsical *Humour*, gratifying some inordinate *Passion*, or meanly imitating the *Customs* of the unthinking *Vulgar*, whether *great* or *small*, that have Influence enough to make their Way of Life *fashionable*.<sup>52</sup>

It was the aim of writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction to educate readers against self-interest and vice. Correctly, they argued that if individuals played some part in their own moral development, with some guidance from the writers themselves, then they could be inspired to pursue virtue and, consequently, achieve the ultimate reward of eternal happiness.

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<sup>50</sup> F. E. Sparshott, *An Enquiry into Goodness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 16 (July 17, 1725), Volume I, p. 136.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., No. 5 (May 1, 1725), Volume I, p. 37-38.

## Chapter II

### The Function of Rhetoric in the Novel of Moral Education

Writers, who have as their aim a didactic purpose in moral education, should choose a form of discourse which can persuade their readers to accept their values as correct. As modern exponents of reader-response criticism have argued, a study of any literary work should not only concern itself with the text, but also, "in equal measure", the part that readers play in responding to that text.<sup>1</sup> As a result, it is the convergence of the text and the readers that gives to any piece of literature its dynamic nature. At the same time, however, writers should never provide their readers with the whole story, lest they be accused of indoctrinating them, the consequence of which is the loss of the attention of readers. Edward Bullough summarizes this point when, in his discussion on the relationship of "physical distance" to literature,<sup>2</sup> he argues that works which are "over-distanced" from readers will seem artificial and empty; while, those that are "under-distanced" will be too personal. In either case, readers will respond adversely to the works. Writers, therefore, should use a rhetorical discourse which not only presents readers with the story and its values, but which also engages the imagination of readers in decoding the meaning of the text. Thus, successful literary discourse should always preserve the autonomy of its readers in making judgements upon the text.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Reader and Text", in *The Reader and the Text*, ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Bullough, "'Physical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle", in *The Problems of Aesthetics*, ed. Eliseo Vivas and Murray Krieger (New York: 1953; first published, 1912), pp. 396-405.

Any discussion of the rhetorical nature of the eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction should be considered in the light of the text as a means of communication with its readers. Although individuals may not necessarily agree with Jakobson's general assertion that literature has no existence until it is read and discussed by its readers, they should accept his assumption that authors and readers of texts are related to each other as the senders and the receivers of messages.<sup>3</sup> Far from being passive receptors of the text, eighteenth-century readers played an active role in decoding, and appreciating, the moral meaning of the text, prior to applying the instruction to their own lives. Unlike the self-formulated message of the sermon, which required little more from readers than an absolute acceptance of the doctrine, mid eighteenth-century fiction forced readers, by assimilating them into the text, to deduce its meaning and scrutinise their own moral consciousness. In reading the text, readers were confronted with characters, events and situations which elicited from them responses and judgements. Wolfgang Iser, for example, argues that readers, in the process of reading, receive certain mental "images [which] will inevitably be coloured by the reader's 'existing stock of experience'".<sup>4</sup> As a result of this colouring, writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel adopted a discourse which aimed at modifying the values of readers, so that they could pursue virtue in a more resolute manner. By providing readers with a work aimed at improving virtue, they were able to see virtue functioning in the real world, and its consequent benefits.

Literature, therefore, should help readers form their own identities, by persuading them to participate in the world of the narrative. Walker Gibson<sup>5</sup> suggests that, when they open a book, readers engage on a new adventure which helps them become new persons. He notes that readers either "assume, for the sake of the experience, that set of

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<sup>3</sup> Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics", in *Style and Language*, ed. T. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 353-359.

<sup>4</sup> Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1985), p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers", in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 1-5.



attitudes and qualities which the language asks [them] to assume",<sup>6</sup> or they "throw away" the book. Although Gibson's comment may oversimplify matters, it is important, nonetheless, that readers do assimilate themselves into the world of the text, and relate the textual experiences to their own lives. Although, in reality, they may not complete their reading as "new persons", the reading experience should contribute to the moral development of readers by teaching them how to discern virtue from vice, and by helping them to clarify their own values. For this reason, Georges Poulet<sup>7</sup> errs when he suggests that readers passively allow themselves to become "prisoner[s] of the author's consciousness".<sup>8</sup> Although authors could expect that readers yield a part of their consciousness, in terms of assimilating themselves into the story, writers should still allow readers the autonomy necessary for investigating and judging what they read. Even though he tends to neglect the premise that readers should maintain their autonomy, Iser's statement upon the role of readers as one of filling in the "unwritten parts of the text" comes close to the truth. Essentially, the aim of reading should be synonymous with that of moral education, in that readers should conclude their reading of the text with a fuller knowledge of themselves.

In addition to this fuller understanding of the self, writers should also aim at giving readers a deeper appreciation of their relationships with other individuals. For writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel, this achievement could be measured in terms of the readers' improvement in ethical and moral values. Nor did this detract from the autonomy of readers, for, after the narrative had been presented, readers were left to make their own decisions in relation to moral dilemmas. In effective pieces of writing,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority", in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins, pp. 41-49.

<sup>8</sup> Georges Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading", in *New Literary History 1* (Autumn, 1969), p. 56. Poulet argues that "Whatever I think is a part of *my* mental world. And yet here I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world, which is being thought in me just as though I did not exist. Already the notion is inconceivable and seems even more so if I reflect that, since every thought must have a subject to think it, this *thought* which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have in me a *subject* which is alien to me and yet in me. . . . Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an *I*, and yet the *I* which I pronounce is not myself".

the rhetorical discourse should allow readers to see, and accept, quite readily the intent of the writers. Another critic, Norman Holland, suggests that readers deal with literary texts in much the same way as they deal with life experiences;<sup>9</sup> that is, by applying their existing values to a text in order to interpret it. Although this may be a generalisation on the part of Holland, for readers often become susceptible to the rhetoric of writers by suspending their existing values in reading fiction, it is nonetheless an implicit aim of writers to modify the values of readers in response to what they read. However, only readers, once they have accepted the values of writers into their consciousness and fully scrutinised them, can actualize the degree to which those particular values are to be accepted, questioned or rejected. Often, the result is that the value systems of readers may have to be modified, as a result of their internalising and realising the various elements of the text. The act of reading, then, should lead to something being formulated in the minds of readers which had previously eluded them either through ignorance or neglect. Abrams is correct when he argues that:

If the [literature] works, our appreciation of the matters it presents is not aloofly contemplative, but actively engaged. . . . We are interested in a fashion that brings into play our entire moral economy and expresses itself continuously in attitudes of approval or disapproval, sympathy or antipathy.<sup>10</sup>

Writers, therefore, should aim at educating readers by engaging them in the text and persuading them to scrutinise their own moral beliefs and values, in an active manner. In this sense, the aim of writers is consistent with the traditional approach to moral education.

Any form of criticism that conceives of a text as a message to be decoded, and a means by which an author communicates certain beliefs and values to readers should be regarded as rhetorical. Rhetoric is a mode of thinking that considers an object in terms of a purpose which may be to persuade, inform, or even entertain readers. It aims at both determining what speakers or writers wish to accomplish in their works, and selecting the

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<sup>9</sup> Norman Holland, "Unity, Identity, Text, Self", in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins, pp. 118-130.

<sup>10</sup> Meyer Howard Abrams, *Literature and Belief: English Institute Essays, 1957* (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 16-17.

most appropriate method for persuading listeners and readers to agree with them on a given subject. For many eighteenth-century writers, rhetoric was far more than "empty language, or language used to deceive, without honest intention behind it";<sup>11</sup> instead, rhetoric was used for the purposes of finding the truth in any given hypothesis, correcting vice, and leading readers in pursuit of virtue. Both Johnson and Hume agreed, despite other differences of opinion, that great writers expressed, by means of a poetic language, those unchanging universal truths about life and nature. At the same time, however, there were writers who, like John Brown, reacted vehemently against this form of "suasory discourse", which encouraged falsehood. He argued that:

Eloquence gains its End of Persuasion by offering *apparent* Truth to the Imagination; as Argument gains its proper End of Conviction by offering *real* Truth to the Understanding. . . . [Thus] we perceive, that the Consequences of Eloquence, with regard to speculative *Instruction* and *Inquiry*, are of a very different Nature from those which relate to *Morals* and *Action*. To Instruction and Inquiry, every Species of Eloquence must for ever be an Enemy: For though it may lead the Mind to acquiesce in a just Opinion, yet it leads it to acquiesce upon a false Foundation: It puts the Hearer or Reader in the Speaker's or Writer's Power: And though he be so honest as to lead him in the Path of Truth, yet still he leads him *blind-fold*. . . . For though the Ends of Truth and Persuasion are then essentially different when the Orator strikes the Imagination with fictitious Images, in which case Falsehood becomes apparent Truth, and Eloquence the Instrument of Deceit; yet the Ends of Persuasion and Conviction, Opinion and Knowledge *concur*, when such Impressions are made on the Imagination and Passions, as consist with the Dictates of right Reason. In this case, Eloquence comes to the Aid of Argument, and *impresses* the Truths which Logic teaches, in a warmer and more effectual Manner. It paints real Good and Evil in all the glowing Colours of Imagination, and thus inflames the Heart with double Ardor to embrace the one, and reject the other.<sup>12</sup>

However, in spite of his criticism, even Brown was forced to acknowledge that rhetoric, when used correctly, could help writers impress truths upon the minds of readers. It is in this context that the writers, examined in this dissertation, viewed rhetoric.

For these writers, rhetoric was at the command of honest men, who strove to improve society. Concerning itself with what went on in the mind, true rhetoric worked through an argument in the narrative, while still preserving the autonomy necessary for

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<sup>11</sup> Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope", in *Rhetoric: A Tradition in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1974), p. 197.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, "Essay On Ridicule considered as a Test of Truth," in his *Essays on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury*, Section III, pp. 21-23.

readers to make up their own minds on the basis of what had been presented. It supported the traditional approach to moral education by not only seeking truth, but by anticipating that individuals would conclude their reading of the text with more virtuous dispositions, a greater acknowledgement of the ascendancy of the will of God, and the realisation that virtue alone promoted the common good. Sheridan's words provided an apt analogy between the functions of rhetoricians and orators. Arguing that orators must win the "good opinion" of their listeners,<sup>13</sup> he continued:

[As] no one can deserve the name of an orator who does not use his talents in the cause of virtue, and as the perfection of eloquence consists in speaking from the heart, none but a good man can speak feelingly about that which is good. . . . 'Tis the orator's part to give advice upon the most important affairs, and to deliver his sentiments with clearness and dignity. 'Tis his to rouse people from languor, and to restrain the impetuous within due bounds. 'Tis his to pass sentence of destruction on falsehood, and of safety on truth. Who with more ardour than he can inflame men to virtue, who with more force can recall them from vice? . . .<sup>14</sup>

In a sense, though not in a Hobbesian manner, writers assumed an implied superiority over their readers, because it was expected that they could discern virtue from vice. This superiority was dictated by the art of rhetoric itself, which required that writers persuade readers to accept the validity of their arguments and values.

Rhetoric, like moral education, aims at the clarification of the understanding and the cultivation of the mind. It provides the best method for answering the most difficult questions concerning human activity and behaviour. By seeking truth and moving "men to action", so as to promote "the common good",<sup>15</sup> rhetoric should make virtue appear attractive enough to counteract the influences of corrupt manners and selfishness. Consequently, for writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction, rhetoric became the mode by which they could catalogue, for readers, the benefits of maintaining virtuous dispositions. One way in which they could achieve this was to introduce, into the text, characters with whom readers could become so engaged, in both actions and thoughts, that they acted as mediators of change within the minds of readers. However, as rhetoric

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<sup>13</sup> Sheridan, op. cit., Book I, Chapter X, pp. 36-37.

<sup>14</sup> Sheridan, op. cit., Book I, Chapter XV, pp. 95-98.

<sup>15</sup> Hudson, "Field of Rhetoric", in *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 9 (April, 1923), pp. 167-80.

also deals with investigation, decision making and communication, writers should always choose the best possible language to persuade readers into accepting their beliefs and values. Kenneth Burke notes, appropriately, that the basic function of rhetoric is "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other agents".<sup>16</sup> In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson argued that writers should adopt the easiest, most pleasing and most understandable manner for communicating their instruction to readers, a view reinforced by the philosopher in *Rasselas*, Imlac, who claimed that the writer "must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind".<sup>17</sup> Allan Ramsay supported Johnson's claims when, writing in *The Investigator*, he proposed that writers "who engage[d] in any controversy with the candid intention of discovering truth" must employ a perfectly clear and concise language, so that "their laudable endeavours [were not] obstructed".<sup>18</sup>

Johnson attacked the ostentatious language and style which obscured "the most evident truths".<sup>19</sup> Plain truths, he argued, had to be written in a natural and plain language. In stressing the need for a clear and unadorned language, Johnson followed the educational ideas of the founders of the Royal Society who had advocated, for all forms of writing, a purity of language, free from amplifications, digressions, and pretentiousness. Johnson supported this argument when he claimed that:

Among many parallels which men of imagination have drawn between the natural and moral state of the world, it has been observed that happiness, as well as virtue, consists in mediocrity; that to avoid every extreme is necessary even to him who has no other care than to pass through the present state with ease and safety; and that the middle path is the road of security, on either side of which are not only the pitfalls of vice but the precipices of ruin.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), Chapter X, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Allan Ramsay, *The Investigator* (London: 1762), Part I, Section iv, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Idler*, No. 36 (December 23, 1758), in *The Idler and the Adventurer*, ed. W. J. Bate (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 113.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, *The Rambler* (3 vols.), No. 38 (July 28, 1750), ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1969), Volume I, p. 205. Future references to this work will be from this edition.

In this, Johnson followed Aristotle's argument that a clear diction was the only means by which orators and writers could persuade readers to moderate their excessive passions and pursue virtue.<sup>21</sup> He emphasised that writers should imitate the language and style of Addison, if they sought to teach readers wisdom.<sup>22</sup> He continued:

His [Addison's] purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. . . . As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand the first of the first rank. . . . He never *outsteps the modesty of nature* nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. . . . He copies life with so much fidelity. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Like Johnson, Hume also argued that writers of moral instruction should adopt a language, and style, which was moderate and simple, without "fustian, affectation, coldness and a false brilliancy".<sup>24</sup>

Choice of language, which has considerable influence over the modification of beliefs, attitudes, and values, is also a key factor in the technique of successful writers, whose task it is to persuade readers to accept the validity of their values. By using a language which is realistic, sincere and appropriate to the presentation of their argument, writers can create a bond between themselves and their readers. Sheridan, following Shaftesbury's theoretical use of suasive rhetoric, argued that:

In this, as in life, the general maxim will hold good, that before you can persuade a man into any opinion he must first be convinced that you believe it yourself. This he can never be, unless the tones of voice in which you speak come from the heart. . . . For, considered only as artificial sounds, the words of falsehood [*sic*] are as easily spoke as those of truth; the lips and tongue discharge their office equally well in the one and the other. But the tones that are declarative of truth must come from the heart, which at the same time strikes other chords; . . . and bear testimony to the truth so declared.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, ed. J. A. K. Thompson (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 65.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Johnson, "Life of Addison", in *Samuel Johnson: Rasselas, Poems, and Selected Prose*, 3rd edition, ed. Bertrand H. Bronson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), pp. 396-398.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 396-98.

<sup>24</sup> David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1964), Volume I, p. 266.

<sup>25</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, Book I, Chapter XV, pp. 68-70.

Sheridan's comment highlighted the importance, for writers, of using a language that was free of artificiality, sincere and straight from the heart. If writers were to promote virtue, then language and style also had to be devoid of corrupt influences.

By the very fact that rhetoric aims at realising change, its purpose must, therefore, be didactic. Successful eighteenth-century writers anticipated that, at the conclusion of their reading of the text, readers would share their hypotheses, and make the necessary modifications to their value systems, in order to bring them into line with the requirements of a virtuous disposition. This necessitated that writers educate their readers. However, confronted with the general "depravity of manners" of contemporary society, writers sought, in order to complement their rhetorical method, an art "in which wickedness or folly [could be] censured".<sup>26</sup> This art, which diminished a subject by making it appear ridiculous or contemptible, was satire. The satirist's aim was to identify certain foibles and deficiencies in human behaviour, and convince readers, by means of a laughter based on derision, that those shortcomings in the human character required immediate correction. Claude Rawson, for example, observes, in relation to the literature of the eighteenth century, that "satire is a conservative art . . . [that] flourishes most in an order-minded culture, perhaps at moments when order is felt to be slipping".<sup>27</sup> Rawson assumes correctly that, rather than anticipate any radically new form of behaviour, eighteenth-century satire assumed a particular ideal behaviour, already existent in the minds of writers. Unable to tolerate the corrupt nature of contemporary manners, satirists used this art as a weapon against affectation, folly, social hypocrisy, and vice.

The laughter derived from satire needs to be distinguished from that derived from comedy, which also exposes the foibles and follies of humankind. Whereas satirists deride, or ridicule, their subjects, comic writers, without passing judgement, present foibles and follies for amusement only. During the early part of the eighteenth century, there had been considerable debate over the distinction between comedy and satire,

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<sup>26</sup> Johnson, *Johnson's Dictionary*, ed. E. L. McAdam, Jr. & George Milne (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1963), p. 357.

<sup>27</sup> Claude Rawson, *English Satire and the Satiric Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. viii.

arising from some misconceptions about the functions of the two in the previous century.

René Rapin, for example, had declared that the end of comedy was to show:

les défauts des particuliers, pour guérir les défauts du Public, et de corriger le Peuple par la crainte d'être moqué. Ainsi le ridicule est ce qu'il y a de plus essentiel à la Comédie.<sup>28</sup>

Such a declaration, which advocated that the aim of both was "to instruct the People by discrediting Vice",<sup>29</sup> was erroneous, at least from the viewpoints of writers of works dealing with moral education. As many critics had blamed comedy for the deterioration in manners during the early part of the eighteenth century, it was not surprising, given Rapin's definition of the two, that they should distrust satire as a means of effecting social reform.

Satirists, however, unlike writers of comedy, are deeply troubled by moral issues. Always conscious of the way things ought to be, they are drawn to instances of corruption, in order to correct, and even punish, wrongdoers, and to instruct readers in what constitutes correct behaviour. Many early eighteenth-century writers, among whom were included Wolseley, Temple and Addison, distrusted the effects of satire because of the way in which it pandered to the worst elements in human nature, and besmirched the good names of distinguished community leaders. Even Charlotte Lennox, in *The Female Quixote*, in 1752, warned readers of the ill-effects of satire when her heroine observed that it was not only hated and feared, but "in danger of wronging all the Laws of Friendship and Humanity".<sup>30</sup> However, among writers of the first decade of the eighteenth century, it was Steele who best defined true raillery and satire. He observed that:

. . . good Nature was an essential Quality in a Satyrst, and that all the Sentiments which are beautiful in this Way of Writing must proceed from that Quality in the Author. Good Nature produces a Disdain of all

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<sup>28</sup> René Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, trans. Thomas Rymer, (1674; rpt. London: By T. N. for H. Herringman, 1961) pp. 124 -125. Translation: "the faults of particular persons, in order to amend the faults of the public, and to correct society through a fear of being rendered ridiculous. Thus ridicule is what is most essential in comedy".

<sup>29</sup> Rapin, *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (London: For A. Millar, 1752), Volume I, pp. 143-44.



Baseness, Vice, and Folly, which prompts [satirists] to express themselves with smartness against the Errors of Men, without bitterness towards their Persons. This Quality keeps the Mind in Equanimity, and never lets an Offence unreasonably throw a Man out of Character.<sup>31</sup>

Correctly, Steele argued that the value of satire lay in the way that it was used by writers, a point supported by Shaftesbury who, in his *Advice to an Author*, warned writers not to use satire which was "scurrilous, buffooning and without Morals and Instruction".<sup>32</sup> Shaftesbury's notion of satire was synonymous with Collier's definition of the function of comedy in plays. Collier had suggested that:

The business of plays is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice. 'Tis to expose the singularities of pride and fancy, to make folly and falsehood contemptible, and to bring every thing that is ill under infamy and neglect.<sup>33</sup>

Shaftesbury, too, advocated the moral and intellectual utility of both ridicule and satire in exposing vice and, thus, contributing to the moral development of individuals. In opposition to the theories of Hobbes and Mandeville, Shaftesbury, following the argument of Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, claimed, in his "Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour", that ridicule was the best test of truth. He continued that:

"Twas the saying of an ancient sage, that humour was the only test of gravity: and gravity of humour. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit".<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to Hobbes who had claimed that "the Passion of Laughter is nothing else but sudden Glory arising from some sudden Conception of some Eminency in our selves, by Comparison with the Infirmary of others", or past follies,<sup>35</sup> Shaftesbury maintained that laughter was a faculty given by God in order to correct the extravagant fancies of

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Steele, op. cit., *The Tatler*, No. 242 (October 26, 1710), in *The Tatler and the Guardian* (London: William P. Nimmo, 1877), p. 428.

<sup>32</sup> Shaftesbury, *Advice to An Author* (1710), in *Characteristics*, p. 109.

<sup>33</sup> Reverend Jeremy Collier, *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London: 1698), quoted in James Sutherland, *English Satire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., I, p. 52. Brown, in his *Essay on the Characteristics*, suggests that this was taken, only in part, from the poet Gorgias and, as such, was rather of Shaftesbury's own making.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Discourse of Human Nature*, Chapter IX, in Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 47 (April 24, 1711), p. 337.

individuals, an idea taken up later by Hutcheson, and that elements of truth could undergo the test of ridicule without blemish. He commented:

For, if it be genuine and sincere, it will not only stand the proof, but thrive and gain advantage from hence; if it be spurious, or mixed with any imposture, it will be detected and exposed.<sup>36</sup>

According to Shaftesbury, the functions of moral education and ridicule were closely related; for, rather than just raising laughter, ridicule could be used both to expose evils which, in contemporary society, had masqueraded as virtues, and to return individuals to the path to virtue. Like Swift, Shaftesbury censured the false laughter of those satirists who, like pedants preparing "a naughty Boy [to be] Hors'd for Discipline", "expostulate[d] the Case, then plead[ed] the Necessity of the Rod".<sup>37</sup> Punishment, without the application of the intellect, argued Shaftesbury, did as little to correct the vicious behaviour and manners of individuals as did the sermons to persuade individuals to abandon folly and pursue virtue. However, for writers of didactic fiction, Swift highlighted one of the major problems associated with the use of satire - the inability of individuals to apply the example to their own lives. He commented, in the Author's Preface to *The Battel of the Books*, that:

SATYR is a sort of Glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own; which is the chief Reason for that kind Reception it meets in the World, and that so very few are offended with it. <sup>38</sup>

It was this consideration that motivated writers of the middle part of the eighteenth century to search for a form of satire which not only exposed the foibles and follies of individuals "in [their] strongest Colours", but one which would also force individuals to examine their own lives and keep them "within the Bounds of their Duty".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Shaftesbury, "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm to My Lord \* \* \* \*", Section IV, *Characteristics*, Volume I, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Swift, Preface to *A Tale of a Tub* (revised edition, 1710), in *The Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and William B. Piper (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 288.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Swift, *A Full Account of the Battel Fought last Friday, Between the Antient and the Modern Books in St. James's Library* (1710), in *The Writings of Jonathan Swift*, p. 375.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Swift, *The Examiner*, No. 38 (April 26, 1711), in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940), Volume III, p. 141.

Shaftesbury defended the educative aim of ridicule and satire by stating that both, when used in a proper manner, supported virtue. He commented:

You may possibly, I hope, be satisfied that as I am in earnest in defending raillery, so I can be sober too in the use of it. 'Tis in reality a serious study to learn to temper and regulate that humour which nature has given us as a more lenitive remedy against vice, and a kind of specific against superstition and melancholy delusion . . . Nothing is ridiculous except what is deformed; nor is anything proof against raillery except what is handsome and just. And therefore 'tis the hardest thing in the world to deny fair honesty the use of this weapon, which can never bear an edge against herself, and bears against everything contrary.<sup>40</sup>

Despite this defence of raillery, there were still many who, like Blackmore, in his *Essay upon Wit*, claimed that the art was not only detrimental to correction, but unable to reclaim any individuals from a life of folly. This criticism of satire, however, was based more on the inability of some critics to distinguish Shaftesbury's "raillery", which aimed at promoting truth and virtue, from that false form of satire, best described by Chesterfield as the "noisy mirth and loud peals of laughter, which [were] the distinguishing characteristics of the vulgar and the ill-bred".<sup>41</sup> Even Mandeville, despite some marked differences in moral philosophy, supported Shaftesbury's view that satire was an important medium for instructing readers. Mandeville, going further than his adversary, laid the basis for the purpose of satire in the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral education, for he attributed to satire the capacity both "to instrust and to delight" readers. However, the deficiency underlying Mandeville's method of moral education was that his instruction too often conformed to the "directed learning" approach of the sermons. One example of his approach can be seen in his satirical vignette of the life and behaviour of eighteenth-century school girls, in *The Virgin Unmask'd*. He commented:

They lead Easie and Lazy Lives, and have abundance of Time upon their Hands, especially those whose Relations are rich and foolish enough to furnish them with as much Money as may enable them to bribe their Teachers to neglect their Duty, and wink at their Faults. . . . I have often taken notice, how they have run together in Shoals, whispering and hugging one another, and standing still between whiles, all at once, set up a Laughter with so much Loudness, and so many Grimaces, as if they were

<sup>40</sup> Shaftesbury, "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm to My Lord \* \* \* \*", in *Characteristics* Volume I, p. 85.

<sup>41</sup> Chesterfield, quoted in S. M. Tave's *The Amiable Humorist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 10-11.

tickled to Death, and all this occasioned by some silly, naughty Word, they have got by the end; perhaps a bawdy Monosyllable, such as Boys write upon Walls.<sup>42</sup>

Like Shaftesbury, Mandeville also argued that satire could be used as a powerful weapon for exposing hypocrisy and self-deception to public scrutiny.

James Arbuckle, writing in 1725, also supported the part that ridicule and satire could play in educating readers in morality. Attacking those critics who claimed that ridicule diminished truth into "Disesteem", Arbuckle stressed that ridicule could be used to restrain enthusiasms.<sup>43</sup> He continued:

Nothing is so properly applied to the *false Grandeur*, either of Good or Evil, as Ridicule: Nothing will sooner prevent our excessive Admiration of *mix'd Grandeur*, or hinder our being led by that, which is, perhaps, really *great* in such an Object, to imitate also and approve what is really *mean*. . . . Ridicule, like other *edged Tools*, may do good in a wise Man's hands, tho Fools may cut their fingers with it, or be injurious to an unwary By-stander.<sup>44</sup>

Although Defoe, writing some years after Arbuckle in *The Compleat English Gentleman*, believed that "evill [was] too far spread to be corrected in the present generation", he still maintained that the use of satire could help in the moral education of individuals of the next generation, "to prevent the mischief of what is to come".<sup>45</sup> Francis Hutcheson, a supporter of Shaftesbury, writing in the seventeen-twenties, distinguished the good from bad uses of ridicule and satire, in his *Reflections upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees*. In contrast to the indoctrinating tone of sermons, Hutcheson argued that satire could laugh individuals "out of faults which a sermon could not reform". He concluded with the remarks:

Now ridicule, with contempt or ill-nature, is indeed always irritating and offensive; but we may, by testifying a just esteem for the good qualities of the person ridiculed, and our concern for his interests, let him see that our ridicule of his weakness flows from a love to him, and then we may hope for a good effect. This then is another necessary rule, "That along with our

<sup>42</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *The Virgin Unmask'd* (1709; rpt. London: Sold by J. Morphew; A. Dodd, 1714), pp. 48-49.

<sup>43</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 12 (June 19, 1725), Volume I, pp. 98-99.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Volume I, pp. 103-104.

<sup>45</sup> Defoe, op. cit., pp. 144-145. Defoe argued that the eyes of children "must be open'd to the absurdity of their fathers' conduct that it may be rectified by the children".

ridicule of smaller faults we should always join evidences of good-nature and esteem."<sup>46</sup>

Hutcheson's comment was important for the educative aim of moral instruction because it stressed that, in order to correct the natures of individuals, satire should not only avoid being too offensive, but should also be accompanied by some examples of a positive nature. Thus, by accompanying satire with positive examples, Hutcheson attacked those critics of Shaftesbury who, like Alexander Forbes and Thomas Morgan, had argued that individuals would ignore ridicule because they were either too "wedded to [their] Opinions and resolv'd never to part with them", or too "ready to resent any Thing that [could] be said against [their] espoused and darling Idols".<sup>47</sup>

In the subsequent twenty years, there was continued debate over the effectiveness of using either ridicule or satire as a means of reforming the manners of humankind. John Brown, in his attack on Shaftesbury's philosophy, maintained that ridicule only arose from a contemptuous and pernicious disposition in individuals. He charged Shaftesbury of "shameless *Effrontery*", for the way in which the latter had portrayed "Truth, Wisdom, Virtue, Liberty, successfully disguised and derided; [and] by this very means the Cause of Falsehood, Folly, Vice, Tyranny maintained".<sup>48</sup> In advocating that ridicule was "an Enemy" to morals and instruction, Brown argued that it could never "be a *Detector of Falsehood*, or a *Test of Truth*".<sup>49</sup> However, in spite of describing ridicule as a malevolent passion, he still maintained that there could be a proper use for it, that was "to disgrace *known* Falsehood" and "to enforce *known* Truth". He continued:

This being the real Nature and Tendency of Ridicule, it cannot be worth while to descant much on its Application, or explore its Subserviency to the Uses of Life. For though under the severe Restrictions of Reason, it may be made a proper Instrument on many Occasions, for disgracing *known* Folly; yet the Turn of Levity it gives the Mind, the Distaste it raises to all candid

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<sup>46</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees* (Glasgow: Printed for R. Urie, For Daniel Banter, Bookseller, 1750), pp. 35-36. These words were also quoted verbatim by James Arbuckle in his "Remarks on Ridicule", in his *Collection of Letters*, No. 12 (June 19, 1725), Volume I, p. 105.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* (London: Printed for the Author, 1737), p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> Brown, op. cit., Essay I, Section vi, pp. 63-64.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Essay I, Section iv, pp. 46-47.

and rational Information, the Spirit of Animosity it is apt to excite, the Errors in which it confirms us when its Suggestions are false, the Extremes to which it is apt to drive us, even when its Suggestions are true; all these conspire to tell us, it is rather to be wished than hoped, that its Influence upon the whole can be considerable in the Service of *Wisdom* and *Virtue*.<sup>50</sup>

Brown's criticism of ridicule was far from an objective assessment of the art form; rather, he used it as an opportunity for attacking Shaftesbury's philosophical doctrine, which he described as "the most pernicious of Writings, and . . . one continued Heap of *Fustian*, *Scurrility*, and *Falsehood*".<sup>51</sup>

Brown's charges, however, were met with strong resistance from many of Shaftesbury's supporters, and supporters of the novel of moral instruction. Charles Bulkeley, for example, one of Shaftesbury's staunchest advocates, defended the method of his mentor, commenting that "his Lordship use[d] the word ridicule as synonymous [*sic*] to freedom, familiarity, good humour, and the like."<sup>52</sup> A decade later, Lord Kames, in his *Elements of Criticism*, distinguishing between laughter accompanied by disapprobation and that which mixed pure amusement with tenderness,<sup>53</sup> argued, with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, that proper ridicule and satire were conducive to moral improvement. Claiming that the object of true laughter and ridicule was either something "out of rule", a defect or an excess, Kames emphasised, for writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, that satire could play an important role in promoting a course of moderation in life.

Another critic, Allan Ramsay, writing in *The Investigator*, defined the part that both ridicule and satire should play in the works of writers, whose moral aim it was to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Essay I, Section xi, pp. 103-106.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Essay I, Section i, pp. 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Bulkeley, *A Vindication of My Lord Shaftesbury, On the Subject of Ridicule* (London: John Noon; J. Payne, 1751), p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> Home, Henry, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (Edinburgh: 1762), II, pp. 15-16. Kames argued that "The first raises an emotion of laughter that is altogether pleasant: the emotion of laughter raised by the other, is qualified with that of contempt; and the mixed emotion, partly pleasant partly painful, is termed the emotion of ridicule. I avenge myself of the pain a ridiculous object gives me by a laugh of derision. A risible object, on the other hand, gives me no pain: it is altogether pleasant by a certain sort of titillation, which is expressed externally by mirthful laughter".

educate readers. Supporting Shaftesbury's argument, Ramsay also stressed that true virtue was "entirely out of the reach of Ridicule".<sup>54</sup> He continued:

I will venture one step farther, and assert, that it is one of the methods the best founded, the easiest comprehended, and the least subject to fallacy; for it will always be found, AN APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE by some familiar image or allusion, which convinces by the justness, while it pleases by the novelty and contrast of its application.<sup>55</sup>

Ramsay's argument, that satirists must combine both experience and novelty in their moral instruction, was identical to that propounded by Henry Fielding. The anonymous author of *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding*, summarised both Fielding's method and the transformation from the traditional to the innovative rhetorical method of mid eighteenth-century novelists of moral instruction, when he commented that:

His [Fielding's] Design of Reformation was noble and public-spirited, but the Task was not quite so easy to perform, since it requir'd an uncommon Genius. For to tread the old beaten Track would be to no Purpose. Lecture would lose all its Force; and Ridicule would strive in vain to remove it. For tho' it was a Folly, it was a pleasing one: And if Sense could not yield the pretty Creatures greater Pleasure, Dear Nonsense must be ador'd.

Mr. *Fielding* therefore, who sees all the little Movements by which human Nature is actuated, found it necessary to open a new Vein of Humour, and thought the only way to make them lay down *Cassandra*, would be to compile Characters which really existed, equally entertaining with those Chimæras which were beyond Conception. This Thought produced *Joseph Andrews*, which soon became a formidable Rival to the *amusing* Class of Writers; since it was not a mere dry Narrative, but a lively Representative of real life. . . . and instead of Impossibility, what we experience every Day.<sup>56</sup>

The essayist noted that Fielding's "new Species of Writing" included the diffusion of humour throughout the whole of the work, "a Choice of Characters . . . exactly copied from Nature", and the elimination of ideal characters and "every Circumstance quite imaginary . . . to give it a greater Air of Truth".<sup>57</sup> For this reason, Ramsay praised Fielding, as he did Hogarth who was achieving the same "upon immortal canvass", for

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<sup>54</sup> Allan Ramsay, *The Investigator* (London: Printed for A. Millar in the Strand, London, 1762), Part II, p. 76.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, Section iii, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Anonymous, *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding: With a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism* (London: 1751), pp. 15-16.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

exposing "the fashionable follies, vices and affectations" of contemporary society.<sup>58</sup>

Concluding with a description of the function of writers who used ridicule and satire, he stated:

It has often been recommended to those, who take upon them the instruction of mankind, that they should convey their lessons in such a way, as might render them *agreeable* as well as *useful*. Tho' this was meant, like putting sugar into a bitter potion, only to render it more palatable, and be more willingly swallowed by the patient; without its being looked upon as any part of the medicine itself. . . if *appeals to experience* are the best test of truth; if those appeals are *least subject to fallacy*, when made to *facts the most vulgar and familiar*, if in the most *serious* questions, such wherein the welfare of mankind is chiefly interested, *the entertainment rises in proportion to the familiarity of the known truths*, by the application of which any falshood [*sic*] in those *important* points is detected: if, I say, these things are so, then it will be easy to perceive a more than accidental connection betwixt the *utile* and the *dulce*; it will be easy to perceive, that in speculative, as well as in active life, *the ways of Wisdom are really ways of pleasantness*, and that a true philosopher, that is, a man of candour, sense and knowledge, has a better chance than ordinary of improving the understandings of those with whom he converses, at the very instant that he makes them laugh.<sup>59</sup>

According to Ramsay, the aim of writers of moral education was to provide an instruction in virtue, which combined experience and the familiarity of known truths with agreeability and pleasantness. The technique, used successfully by Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, proved that ridicule and satire did provide an excellent complement to the aims of moral instruction.

Ramsay also answered those critics who, like Brown, questioned why "a Ridicule of . . . follies and vices [was] followed by a laugh or smile from the most humane?"<sup>60</sup> He replied that people laughed not at the folly before them, which was an "object of pity or detestation", but at the pleasure of the art itself. Such a reply won the support of the majority of writers of moral instruction. Even Hugh Blair, as late as 1783, while warning of the possible dangers of ridicule and satire, admitted that "the general idea of Comedy, as a satirical exhibition of the improprieties and follies of mankind, is an idea very moral and useful".<sup>61</sup> Ramsay's comments, on the function of rhetoric in

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<sup>58</sup> Ramsay, op. cit., Part II, pp. 73.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Part II, pp. 79-82.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Part II, p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), II, pp. 528-529.



didactic fiction, supported the traditional approach to moral education. Certainly, readers, after investigating the realistic depiction of folly in the narrative, could laugh or smile; however, it was always a laugh or smile directed only at the novelty of the art itself, for readers never failed to see folly in its true colours, either as pathetic or detestable. Joseph Highmore summarised the function of ridicule and satire when, in his criticism of Brown's *Essay*, he claimed that "both will and ought to have their genuine effects".<sup>62</sup>

Once satire was freed from what Shaftesbury described as its "scurrilous, buffooning", immoral and uninstructional elements,<sup>63</sup> it became a most important tool in the rhetorical discourse of the writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. Possessing a moral utility, ridicule and satire aimed at preserving a certain moral code prescribed by society, a code which rendered vice and folly contemptible to readers. Henry Fielding correctly emphasized the direction of the novel of moral instruction when he commented that:

*Examples may perhaps have more Advantage over Precepts, in teaching us to avoid what is odious, than in impelling us to pursue what is amiable.*<sup>64</sup>

While the virtuous remained confirmed to virtue, Fielding believed that foolish or vicious individuals could be shamed into reforming their natures. "Exquisite mirth and laughter" became, for Fielding, a means of purging the affections and passions. Both Ferguson and Goldsmith supported Fielding's view,<sup>65</sup> yet added a further dimension to the theory by emphasising the need to pursue moderation and avoid excessiveness, even in the use of humour. True satire, these moral educators argued, could moderate excessive behaviour and purge individuals of the deformities of social life.

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<sup>62</sup> Joseph Highmore, *Essays Moral, Religious, and Miscellaneous* (Printed for B. White, at Horace's Head, in Fleet-street; and J. Walter, at Charing-Cross, 1766), Volume II, p. 30.

<sup>63</sup> Shaftesbury, *Advice to An Author*, in *Characteristics*, I, p. 173.

<sup>64</sup> Henry Fielding, *The Covent Garden Journal*, No. 21 (March 14, 1752), in *The Covent Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 139-140.

<sup>65</sup> Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Kincaid & W. Creech, and J. Bell, 1773), pp. 75-76.

This use of social satire in the literature of the mid eighteenth century coincided with some general changes that took place in society over the fifty year period. Whereas early satirists, following the objectives of the English legal system which promoted "public punishment",<sup>66</sup> had aimed at exposing and ridiculing specific individuals, by the middle of the century, a new breed of satirists were opting for an art that would expose, and consequently prevent, vices common to all individuals. Oliver Goldsmith noted:

To be more serious, new fashions, follies, and vices, make new monitors necessary in every age. An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature: he acts not by punishing crimes, but preventing them; however virtuous the present age, there may be still growing employment for ridicule, or reproof, for persuasion, or satire.<sup>67</sup>

Although many writers argued that satire could not reclaim individuals from vice, it was still acknowledged by others that it could help individuals in their pursuit of virtue. This new form of didactic fiction, through its rhetorical nature, not only highlighted the truths about human nature for its readers, but also allowed them the autonomy necessary to formulate their own judgements, on the basis of the facts presented. In such a way, both ridicule and satire became essential tools for moral educators because they supported the aim of rhetoric by persuading readers of the worth of virtue in society. Furthermore, this task was achieved by combining "Instruction" with "Delight" which, in turn, resulted in the evolution of a "new Species of Writing". The function of rhetoric in the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction was best summarised in the following words:

The Story should be probable, and the Characters taken from common Life, the Style should be easy and familiar, but at the same Time sprightly and entertaining; and to enliven it the more, it is sometimes heightened to the Mock-heroic, to ridicule the Bombast and Fustian, which obtain'd so much in the Romances.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> David B. Morris, *Alexander Pope: The Genius of Sense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 226.

<sup>67</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), in *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith* (five volumes), ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), Volume I, pp. 314-315.

<sup>68</sup> Anonymous, *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding: With a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism* (London: 1751), pp. 19-20.

**Chapter III      The Influence of La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère  
on the Novel of Moral Education**

If the fiction of the mid eighteenth century aimed at engaging readers in the text in order to have them scrutinize their moral beliefs and values, then this literature had to be grounded, at least to some degree, in reason. The traditional approach to moral education emphasises that the story is crucial to instruction in the following ways: firstly, in its implication that there is a right and a wrong way of behaving, based upon common sense; secondly, that individuals learn correct behaviour by being habitually trained in it; thirdly, that they must be presented with models of virtue to imitate; and finally, that these models do occur in stories of virtue. Each of these points assumes an ability on the part of readers to examine, collate, compare, and apply a common measure to the facts in order to deliver some judgement or verdict.

In the context of the eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, reason allowed readers to re-examine constantly the accuracy of their findings during the course of the narrative, in much the same way as experiment allows a hypothesis to develop into a theory. Paul Hazard argues that:

Experiment made all the difference between a hypothetical conclusion and a definite result. Experiment was the guarantor, the assurance against error, the safeguard against the fallibility of our perceptions, the carelessness of our observations or the vagaries of our imagination. . . . Experiment was to be the beneficent power which was destined to bring the temples of falsehood to destruction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), p. 28.

Readers who applied reason to their reading, it was argued, would be less likely to deviate from the path of virtue. However, this did not constitute an acceptance of the myopic view of philosophers who, like Hobbes, attributed everything to reason. Passions also played a large part in the decision-making process of human beings and, as such, it would be an oversight to ignore their influence on both the emotional and judgemental faculties. Writers of the novel of moral instruction, however, advocated that it was the function of reason, by moderating the appetites and passions, to control those instincts within individuals which prompted them to pursue selfish interests. By this means, reason not only promoted the "publick good", but also virtue. Henry Bolingbroke, distinguishing between virtue and vice, commented:

What is vice, and what is virtue? The former is, I think, no more than the excess, abuse, and misapplication of appetites, desires and passions, according to the rules of reason, and therefore often in opposition to their own blind impulse.<sup>2</sup>

The writers of novels of moral instruction, therefore, were motivated, in part, by the dictates of reason. Realising that readers could easily be led astray by excessive appetites and passions which, in turn, corrupted the moral values of contemporary society, writers sought to instruct their readers in morality, by emphasising the importance of reason.

As reason was acknowledged to promote Truth, writers gradually abandoned the authoritarian style of the sermons and religious tracts, which had led individuals into accepting blindly the validity of certain doctrines, without having ever examined them in the light of reason. This failure to apply reason to their actions and thoughts had resulted in individuals acting and judging in ignorance. Many philosophers blamed the decline in the standard of contemporary manners upon these errors in judgement. In spite of considerable reaction from the traditionalists, who believed that readers developed virtue only by means of authoritarian direction, such as through catechisms and tracts, a group of reactionaries were advocating the replacement of the religious catechism with a humanitarian catechism, which promoted tolerance, beneficence and virtue. In many

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Bolingbroke [Henry St. John], *Letters on the Study and Use of History* in Two Volumes (London: For A. Millar, 1752), Volume I, Letter III.

ways, the novel of the mid eighteenth century fulfilled this function. Its development, however, was the result of a long and gradual process which began with the French writers, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère.

The French moralists examined objectively the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. La Rochefoucauld, writing in 1665, used the maxim - an epigram focusing upon a single thought and reducing it to its most concentrated form - to express general truths about individuals, and to highlight true virtue. Like the writers of novels of moral instruction, he feared that true virtue had been mistaken. Emphasising that what passed for virtue was, in fact, only excessive passion and vanity, he commented:

Cette clémence, dont on fait une vertu, se pratique, tantôt par vanité, quelquefois par paresse, souvent par crainte, et presque toujours par tous les trois ensemble.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, against the idea of mistaken virtues and the influence of the passions, La Rochefoucauld advocated the moderating effect of reason. He observed that:

Les passions ont une injustice et un propre intérêt, qui fait qu'il est dangereux de les suivre, et qu'on s'en doit défier, lors même qu'elles paraissent les plus raisonnables.<sup>4</sup>

Believing that only God knew the true motives behind the actions of individuals, La Rochefoucauld asserted that, when people did act virtuously, it was more for the sake of appearances than any genuine concern for the welfare of their neighbours.

La Rochefoucauld affirmed that the mind, and thus reason, was at the mercy of the passions. Arguing that individuals did not have "assez de force pour suivre toute [leur] raison",<sup>5</sup> he continued:

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<sup>3</sup> François De La Rochefoucauld, *The Maxims of François Duc De La Rochefoucauld*, trans. F. G. Stevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), Maxim 16, p. 8. Translation: "Such clemency, though hailed as a virtue, is the product sometimes of vanity, sometimes of indolence, not infrequently of timidity, and generally of all three combined".

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Maxim 9, p. 4. Translation: "The passions exhibit a prejudice and personal bias, which makes them dangerous guides and untrustworthy, even when their advice seems most plausible".

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Maxim 42, p. 16. Translation: "enough strength to obey their judgement".

L'homme croit souvent de conduire lorsqu'il est conduit, et, pendant que par son esprit il tend à un but, son cœur l'entraîne insensiblement à un autre.<sup>6</sup>

With his claim that individuals were motivated, to a large degree, by their passions, which often clouded reason, La Rochefoucauld set the precedent for writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. La Rochefoucauld, however, was no moral educator, according to the criteria listed above, for, too often, he emphasised a negative attitude in relation to the ability of individuals either to improve their morals, or to pursue virtue. He noted, for example, in two maxims, that:

191. On peut dire que les vices nous attendent dans le cours de la vie, comme des hôtes chez qui il faut successivement loger; et je doute que l'expérience nous les fît éviter, s'il nous était permis de faire deux fois le chemin.

194. Les défauts de l'âme sont comme les blessures du corps; quelque soin qu'on prenne de les guérir, la cicatrice paraît toujours, et elles sont à tout moment en danger de se rouvrir.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to writers such as Fielding, La Rochefoucauld argued that individuals could never be reformed. Even given adequate moral instruction in how to reform their vicious behaviour and manners, he believed that individuals, if given a second chance in life, would invariably "lodge in the same inn".

Like Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld argued that individuals acted solely from self-interest. Such a view contrasted with the philosophy of his contemporaries who, like Grimm and Saint-Lambert, insisted that it was only by acting for the common good that individuals could achieve happiness. Saint-Lambert, following the line of thought in Grimm's *Essai d'un catéchisme pour les enfants*, offered the most adequate summary of this argument in his *Catéchisme universel*:

Question: *What is man?*

Answer: *A being possessed of feelings and understanding.*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Maxim 43, p. 16. Translation: "Man often thinks he leads, when in fact he is led; while his mind is urging him in one direction, his heart is dragging him in another, though he knows it not".

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Maxims 191 and 194, pp. 60, 62. Translation:

191. "The vices which haunt us throughout life's journey may be compared to inns at which we must lodge at its successive stages; and I doubt whether, if we were allowed to make the journey a second time, our experience would teach us to avoid them".

194. "Moral defects resemble physical wounds; whatever pains we take to cure them, the scars always show, and are liable to reopen at any moment".

- Q.: *That being so, what should he do?*  
 A.: *Pursue pleasure and eschew pain.*  
 Q.: *This desire to pursue pleasure and avoid pain, is it not, in man what we call self-love?*  
 A.: *It is the necessary effect thereof.*  
 Q.: *Does self-love exist in all men alike?*  
 A.: *It does, because all men aim at self-preservation and at attaining happiness.*  
 Q.: *What do you understand by happiness?*  
 A.: *A continuous state in which we experience more pleasure than pain.*  
 Q.: *What must we do to attain this state?*  
 A.: *Cultivate our reason and act in accordance therewith.*  
 Q.: *What is reason?*  
 A.: *The knowledge of the truths that conduce to our well-being.*  
 Q.: *Does not self-love always lead us to discover those truths and to act in accordance with them?*  
 A.: *No, because all men do not know how self-love should be practised.*  
 Q.: *What do you mean by that?*  
 A.: *I mean that some men love themselves rightly and others wrongly.*  
 Q.: *Who are those who love themselves aright?*  
 A.: *Those who seek to know one another and who do not separate their own happiness from the happiness of others.<sup>8</sup>*

If controlled by reason, the instincts which prompt individuals to pursue their own interests should, in turn, promote the interests of the common good, because, ideally, the two cannot be separated. On the contrary, however, La Rochefoucauld, in his *Maximes*, advanced the view that individuals were motivated by the negative side of "amour-propre", which corrupted both reason and virtue. Emphasising this point in his essay on self-love, in his *Maximes Supplémentaires*, he stated:

L'amour-propre est l'amour de soi-même et de toutes choses pour soi; il rend les hommes idolâtres d'eux-mêmes, et les rendrait les tyrans des autres, si la fortune leur en donnait les moyens: il ne se repose jamais hors de soi, et ne s'arrête dans les sujets étrangers que comme les abeilles sur les fleurs, pour en tirer ce qui lui est propre. Rien n'est si impétueux que ses desirs, rien de si caché que ses desseins, rien de si habile que ses conduites: ses souplesses ne se peuvent représenter, ses transformations passent celles des métamorphoses et ses raffinements ceux de la chimie. On ne peut sonder la profondeur ni percer les ténèbres de ses abîmes. Là, il est couvert des yeux les plus pénétrants; il y fait insensibles tours et retours. Là, il est souvent invisible à lui-même: il y conçoit, il y nourrit et il y élève, sans le savoir, un grand nombre d'affections et de haines; il en forme de si monstrueuses, que lorsqu'il les a mises au jour, il les méconnaît, ou il ne peut se résoudre à les avouer. De cette nuit qui le couvre naissent les ridicules persuasions qu'il a de lui-même; de là viennent ses erreurs, ses ignorances, ses grossièretés, et ses niaiseries sur son sujet . . . .<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Catéchisme universel*, quoted in Hazard, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>9</sup> La Rochefoucauld, op. cit., *Maximes Supplémentaires*, No. 1, p. 162. Translation: "Amour-propre is the love of oneself and of all other things for one's own sake; it makes men idolize themselves and would cause them to tyrannize over their neighbours, had they the opportunity: it never rests outside itself, and if it dwells

La Rochefoucauld emphasised that self-love could never be associated with a virtuous disposition; rather, it could be associated only with affectation, falsity, ignorance and vanity. Even reason, he argued, was no safeguard against "amour-propre", because desires were kindled, not by the beauty and worth of objects, but by the imagination. For La Rochefoucauld, individuals could love nothing except that which was in relation to themselves.<sup>10</sup> According to Lewis, the image of the bee sucking flowers depicted aptly the basic impulse of self-love, that of "consumption, self-aggrandizement, acquisition in service of an ultimately narcissistic satisfaction".<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the bee became an appropriate symbol for all individuals.

The *Maximes* that dealt with self-love emphasized the way in which individuals deceived themselves in order to promote their own interests. The fact that individuals would satisfy their own needs at the expense of any consideration for the requirements of others ultimately resulted in the moral corruption of society. Believing that individuals acted out certain roles within life, in order to satisfy their own wants, La Rochefoucauld added that:

L'intérêt parle toutes sortes de langues, et joue toutes sortes de personnages, même celui de désintéressé.<sup>12</sup>

Although these words provided a negative commentary upon human nature, they still contributed to the development of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction,

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at all on external objects, it is only to extract nourishment from them, as bees do from flowers. Nothing equals the impetuosity of its desires, the depths of its schemes, or the ingenuity of its methods; its agility is unrivalled, its transformations find no parallel in the *Metamorphoses*, its subtleties none in the art of chemistry. It is impossible to fathom the depths or pierce the gloom of the abyss in which it dwells. There it remains, sheltered from the keenest sight; there it comes and goes, all unperceived, often invisible even to itself. There it conceives, breeds, and rears, unknowingly, a vast number of appetites and dislikes - some of so monstrous a shape that it fails to recognize them when exposed to the light of day, or cannot bring itself to own them. Out of the night that covers it are born the absurd ideas it entertains of itself; thence comes its errors, its ignorance, its clumsiness, and its fatuous beliefs about itself . . .".

<sup>10</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Les Maximes*, Maxim 81, p. 26. He commented "Nous ne pouvons rien aimer que par rapport à nous".

<sup>11</sup> P. E. Lewis, *La Rochefoucauld: The Art of Abstraction* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> La Rochefoucauld, op. cit., Maxim 39, p. 14. Translation: "Selfishness speaks many tongues and plays many parts, even that of unselfishness".



especially the works of Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, by emphasising that all individuals should scrutinise the actions and words of those with whom they associated, to avoid being duped by artificiality, pretence and vanity. La Rochefoucauld insisted that:

Dans toutes les professions, chacun affecte une mine et un extérieur pour paraître ce qu'il veut qu'on le croie. Ainsi on peut dire que le monde n'est composé que de mines.<sup>13</sup>

In this sense, the world of the *Maximes* bore a striking similarity to that described by Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, in which individuals acted from pride and self-interest, rather than from reason and morality. Hobbes had commented that:

The object of man's desire, is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire. . . . [All society] is either for gain or for glory: that is, not so much for the love of our fellows as for the love of ourselves.<sup>14</sup>

Hobbes believed that there were very few individuals, "perhaps none", who were not blinded by either self-love or some other passion. Aware that many individuals affected virtue, La Rochefoucauld, like Hobbes, argued that individuals should apply reason as a means of controlling self-interest, a proposition best argued by Nicole who, in his essay, "De la Charité et de l'Amour Propre", advocated that:

Pour reformer entièrement le monde, c'est-à-dire pour en bannir tous les vices et tous les désordres grossiers, et pour rendre les hommes heureux dès cette vie même, il ne faudrait, au défaut de la charité, que leur donner à tous un amour-propre éclairé, qui sût discerner ses vrais intérêts.<sup>15</sup>

This became the task of writers of the novel of moral instruction, a task which La Rochefoucauld failed to achieve because of his inability to recognise the part that reason could play in controlling the passions and self-interest. Instead, his notion of "amour-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., *Maxim* 256, p. 84. Translation: "In every walk of life people assume a certain pose and outward demeanour, in order to appear what they would wish to be. So much so that mankind may be said to be a mere mass of poses".

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651). Quoted in *British Moralists: 1650-1800*, Volume I, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Nicole, "De la Charité et de l'Amour Propre" (1671), quoted in "Du jansénisme à la morale de l'intérêt", *Mercure de France* (Paris: juin, 1957), pp. 238-55. Translation: "In order to reform the world entirely, that is to banish all vices and all gross disorders, and to make mankind as happy as possible from this life, they must be given, in default of charity, an enlightened self-love, which can discern their true interests".

propre" focused only upon the tendency of individuals to look within themselves, to worship themselves, and to activate their self-interest.

Although it would seem as if La Rochefoucauld concentrated only upon the negative side of human nature, an argument propounded by the likes of Madame de La Fayette and Rousseau, he did not ignore the concept of virtue. He stressed, for example, that truly honest individuals were without conceit and hypocrisy.<sup>16</sup> He noted that:

Les faux honnêtes gens sont ceux qui déguisent leurs défauts aux autres et à eux-mêmes; les vrais honnêtes gens sont ceux qui les connaissent parfaitement et les confessent.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, he argued that both good taste and virtue were the products of a sound judgement.<sup>18</sup> However, in spite of this, it was always evident from the tone of the *Maximes* that goodness and virtue were too often contaminated by self-interest, vanity and vice. He even suggested that individuals were so preoccupied with their own advantage that they accepted for virtues what were really vices:

L'aveuglement des hommes est le plus dangereux effet de leur orgueil: il sert à le nourrir et à l'augmenter, et nous ôte la connaissance des remèdes qui pourraient soulager nos misères et nous guérir de nos défauts.<sup>19</sup>

If true virtue was to be freed from vice, it demanded a high degree of lucidity - "Rien n'est plus rare que la véritable bonté".<sup>20</sup> However, he qualified his thought by adding that even those who thought that they possessed virtue were only suffering from weakness. Like moral instructors, he tended to blame the corruption of virtue on a deficient moral education, which promoted "amour-propre". He noted that:

L'éducation que l'on donne d'ordinaire aux jeunes gens est un second amour-propre qu'on leur inspire.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> La Rochefoucauld, op. cit., Maxim 203, p. 64.

"Le vrai honnête homme est celui qui ne se pique de rien".

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Maxim 202, p. 64. Translation: "False honesty hides its imperfections both from itself and from others; true honesty recognizes them fully and acknowledges them".

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Maxim 258, p. 84. "Le bon goût vient plus du jugement. . .".

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Supplementary Maxim 19, p. 174. Translation: "The most dangerous effect of pride is the blindness it produces; it is this which feeds and swells it, and prevents our observing remedies which might alleviate our misery or cure our faults".

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Maxim 481, p. 148. Translation: "Nothing is rarer than true goodness".

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Maxim 261, p. 84. Translation: "The education usually given to the young is merely an extra dose of 'amour-propre'".

By focusing upon reason, both as a moderator of the passions and a faculty which assigned true worth to things, La Rochefoucauld could be described as a forerunner of mid eighteenth-century moral educators. Furthermore, in contrast to contemporary theory which stressed rationalism as the only basis for judgement, La Rochefoucauld advanced the theory that the passions and sensibility also affected the reasoning ability of individuals, and their subsequent judgements. He commented:

Il semble que la nature ait caché dans le fond de notre esprit des talents et une habileté que nous ne connaissons pas: les passions seules ont le droit de les mettre au jour, et nous donner quelquefois des vues plus certaines et plus achevées, que l'art ne saurait faire.<sup>22</sup>

Although Rousseau criticised La Rochefoucauld's negativity, in his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, there was little doubt that La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes* were designed to instruct readers against vices so prevalent in contemporary society. In a statement reminiscent of the writers of moral instruction in the mid eighteenth century, he correctly asserted that:

Rien n'est si contagieux que l'exemple, et nous ne faisons jamais de grands biens ni de grands maux qui n'en produisent de semblables.<sup>23</sup>

During the next century, writers were to advance indirectly the truth of this statement, by stressing that good novels exhibited virtuous behaviour at the expense of the vicious, while bad novels exhibited the converse. In addition to this, La Rochefoucauld was also responsible for stating that approval or praise prompted people to act virtuously. He claimed that:

Le désir de mériter les louanges qu'on nous donne fortifie notre vertu; et celles que l'on donne à l'esprit, à la valeur et à la beauté, contribuent à les augmenter.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Maxim 404, p. 126. Translation: "It would seem that nature has concealed in us talents and abilities of which we are not conscious; it is the privilege of emotion to reveal these powers, and in some cases to endow us with a surer and more perfect insight than we could attain by our own art".

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Maxim 230, p. 74. Translation: "Nothing is so contagious as example, and all our very good and very bad deeds beget their like".

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Maxim 150, p. 48. Translation: "The desire to be worthy of praise we receive fortifies our virtue; praise accorded to wit, courage, or beauty tends to enhance those qualities".

These words, which represent a subsidiary aim of the traditional approach to moral education, emphasised the need for readers to be constantly exposed to models of virtue, so that they could be enhanced by virtue.

Far from possessing a corrupt heart and soul himself, as Madame de La Fayette described him in her *Lettre à Madame de Sablé*, La Rochefoucauld was an acute observer of the society of his time. In his portrait of the human heart, in the preface to the edition of 1665, he anticipated the criticisms of his adversaries when he wrote:

Il court fortune de ne plaire pas à tout le monde, parce qu'on trouver a peut-être qu'il ressemble trop, et qu'il ne flatte pas assez . . . . mais, toute correcte qu'elle est, possible n'évitera-t-elle pas la censure de certaines personnes, qui ne peuvent souffrir que l'on se mêle de pénétrer dans le fond de leur cœur, et qui croient être en droit d'empêcher que les autres les connaissent parce qu'elles ne veulent pas se connaître elles-mêmes. Il est vrai que comme ces Maximes sont remplies de ces sortes de vérités dont l'orgueil humain ne se peut accommoder, il est presque impossible qu'il ne se soulève contre elles, et qu'elles ne s'attirent des censeurs.<sup>25</sup>

Such was the case with *Les Maximes*; they attracted censure because they exposed, as was the function of the novel of moral instruction, vices inherent in society. However, they also fell far short of the intended role of the novel of moral instruction because they failed to adopt an adequate rhetorical discourse. La Rochefoucauld stated that his *Maximes* presented "universal truths"; however, in reality, his work failed to allow readers the autonomy necessary in exploring the validity of his instruction. Consequently, his method provided a deficient means of educating readers. By failing to engage his readers in a text which allowed them to scrutinize their beliefs and values, La Rochefoucauld also failed in his attempt to inculcate virtue into the minds of his readers. The *Maximes*, therefore, provided a useful set of general truths, but little real moral instruction.

Jean de La Bruyère, in his work *Les Caractères*, refined the model of instruction used by La Rochefoucauld. He sought, in his study of manners, to analyse and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., "Avis au lecteur de l'édition de 1665", p. xxii. Translation: "It is not likely to find favour with everybody, because the likeness may be found too faithful and not flattering enough. . . . however, faithful though it be, it may not succeed in escaping the censure of certain people who cannot tolerate any busybody probing their inmost hearts, and consider they have a right to prevent others knowing them because they have no wish to know themselves. It is true that, as the Maxims are full of truths that are unacceptable to human pride, pride will almost inevitably protest against them, and they will surely attract criticism".

understand the irrational and the illusory in order to provide some reasoned judgement to moral dilemmas. In so doing, he claimed that he could discover the truth and, by consequence, improve the manners of society. In his preface to *Les Caractères*, borrowing a Latin epigraph from Erasmus, he stated that the purpose of his work was:

Admonere volumus, non mordere; prodesse, non laedere; consulere moribus hominum, non officere.<sup>26</sup>

In this aim, La Bruyère anticipated not only the role of writers, but also the part that ridicule and satire were to play as instruments of moral correction, in the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. He also distinguished between those vices that had become ingrained in individuals from birth, and those that had been assumed by them during the course of life. Like La Rochefoucauld, Locke and other eighteenth-century writers, La Bruyère blamed a deficient moral education for promoting vice. He commented that:

Il y a des vices que nous ne devons à personne, que nous apportons en naissant, et que nous fortifions par l'habitude; il y en a d'autres que l'on contracte, et qui nous sont étrangers.<sup>27</sup>

La Bruyère argued that deficiently-educated individuals, affected from childhood by artifice and vanity, were augmenting their own vices by adopting vices common to their own society. Blaming the accumulated vices of individuals upon their lack of piety and their inability to apply reason to control the appetites, he observed that:

Tout nôtre mal vient de ne pouvoir être seuls: de là le jeu, le luxe, la dissipation, le vin, les femmes, l'ignorance, la médisance, l'envie, l'oubli de soi-même et de Dieu.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Jean de La Bruyère, *Les Caractères de Theophraste, Traduits du Grec, avec les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce Siècle* (first published, 1688), (Paris: Brodard et Taupin, 1973), p. 23. Translation: "We have sought to admonish, not to offend; to help rather than wound; to be of good counsel to men, not to do them harm".

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, "De l'homme", ¶15, p. 273. Translation: "There are some vices for which we are indebted to none but ourselves, which are innate in us, and are strengthened by habit; there are others we contract which are foreign to us".

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, "De l'homme", ¶99, p. 296. Translation: "All men's misfortunes proceed from their aversion to being alone; hence gambling, extravagance, dissipation, wine, women, ignorance, slander, envy, and forgetfulness of what we owe to God and ourselves".

Although La Bruyère did not ignore the part that the passions could play in dictating the actions and words of individuals, he still concurred with La Rochefoucauld's view that reason alone was responsible for the attainment of truth and virtue. He noted:

La raison tient de la vérité, elle est une; l'on n'y arrive que par un chemin, et l'on s'en écarte par mille. L'étude de la sagesse a moins d'étendue que celle que l'on feroit des sots et des impertinents.<sup>29</sup>

In a statement which could well describe the intent of writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, La Bruyère warned individuals to be wary of the excesses of the imagination, if they sought moral improvement. He commented that:

Il ne faut pas qu'il y ait trop d'imagination dans nos conversations ni dans nos écrits; elle ne produit souvent que des idées vaines et puérides, qui ne servent point à perfectionner le goût et à nous rendre meilleurs: nos pensées doivent être prises dans le bon sens et la droite raison, et doivent être un effet de notre jugement.<sup>30</sup>

Aware that most individuals cared less for instruction than they did for praise and applause, La Bruyère blamed the corruption of manners upon the ignorance of individuals, who based all actions upon self-centredness. For this reason, a substantial part of *Les Caractères* was inspired by a desire to investigate the behaviour and inner nature of human beings as they appeared to the impartial observer. Anticipating the moral instruction of writers like Joseph Butler and Henry Fielding, La Bruyère warned readers that vicious instincts could motivate the actions of individuals, in much the same way as did "a feeling of duty". He observed that:

Nous faisons par vanité ou par bienséance les mêmes choses, et avec les mêmes dehors, que nous les ferions par inclination ou par devoir. Tel vient de mourir à Paris de la fièvre qu'il a gagnée à veiller sa femme, qu'il n'aimoit point.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., "De l'homme", ¶156, p. 313. Translation: "Reason is ever allied to truth, and is almost identical with it; only one way leads to it, but a thousand roads can lead us astray. The study of wisdom is not so extensive as that of fools and coxcombs".

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., "De la société et de la conversation", ¶17, p. 121. Translation: "Too much imagination is to be avoided in our conversation and in our writings, as it often gives rise to idle and puerile ideas, neither tending to perfect our taste nor to improve our conduct. Our thoughts should originate from sound sense and reasoning, and always be the result of our judgement".

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., "De l'homme", ¶64, p. 284. Translation: "Vanity and propriety lead us to act in the same way and in the same manner as we should do through inclination or a

Arguing that "le motif seul fait le mérite des actions des hommes",<sup>32</sup> La Bruyère stressed that all individuals should examine the motives behind both their own actions and the actions of others.

Throughout his work, La Bruyère was concerned with contributing to the moral improvement of his readers, an aim which, he suggested, should be pursued in all forms of writing. In relation to comedy and the novel, he stated:

Il semble que le roman et la comédie pourroient être aussi utiles qu'ils sont nuisibles. L'on y voit de si grands exemples de constance, de vertu, de tendresse et de désintéressement, de si beaux et de si parfaits caractères, que quand une jeune personne jette de là sa vue sur tout ce qui l'entourne, ne trouvant que des sujets indignes et fort au-dessous de ce qu'elle vient d'admirer, je m'étonne qu'elle soit capable pour eux de la moindre foiblesse.<sup>33</sup>

In this way, La Bruyère emphasised directly the value that the novel could have for moral educators. Advocating that the novel of moral instruction should focus on exemplary behaviour and manners, La Bruyère argued that writers should instruct readers by exhibiting examples of virtue upon which readers could, ideally, model their own behaviour. One of the best exponents of this theory, in the mid eighteenth-century novel, was Samuel Richardson who designed his protagonists as paragons of virtue. However, in spite of such representations of virtue, it became questionable whether or not novelists of such works did inculcate virtue into the minds of their readers.

If La Bruyère's aim was to instruct readers, then there were elements of rhetorical deficiency evident in his own works. Odette de Mourgues suggests that "the usual method of the moralist was to alter the raw material of his own experience to achieve an

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feeling of duty; a man died lately in Paris of a fever which he got by sitting up at night with his wife, for whom he did not care".

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., "Du mérite personnel", ¶41, p. 71. Translation: "It is the motive alone that gives merit to human actions".

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", ¶53, p. 47. Translation: "It seems to me that the novel and comedy may be made as useful as they are harmful. They exhibit so many eminent examples of constancy, virtue, and disinterestedness; so many fine and perfect characters, that when young people cast their eyes upon what they see around them and find nothing but unworthy objects, very much inferior to those they just admired, it is not to be wondered at that they cannot have the least inclination for them".

impersonal statement stamped with a seal of universality".<sup>34</sup> Unlike La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère did not take this approach. Too often, his own personal experience of human nature became indistinguishable from what he had presented on the page. These intrusions hampered not only the objectivity of his work, but restricted readers in assuming responsibility for making their own judgements in relation to the issues presented. He commented, for example, that:

Je n'aime pas un homme que je ne puis aborder le premier, ni saluer avant qu'il me salue, sans m'avilir à ses yeux, et sans tremper dans la bonne opinion qu'il a de lui-même.<sup>35</sup>

Such authorial intrusions defeated the true nature of moral education, because they tended to usurp control over the autonomy of readers. However, these intrusions, confined often to comments made by the way, even pervaded his longer stories, such as his comment on Menippus:

*Ménippe* est l'oiseau paré de divers plumages qui ne sont pas à lui. Il ne parle pas, il ne sent pas; il répète des sentiments et des discours, se sert même si naturellement de l'esprit des autres qu'il y est le premier trompé, et qu'il croit souvent dire son goût ou expliquer sa pensée, lorsqu'il n'est que l'écho de quelqu'un qu'il vient de quitter. C'est un homme qui est de mise un quart d'heure de suite, qui le moment d'après baisse, dégénère, perd le peu de lustre qu'un peu de mémoire lui donnoit, et montre la corde. Lui seul ignore combien il est au-dessous du sublime et de l'héroïque; et incapable de savoir jusqu'où l'on peut avoir de l'esprit, il croit naïvement que ce qu'il en a est tout ce que les hommes en sauroient avoir: aussi a-t-il l'air et le maintien de celui qui n'a rien à désirer sur ce chapitre, et qui ne porte envie à personne. . . . Sa vanité l'a fait honnête homme, l'a mis au-dessus de lui-même, l'a fait devenir ce qu'il n'étoit pas. L'on juge, en le voyant, qu'il n'est occupé que de sa personne; qu'il sait que tout lui sied bien, et que sa parure est assortie; qu'il croit que tous les yeux sont ouverts sur lui, et que les hommes se relayent pour le contempler.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Odette de Mourgues, *Two French Moralists: La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.110.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., "De la société et de la conversation", ¶30, pp. 30-31. Translation: "I hate a man whom I cannot accost or salute before he bows to me, without debasing myself in his eyes, or sharing in the good opinion he has of himself".

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., "Du mérite personnel", ¶41, p. 70. Translation: "*Menippus* is a bird decked in various feathers which are not his. He neither says nor feels anything, but repeats the feelings and sayings of others; it is so natural for him to make use of other people's minds that he is the first deceived by it, and often believes he speaks his own mind or expresses his own thoughts when he is but the echo of some man he just parted with. He is bearable for a quarter of an hour, but a moment after he flags, degenerates, loses the little polish his shallow memory gives him, and shows he has nothing more left. He alone ignores how very far he is from the sublime and the heroic; and having no idea about the extent of his intelligence,



Behind the façade of the accomplished gentleman lies the true character of Menippus who, suffering from affectation and vanity, cannot even sustain his artificiality for periods much longer than a quarter of an hour. La Bruyère used the portrait to warn readers of the immense dangers associated with allowing the passions to rule the mind. However, unlike the moral fiction of the mid eighteenth century, his readers were deprived of the opportunity of forming their own judgements; instead, they were told of the consequences of assuming such dispositions. Although La Bruyère departed from the maxim approach of La Rochefoucauld, by couching general truths in the form of a story, his approach was still inadequate to moral educators because he failed, during the course of the narrative, to allow readers the opportunity of assimilating themselves into the world of the text and judging the relative merits of the his instruction for themselves. Although his narrative entertained readers and, on face value, provided them with some moral instruction, the rhetorical method of La Bruyère failed to induce them to apply the instruction to their own lives. Consequently, like the maxim, his narrative presented general truths, which readers quickly forgot, on completing the text.

Despite having developed the instructional method of La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère's text was still primarily one of deliberate instruction, and one which stifled the moral growth of readers. However, he did outline what constituted the most appropriate rhetorical style "for the good author". He commented:

Un bon auteur, et qui écrit avec soin, éprouve souvent que l'expression qu'il cherchoit depuis longtemps sans la connoître, et qu'il a enfin trouvée, est celle qui étoit la plus simple, la plus naturelle, qui sembloit devoir se présenter d'abord et sans effort.<sup>37</sup>

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ingenuously believes that he possesses as much as it is possible for any man to have, and accordingly assumes the air and manners of one who has nothing more to wish for nor to envy anyone. . . . His vanity, which has made him a gentleman, has raised him above himself, and made him what naturally he is not. When you behold him, you can judge he has nothing to do but to survey himself, so that he may perceive everything he wears suits him, and that his dress is not incongruous; he fancies all men's eyes are upon him, and that people come to look on him one after another".

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", ¶17, p. 33. Translation: "A good author, who writes carefully, often finds that the expression he has been looking for for some time, and which he did not know, proves, when found at last, to be the most simple, the most natural, and the one which is most likely to present itself to him spontaneously at first".

This style, of writing in the most natural and yet simple manner, had considerable influence upon the writers of the novel of moral instruction. Furthermore, such a style, free from affectation, was the best means by which to instruct readers. In outlining how writers could achieve this "best style", he continued:

Tout écrivain, pour écrire nettement, doit se mettre à la place de ses lecteurs, examiner son propre ouvrage comme quelque chose qui lui est nouveau, qu'il lit pour la première fois, où il n'a nulle part, et que l'auteur auroit soumis à sa critique; et se persuader ensuite qu'on n'est pas entendu seulement à cause que l'on s'entend soi-même, mais parce qu'on est en effet intelligible.<sup>38</sup>

La Bruyère believed that the success of writers in persuading their readers of the validity of their arguments depended on their assuming the role of readers, themselves. In this way, he anticipated the rhetorical discourse of the mid eighteenth-century writers of moral instruction; a discourse which was realistically based upon contemporary society and which avoided affected language and style. He commented that:

Celui qui n'a égard en écrivant qu'au goût de son siècle songe plus à sa personne qu'à ses écrits: il faut toujours tendre à la perfection.<sup>39</sup>

La Bruyère's notion of perfection was synonymous with his concept of truth. He argued that writers should always pursue truth, even when it were possible to expect greater acclaim and reward from prostituting their art to the corrupt manners of the age. In order to distinguish between the effects of affectation and common sense on the mind, he wrote that, whereas "la pruderie constraint l'esprit, . . . la sagesse au contraire pallie les défauts du corps, [et] ennoblit l'esprit".<sup>40</sup> In the same way, writers had to adopt a discourse of common sense, so as to ennoble the minds of their readers.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", ¶56, p. 51. Translation: "Every author who wishes to write clearly should put himself in the place of his readers, examine his own work as something new to him, which he reads for the first time, is not at all concerned in, and which has been submitted to his criticism; and then be convinced that no one will understand what is written merely because the author understands it himself, but because it is really intelligible".

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", ¶67, p. 55. Translation: "He who only writes to suit the taste of the age, considers himself more than his writings. We should always aim at perfection".

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., "Des Femmes", ¶48, p. 87. Translation: "Affectation and pretension shackle the mind, . . . common sense, on the contrary, palliates the imperfections of the body, ennobles the mind".

Unlike La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère presented a more optimistic picture of human qualities. Whereas the former writer was suspicious of any form of emotion, the latter believed that examples of emotion, such as grief, tears, sympathy and compassion, were genuine, not so much because individuals could "entrer dans la misère d'autrui", but because individuals could feel uneasy at feeling happy while others were facing wretchedness. He commented, for example, that "il y a une espèce de honte d'être heureux à la vue de certaines misères".<sup>41</sup> However, behind this more optimistic view of the nature of individuals lay the purpose of the instructor - a purpose that warned all individuals about the way in which deceitful and excessive passions could lure the uneducated and unsuspecting from the path of virtue:

Toutes les passions sont menteuses: elles se déguisent autant qu'elles le peuvent aux yeux des autres; elles se cachent à elles-mêmes. Il n'y a point de vice qui n'ait une fausse ressemblance avec quelque vertu, et qui ne s'en aide.<sup>42</sup>

Incensed at the moral shortcomings of individuals, La Bruyère, albeit in a qualified way, used both ridicule and satire to provoke the same indignation from his readers. He commented that:

Il ne faut point mettre un ridicule où il n'y en a point: c'est se gâter le goût, c'est corrompre son jugement et celui des autres; mais le ridicule qui est quelque part, il faut l'y voir, l'en tirer avec grâce, et d'une manière qui plaise et qui instruisse.<sup>43</sup>

Although he failed to see, unlike Shaftesbury, that virtue could not be undermined by satire, the work of La Bruyère was otherwise very much in keeping with the art of the satirist, who aimed at correcting "les hommes. . . par les images de choses qui leur sont si familières". By focusing upon topics which were part of the everyday experience of their

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., "De l'homme", ¶82, p. 289. Translation: "There is a shamefulfulness at being happy at the sight of certain miseries".

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., "Du cœur", ¶72, pp. 109-110. Translation: "All passions are deceptive; they conceal themselves as much as possible from others and from themselves as well. No vice exists which does not pretend to be more or less like some virtue, and which does not take advantage of this assumed resemblance".

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", ¶68, p. 55. Translation: "We ought never to turn into ridicule a subject that does not lend itself to it; it spoils our taste, vitiates our judgement as well as other men's; but we should perceive ridicule where it does exist, show it up delicately, and in a manner which both pleases and instructs".

readers, he, like satirists, hoped to reform the characters of readers and, eventually, the society in which he lived. Although La Bruyère was not afraid of satirising individuals in his work, his form of satire came very close to that outlined by Pope as acceptable:

To attack Vices in the abstract, without touching persons, may be safe fighting indeed, but it is fighting with Shadows. General propositions are obscure, misty and uncertain, compar'd with plain, full and home examples: Precepts only apply to our Reason, which in most men is but weak: examples are pictures, and strike the Senses, nay raise the Passions, and call in those (the strongest and most general of all motives) to the aid of reformation. Every vicious man makes the case his own: and that is the only way by which such men can be affected.<sup>44</sup>

La Bruyère's satire was aimed at improving the state of society by morally educating its individuals. He summarised the task of moral educators, philosophers and writers when he commented that:

Le philosophe consume sa vie à observer les hommes, et il use ses esprits à en démêler les vices et le ridicule; s'il donne quelque tour à ses pensées, c'est moins par une vanité d'auteur, que pour mettre une vérité qu'il a trouvée dans tout le jour nécessaire pour faire l'impression qui doit servir à son dessein. Quelques lecteurs croient néanmoins le payer avec usure, s'ils disent magistralement qu'ils ont lu son livre, et qu'il y a de l'esprit; mais il leur renvoie tous leurs éloges, qu'il n'a pas cherchés par son travail et par ses veilles. Il porte plus haut ses projets et agit pour une fin plus relevée: il demande des hommes un plus grand et un plus rare succès que les louanges, et même que les récompenses, qui est de les rendre meilleurs.<sup>45</sup>

The aim, to get individuals to lead better lives, became synonymous with the aim of writers of the novel of moral instruction, who wrote not for praise, but in the expectation that they could help readers to lead better lives.

During the period from 1650 to 1750, writers gradually moved away from the superficial and indoctrinating techniques of early fiction, tracts and sermons, in order to present readers with an accurate and more convincing representation of the real world.

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<sup>44</sup> Alexander Pope, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope* (5 vols.), ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), Volume III, p. 423.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, "Des ouvrages de l'esprit", §34, p. 39. Translation: "A philosopher wastes his life in observing men, and wears himself out in exposing vice and folly. If he shapes his thoughts into words, it is not so much from his vanity as an author as to place entirely in its proper light some truth he has discovered, that it may make the desired impression. Yet some readers think they repay him with interest if they say, with a magisterial air, "that they have read his book, and that there is some sense in it"; but he does not mind their praise, for he has not laboured and passed many sleepless nights to obtain it: he has higher aims, and acts from nobler motives: he demands from mankind greater and more uncommon results than empty praise, and even than rewards; he expects them to lead better lives".

Both La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère contributed significantly to this change in the direction of moral instruction. Although the novel had not taken the form it was to have in the mid eighteenth century, these writers laid the foundations upon which the novel of instruction was developed. La Bruyère, in particular, had demonstrated that, in order to become more conscious of virtue, the emotions of readers could no longer be ignored. Readers needed to be moved, prior to accepting and digesting the instruction of writers. Prévost summarised the emerging role of the novel when he commented that:

Chaque fait qu'on y rapporte est un degré de lumière, une instruction qui supplée à l'expérience; chaque aventure est un modèle, d'après lequel on peut se former; il n'y manque que d'être ajusté aux circonstances où l'on se trouve. L'ouvrage entier est un traité de morale, réduit agréablement en exercice.<sup>46</sup>

These words conveyed La Bruyère's conception of the function of the novel. Because of the abstract and general nature of moral precepts, highlighted in the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, following the example of La Bruyère, set out to embody precepts within the narrative, so as to make them more practical and useful guides to moral conduct. As Diderot commented, in his praise of Richardson's works, truly effective instruction could be achieved only through a combination of reason and emotion in the novel. By presenting readers with "la vérité", based on a realistic account of contemporary society, both writers, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, even given their traditional and indoctrinating styles, exerted considerable influence on the development of the novel of moral instruction.

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<sup>46</sup> Abbé Prévost, *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*, ed. Maurice Allem (1731; rpt. Paris: Garnier, 1957), p. 4. Translation: "Each work sheds some light, giving instruction which makes up for experience; each adventure acts as a model, on which we can form ourselves; where we can adjust ourselves to the circumstances in which we are found. The entire work is a moral treatise, reduced agreeably into practice".

**Chapter IV      The Development of a Literature of Moral Instruction  
in England: Locke, Shaftesbury and Mandeville**

Although both La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère influenced the direction and shape of the mid eighteenth-century English novel of moral instruction, it would be impossible to ignore the simultaneous and significant developments that took place in England. The Reformation, with its subsequent decline in the absolute authority of the Church, resulted in considerable debate over the distinction between good and evil. Many moral philosophers began to refute the theory of "self-interest" propounded by Hobbes who, like La Rochefoucauld, had argued that the moral convictions of all beings were based upon arbitrary whims, biased emotion and self-interest. He continued:

But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good: and the object of his hate and aversion, evil: and of his contempt, vile and inconsiderable. For these words of good, evil and contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Like La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes blamed the negative side of "amour-propre", or the failure to control the imagination and the passions with reason, for the corrupt standard of contemporary behaviour and manners.

Ralph Cudworth, however, opposing the Hobbesian theory of self-interest, attempted to show that virtue was worth pursuing in its own right. Along with the Rationalists, he claimed that the distinction between good and evil was not arbitrary, but

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. W. Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1840), Volume III, Part I, Section vi, p. 41.

natural. Reason guided human conduct through rational intuition, a means by which individuals distinguished right from wrong. Emphasising that "all men should endeavour to promote the universal good and welfare of [others]",<sup>2</sup> Samuel Clarke argued, in his defence of Cudworth, that the wrongs committed by individuals were resultant upon the faculty of reason being subordinated to the power of the appetites and passions. Reason, he continued, presupposed certain duties and obligations on the part of individuals towards others. Alternately, when individuals failed to apply reason to their actions, they could be said to be acting immorally, or in a self-contradictory manner. It was in this context that John Locke, the founder of the school of empiricism, outlined the role that education played in developing virtue in individuals.

By emphasising the importance of the experience of the senses in the pursuit of knowledge instead of intuitive speculation, Locke attacked the existing seventeenth-century doctrine, which had stressed that innate ideas provided the basis of morality. He was concerned that such a doctrine, used by both Christian enthusiasts and followers of Hobbes alike, imposed certain religious and moral principles on individuals, which manipulated them to conform, without thought, to a set of moral rules made by those who professed that the rules had been implanted in the mind by God. In contrast, Locke argued that any belief in innate truths "eased the lazy from the pains of truth".<sup>3</sup> Paving the way for Shaftesbury, he claimed that any truths concerning morality must be demonstrated by reason if individuals were to achieve true happiness. There was, however, a weakness in Locke's argument in relation to his notion of hedonism. On the one hand, he stated that reason should demonstrate truths; yet, on the other, he defined the "good" to be whatever tended to produce pleasure for individuals. In the latter case, Locke's idea was similar to the "values-clarification approach" to moral education, in that moral value was determined by an individual's own feelings of pleasure and pain. In his

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Clarke, *Discourse Concerning the Unchanging Obligations of Natural Religion* (2 Vols.), ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), Volume II, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited with an Introduction, Critical Apparatus and Glossary by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975), Book I, Ch. IV, Section xxiv, p. 101.

*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he commented that "Things then [were] good or evil, only in reference to pleasure and pain".<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it is best to consider his influence on mid eighteenth-century fiction primarily from his *Some Thoughts on Education*, a work which directly supported the "traditional approach" to moral instruction.

In this treatise, Locke concerned himself with the upbringing of children. Realising that people pursued pleasure and avoided any activities which caused pain, he aimed to show that the pursuit of pleasure should be controlled by reason. He commented, in relation to the power of the imagination to disturb and depress the rational power of the mind, that:

As the Strength of the Body lies chiefly in being able to endure Hardships, so also does that of the Mind. And the great Principle and Foundation of all Vertue and Worth, is placed in this, That a Man is able to *deny himself* his own Desires, cross his own Inclinations, and purely follow what Reason directs as best, tho' the appetite lean the other way.<sup>5</sup>

Locke emphasised that individuals should control their passions with reason if they were to succeed in achieving virtue and worth. He continued:

It seems plain to me, that the Principle of all Vertue and Excellency lies in a power of denying our selves the satisfaction of our own Desires, where Reason does not authorize them. This Power is to be got and improved by Custom, made easy and familiar by an *early Practice*.<sup>6</sup>

For Locke, reason was the chief means by which individuals could obtain knowledge. Against the arguments of those who stressed the notion of universally accepted truths, he responded that "there [were] no practical principles wherein all men agree[d]",<sup>7</sup> even though there were "a great variety of opinions concerning moral rules".<sup>8</sup> Even when there might seem to be some agreement concerning principles, he found that individuals would always violate these principles in practice, especially when they were contrary to their own advantage. Rather than accept that moral principles were innate and a matter of

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Ch. 20, Section ii, p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Section 33, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 38, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> Locke, *Essay*, Book I, Ch. 3, Section xxvii, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. 3, Section vi, pp. 68-69.



intuition, Locke claimed that they "require[d] reasoning and discourse, and some exercise of the mind, to discover the certainty of their truth".<sup>9</sup> For him, moral principles had to be "deduced". Only conscience, "our own opinion or judgement of the moral rectitude or pravity of our own actions",<sup>10</sup> was considered by Locke as innate; yet, even this required reason to make it "natural".

Although he, like Hobbes, defined happiness in terms of pleasure, Locke's ideas were closer to those of the Deists in the way that "he tended to resolve virtue into implicit obedience to the will of God, which [was] binding because it [was] enforced by the rewards and punishments of the future life".<sup>11</sup> Locke believed that the law of God was the measure of the duty of all individuals. In this sense, individuals had to differentiate between the ordinary pleasures and pains of living, and divine rewards and punishments. Heaven, Locke asserted, should always be the "great business and interest" of all individuals. Consequently, the present life could not afford any deep or lasting happiness for individuals. He declared, in a "Letter to Anthony Collins", that:

This life is a scene of vanity, that soon passes away; and affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life.<sup>12</sup>

Locke found that, although God should be the only standard by which actions were judged, individuals were governed by two other standards, civil law and "the law of opinion or reputation".<sup>13</sup> In order to avoid disgrace and shame, he claimed that individuals used the law of opinion as the standard by which they judged their actions and their conduct.

According to Locke, standards of moral conduct, which were based upon opinion, were not coincident with virtue; rather, they conformed to the "fashion of the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. 3, Section i, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. 3, Section viii, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> Sterling P. Lamprecht, *The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Locke* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Locke, "Letter to Anthony Collins" (August 23, 1704), in *The Correspondences of John Locke*, in Eight Volumes, edited by E. S. De Beer (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1989), Volume III, pp. 383-384.

<sup>13</sup> Locke, *Essay*, Book II, Ch. xxviii, Section 7, p. 353.

country". Consequently, individuals were easily led astray from the pursuit of virtue because they were unable to judge correctly what was in their own, and society's, best interests. Locke asserted:

Our voluntary actions carry not all the happiness and misery that depend on them along with them in their present performance, but are precedent causes of good and evil, which they draw after them, and bring upon us, when they themselves are past and cease to be.<sup>14</sup>

Anticipating the objectives of writers of mid eighteenth-century moral instruction, Locke believed that individuals had to be taught to consider the remote consequences of their acts, rather than solely rely on what they believed were present advantages. Earthly rewards, therefore, had to be subordinated to heavenly ones. Aware that individuals would always seize as many pleasures as were possible, Locke commented:

Men abandon themselves to the most brutish, vile, and irrational, exorbitant life, without any check, or the least appearance of any reflection, who, if they did but in the least consider what will certainly overtake such a course here, and what may possibly attend it hereafter, would certainly sometimes make a stand, slacken their pace, abate of that height of wickedness their action [*sic*] rise to.<sup>15</sup>

Although individuals may gain some immediate satisfaction from vice, Locke stressed that this would never compensate for a loss of heavenly reward. He commented that:

The true ground of morality . . . can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, because of the strength of the passions in motivating individuals to do what, on reflection, they would not do in normal circumstances, Locke claimed that individuals had to be taught to use reason to control the passions. This association between morality and rationality was addressed in his treatise on education.

In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke brought together much of the theory of his earlier writing in relation to the effect that education had on the development of individuals into responsible and virtuous beings. Influenced by the treatises of Henry Peacham and Jean Gailhard, who attacked the harsh and tyrannical approach of educating

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. xxi, Section 58-63, pp. 272-276.

<sup>15</sup> King, *Life of Locke*, p. 359.

<sup>16</sup> Locke, *Essay*, Book I, Ch. 3, Section vi, p. 69.

individuals, Locke warned readers of the bad influences of nurses and servants, and the important part that education could play in improving the corrupt manners of society. From a rhetorical standpoint, Locke's work was important because it sought to persuade readers of the validity of its argument, rather than simply indoctrinate them with certain moral principles. Like Defoe's later work, *The Compleat English Gentleman*, Locke's treatise was essentially a manual of instruction, aimed at the educative function of instilling into the minds of readers a love of virtue. He commented that:

Tis Vertue then, direct Vertue, which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in Education . . . All other Considerations and Accomplishments should give way and be postpon'd to this. This the solid and substantial good, which Tutors should not only read Lectures, and talk of; But the Labour, and Art of Education should furnish the Mind with, and fasten there, and never cease till the young Man had a true relish of it, and placed his Strength, his Glory, and his Pleasure in it.<sup>17</sup>

Claiming that this function required the same degree of care as that of awakening a sleeping child,<sup>18</sup> Locke suggested that:

great Care should be taken in waking them, that it be not done hastily, nor with a loud or shrill Voice, or any other suddain violent Noise. This often affrights Children, and does them great harm. . . . When Children are to be waken'd out of their *Sleep*, be sure to begin with a low Call, and some gentle Motion, and so draw them out of it by degrees, and give them none but kind words, and usage, till they are come perfectly to themselves, and being quite Dressed, you are sure they are thoroughly awake.<sup>19</sup>

The same degree of care had to be taken with the development of children's minds, so that children were taught to love only "what [what] Excellent and Praise-worthy",<sup>20</sup> and thus obtained "the Dignity and Excellency of a rational Creature".<sup>21</sup>

In order "to form a young Gentleman as he should be", Locke stressed that only well-bred tutors should be employed. He argued that:

Breeding is that, which sets a Gloss upon all his other good qualities, and renders them useful to him, in procuring him the Esteem and Good Will of all that he comes near. Without good Breeding his other Accomplishments make him pass but for Proud, Conceited, Vain, or Foolish.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Section 70, p. 132.

<sup>18</sup> John & Jean Yolton, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Introduction, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 21, p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 94, p. 156.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 31, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 93, p. 150.

In addition, Locke believed that tutors "should know the World well; . . . [especially] the Faults of the Age". Moreover, anticipating writers of the novel of moral instruction, he maintained that tutors should be able to teach their pupils "Skill in Men, and their Manners", so that they could "pull off the Mask" in order to discern the truth behind the "Pretences" and Appearances adopted by those with whom they associated.<sup>23</sup> Tutors, he argued, must instruct individuals to pursue truth and virtue, and warn them against the dangers of uncontrolled passions and corrupt manners. In a statement resembling the function of the "traditional approach to moral education", Locke commented:

The shewing him the World, as it really is, before he comes wholly into it, is one of the best means, I think, to prevent this Mischief. He should by degrees be inform'd of the Vices in fashion, and warn'd of the Applications and Designs of those, who will make it their business to corrupt him. He should be told the Arts they use, and the Trains they lay; and now and then have set before him the Tragical or Ridiculous Examples of those, who are Ruining, or Ruin'd this way. The Age is not like to want Instances of this Kind, which should be made Landmarks to him; that by the Disgraces, Diseases, Beggary, and Shame of Hopeful young Men thus brought to Ruin, he may be precaution'd, and made see, how those joyn in the Contempt and Neglect of them that are Undone, who by Pretences of Friendship and Respect lead them into it, and help to prey upon them whilst they were Undoing; That he may see, before he buys it by a too dear Experience, that those, who perswade him not to follow the Sober Advices he has received from his *Governours*, and the Counsel of his own Reason, which they call being govern'd by others, do it only, that they may have the government of him themselves; and make him believe, he goes like a Man of himself, by his own Conduct, and for his own Pleasure; when, in truth, he is wholly as a Child led by them into those Vices, which best serve their Purposes.<sup>24</sup>

This knowledge, which tutors had to instil into the minds of the young, was the same as that against which writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction had to instruct readers, if the latter were to assume virtuous dispositions. The best means of educating individuals, in accordance with the traditional approach to moral education, was to highlight for them the vices and corrupt manners which awaited them in society. Locke continued:

But of all the Ways whereby Children are to be instructed, and their Manners formed, the plainest, easiest and most efficacious, is, to set before their Eyes the *Examples* of those Things you would have them do, or avoid. Which, when they are pointed out to them, in the Practice of Persons within their Knowledge, with some Reflection on their Beauty or Unbecomingness, are of more force to draw or deterr [*sic*] their Imitation, than any Discourses which can be made to them. Vertues and Vices can by

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Section 94, p. 152.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Section 94, pp. 153-154.

no Words be so plainly set before their Understandings, as the Actions of other Men will shew them, when you direct their Observation, and bid them view this or that good or bad Quality in their Practice.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to all the instructions and rules "which [children often did] not understand, and constantly as soon [forgot] as given",<sup>26</sup> Locke stressed that "Example" left a far more indelible impression on their minds. Writers of mid eighteenth-century moral fiction tried to instruct readers by incorporating into their narratives, examples of moral dilemmas and situations which could be encountered by readers in everyday life.

As the education of children laid the foundation of the adult character, Locke emphasised that the passions should be controlled from infancy. He observed that:

The great Mistake . . . in People's breeding their Children has been, . . . That the Mind has not been made obedient to Discipline, and pliant to Reason, when at first it was most tender. . . Parents, being wisely ordain'd by Nature to love their Children, are very apt, if Reason watch not that natural Affection very warily, are apt, I say, to let it run into fondness. They love their little ones, and 'tis their Duty: But they often, with them, cherish their Faults too.<sup>27</sup>

Locke believed that parents, through their excessive fondness, were often to blame for the corrupt manners of their children. Far from indicating love, this excessive display of passion corrupted the "Principles of Nature in their Children". Furthermore, the problem was compounded as children grew older. He continued:

For when their Children are grown up, and these ill Habits with them; when they are now too big to be dandled, and their Parents can no longer make use of them, as Play-things; then they complain, that the Brats are untoward and perverse; then they are offended to see them wilful, and are troubled with those ill Humours, which they themselves infused and fomented in them; And then, perhaps too late, would be glad to get out those Weeds, which their own Hands have planted, and which now have taken too deep root to be easily extirpated. For he that has been used to have his Will in every thing, as long as he was in Coats, why should we think it strange, that he should desire it, and contend for it still, when he is in Breeches? Indeed, as he grows more towards a Man, Age shews his Faults the more, so that there be few Parents then so blind, as not to see them; few so insensible, as not to feel the ill Effects of their own Indulgence.<sup>28</sup>

The real effects of over-indulgence on children could only be seen at later periods in their

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Section 82, p. 143.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Section 64, p. 120.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Section 34, p. 103.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Section 35, p. 104.

lives. Like adults, children also had the same passions and desires,<sup>29</sup> which had to be restrained by reason. He added, in relation to the appetites and reason, that:

The Difference lies not in the having or not having Appetites, but in the Power to govern, and deny our selves in them. He that is not used to submit his Will to the Reason of others, *when he is young*, will scarce hearken or submit to his own Reason, when he is of an Age to make use of it.<sup>30</sup>

Locke complained not only about the way in which the excessive fondness of parents had encouraged vice in children, but also about the way in which parents set bad examples, when "they Principle[d children] with Violence, Revenge, and Cruelty".<sup>31</sup> He commented that:

The Coverings of our Bodies, which are for Modesty, Warmth, and Defence; are, by the Folly or Vice of Parents, recommended to their Children for other Uses. They are made Matter of Vanity and Emulation. A Child is set a longing after a new Suit, for the finery of it: And when the little Girl is tricked up in her new Gown and Commode, how can her Mother do less than teach her to admire herself, by calling her *her little Queen and Princess?* . . . *Lying* and Equivocations, and Excuses little different from Lying, are put into the Mouths of Young People.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to blaming parents for the corrupt manners of children, Locke also considered that servants and tutors contributed to the problem by providing children, when they were "discountenanced by their Parents" for their faults, with "a Refuge and Relief in [their] Caresses" and flattery.<sup>33</sup> He reasserted:

He that has not a Mastery over his Inclinations, he that knows not how to *resist* the importunity of *present Pleasure or Pain*, for the sake of what Reason tells him is fit to be done, wants the true Principle of Vertue and Industry; and is in danger never to be good for any thing.<sup>34</sup>

The upbringing of children, therefore, had to include careful attention to promoting reason to a position of control over the passions. Only then could the appetites be directed to serve individuals in the pursuit of virtue. Unlike Hume's philosophy, which held reason to be the "slave of the passions", Locke stressed that, from birth, children

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Section 41, p. 109.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Section 36, p. 104.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Section 37, p. 105.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Section 37, p. 105-106.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Section 59, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Section 45, p. 111.

ought to be taught to control their desires "and go without their Longings".<sup>35</sup>

For Locke, education provided the means by which individuals could become more virtuous. Although he failed to explain adequately how self-interest was compatible with a concern for others, as did Shaftesbury and his followers, Locke moved away from the existing ideology, which reduced all desires to self-love. Education, he argued, could provide the means of either achieving virtue or falling into vice. Rousseau, in the middle of the eighteenth century, followed Locke's idea when he advocated that education, freed from the distortions of society, could train children to become virtuous. Although Locke wrote a detailed description of the curriculum necessary in educating children, this remained secondary to his primary aim of educating individuals in the pursuit of virtue. He commented that:

I think I may say, that of all the Men we meet with, Nine Parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education. 'Tis that which makes the great Difference in Mankind: The little, and almost insensible Impressions on our tender Infancies, have very important and lasting Consequences.<sup>36</sup>

Locke argued that education must inculcate, through the reward and punishment system of esteem and disgrace, that God is the source of "all manner of Good to those that love and obey him", and that virtue is necessary if individuals are to achieve happiness "in the other world".<sup>37</sup> In addition, education should teach individuals powers which could guarantee them virtue, such as deliberation, self-examination and reason. In his promotion of raillery, Locke anticipated the Shaftesburian notion of "ridicule", and the use that was to be made of ridicule and satire in the novel of moral instruction. He asserted that:

*Railery [sic]* is the most refined way of exposing the faults of others. But because it is usually done with wit and good Language, and gives entertainment to the company, People are led into a mistake, that where it keeps within fair bounds there is no incivility in it.<sup>38</sup>

Lamprecht summarises Locke's argument well when he comments that the virtuous life

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Section 38, p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Section 1, p. 83.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Section 136, p. 195.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Section 143, p. 201.

requires that reason prevail in all things. He distinguishes between a virtuous and vicious life by suggesting that, in the latter, "passions control the man", while, in the former, "man controls the passions".<sup>39</sup>

It was in the context of such an argument that Locke's pupil, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, came to the fore. Whereas the Rationalists had maintained that moral distinctions were discerned by reason alone, Shaftesbury contended that sentiment or moral sense also played a significant part in the foundation of morals. Although the Rationalists misrepresented Shaftesbury's argument by suggesting that he had ignored the part that reason played in the moral process, Shaftesbury claimed that the moral senses and sentiments, rather than reason alone, were also responsible in discerning the moral duties and obligations of individuals. He argued that:

No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned . . . than straight an inward eye distinguishes and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious or the despicable. How is it possible therefore not to own that as these distinctions have their foundation in nature, the discernment itself is natural and from nature alone?<sup>40</sup>

A moral judgement, he continued, was the response of feeling to some property of an action, rather than just the application of reason. Shaftesbury's moral sense became a fusion of affection and reason, a theory similar to that proposed by La Bruyère. He commented, in his *Advice to an Author*, that:

As long as we enjoy a mind, as long as we have appetites and sense, the fancies of all kinds will be hard at work. . . . If fancy be left judge of anything, she must be judge of all. Everything is right . . . because I fancy it. . . . Every man indeed who is not absolutely beside himself, must of necessity hold his fancies under some kind of discipline and management. The stricter this discipline is, the more the man is rational and in his wits. The looser it is, the more fantastical he must be, and the nearer to the madman's state. . . . There can be no truce . . . For if the fancies are left to themselves, the government must of course be theirs.<sup>41</sup>

Reason, therefore, provided the control necessary for moderating excessive passions. Believing that happiness was the goal of human existence, Shaftesbury still maintained,

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<sup>39</sup> Lamprecht, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>40</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. J. M. Robertson (1711; rpt. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), Volume II, p. 415.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III. 2, pp. 207-208.



with La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère and Locke, that reason was necessary in avoiding the extremes of enthusiasm and fanaticism.

Like Locke, Shaftesbury rejected the Hobbesian view of human nature, which reduced all individuals to the level of corrupt, self-interested beings. Advancing the theory that individuals were, by nature, benevolent, he argued that:

To love the Publick, to study universal Good, and to promote the Interest of the whole world, as far as lies within our power, is surely the Height of Goodness.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast to that of Hobbes, Shaftesbury's philosophy was an optimistic one. In his belief in the innate goodness of man, Shaftesbury maintained that individuals only acquired happiness when they showed concern for their fellow creatures. He observed that, when individuals suffered and evil was apparent, "what appear[ed] to be evil [was] something which subserve[d] a more ultimate good".<sup>43</sup> He commented that:

If everything which exists be according to a good order, and for the best, then of necessity there is no such thing as real ill in the universe, nothing ill with respect to the whole. . . . Whatsoever is really ill, therefore, must be caused or produced either by design (that is to say, with knowledge and intelligence) or, in defect of this, by hazard and mere chance.<sup>44</sup>

According to Shaftesbury, when individuals committed ills, it was because they were suffering from certain vicious affections, which were "inconsistent with the public good". These affections prohibited "a creature [from being] good and natural in respect of his society or public, . . . [and] towards himself".<sup>45</sup> Shaftesbury claimed that it was selfishness, passion in its uncontrolled state, that manipulated the good nature of individuals towards performing deeds which were inconsistent with the public good. This selfishness, labelled by the French writers as the negative side of "amour-propre", caused the conflict between private good and public good. Shaftesbury concluded that it was only when the passions failed to serve the public good that they became vicious.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Volume I, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> R. L. Brett, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth Century Literary Theory* (New York: Hutcheson's University Library, 1951), p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> Shaftesbury, "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit", *Characteristics* Volume IV, pp. 239-240.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, p. 247.

Without adopting the negative outlook of La Rochefoucauld, Shaftesbury was aware of the power of the irrational impulses, or "unnatural affections", over the minds of individuals, especially those that made individuals affect virtuous affections. For him, there were three classes of affections: those that tended to the public good, the natural affections; those that tended to the private good, the self-affections; and those that tended to neither of the above two, the unnatural affections. Into the first category fell love, good-will, benevolence and sympathy; into the second, self-love and interestedness, resentment of injury, pleasure, and emulation, each of which when carried to excess became vices; and into the third, deliberate evil and malice. On the basis of these categories, Shaftesbury argued that those individuals whose good deeds were motivated by selfish affections were as vicious as those who acted from vicious impulses. He continued:

For instance, if one of those creatures supposed to be by nature tame, gentle, and favourable to mankind, be, contrary to his natural constitution, fierce and savage, we instantly remark the breach of temper, and own the creature to be unnatural and corrupt. If at any time afterwards the same creature, by good fortune or right management, comes to lose his fierceness, and is made tame, gentle, and treatable like other creatures of his kind, 'tis acknowledged that the creature thus restored becomes good and natural. Suppose now that the creature has indeed a tame and gentle carriage, but that it proceeds only from the fear of his keeper, which if set aside, his predominant passion instantly breaks out; then is his gentleness not his real temper, but his true and genuine nature or natural temper remaining just as it was: the creature is as ill as ever.<sup>46</sup>

Like the creature in the passage above, individuals could be declared good and virtuous only when their actions stemmed directly from a natural temper of goodness and a concern for the general good and welfare of the whole. In this sense, Shaftesbury diverged significantly from the thoughts of the Rationalists, who contended that acts were good only if they produced good results. In contrast, Shaftesbury claimed that it was the motive behind the act which determined whether that act was good or evil.

For individuals to be described as virtuous, Shaftesbury believed that they had to do more than just perform acts of good nature; they also had to be motivated by the right affections. Although reason could discern what actions produced the greatest public

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, pp. 249-250.

good, he argued that moral goodness arose only when actions were based on the proper affections. Subsequently, acts of virtue rewarded individuals with genuine happiness. He stressed that it was his "business" to prove the following:

1. "That to have the natural, kindly, or generous affections strong and powerful towards the good of the public, is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment"; and "that to want them, is certain misery and ill."
2. "That to have the private or self affections too strong, or beyond their degree of subordinacy to the kindly and natural, is also miserable."
3. And "that to have the unnatural affections (viz. such as are neither founded on the interest of the kind or public, nor of the private person or creature himself) is to be miserable in the highest degree."<sup>47</sup>

Although the style of the above passage was similar to the absolutist doctrines of the French philosophers, in the way that it directed the attention of readers to what constituted moral goodness, it was still significant for the both readers and writers of mid eighteenth-century fiction, as it defined the criteria for distinguishing between characters of virtuous and vicious dispositions. Shaftesbury concluded by adding that "if the love of doing good be not, of itself, a good and right inclination" then there could "possibly be [no such] thing as goodness or virtue".<sup>48</sup>

After emphasising the obvious evil in cases of envy and "other such hateful passions", Shaftesbury, in his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, claimed that there was also an evil to be derived from excessive kindness and love. He remarked that:

. . . even as to kindness and love of the most natural sort (such as that of any creature for its offspring) if it be immoderate and beyond a certain degree it is undoubtedly vicious. For thus over-great tenderness destroys the effect of love, and excessive pity renders us incapable of giving succour. Hence the excess of motherly love is owned to be a vicious fondness; over-great pity, effeminacy and weakness; over-great concern for self-preservation, meanness and cowardice; too little, rashness; and none at all, or that which is contrary (viz. a passion leading to self-destruction), a mad and desperate depravity.<sup>49</sup>

Readers had to be taught that what might seem good and virtuous could also be "vicious". Drawing on the philosophy of La Bruyère, he commented that many apparently good affections, when they became excessive, could have more sinister

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<sup>47</sup> Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, in the *Characteristics*, Volume IV, pp. 292-293.

<sup>48</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Volume I, p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, p. 250.

motives. For Shaftesbury, virtuous individuals lived in harmony with the larger system, without becoming excessive. As such, control of the passions became a necessary activity of reason if the public good was to be advanced. Stanley Green summarizes this point adequately when he comments, in his introduction to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, that:

The relation between the affections and the intellect is reciprocal; an affectional imbalance may distort our reasoning, just as false reasoning may distort our impulses.<sup>50</sup>

Shaftesbury believed that, where the emotional responses were "natural" and subject to the influence of reason, individuals would always respond with the right affections and arrive at the correct moral judgements. Goodness of actions depended upon the agent's affections which, if they followed the natural affections, had to be praiseworthy. This philosophy had an important bearing on the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, particularly in relation to the works of Fielding and Goldsmith.

In 1714, Bernard Mandeville attacked Shaftesbury's doctrine that individuals could be "naturally Virtuous . . . without any Trouble or Violence upon themselves".<sup>51</sup> He argued, in "A Search into the Nature of Society", that such a view, which expected and required "Goodness in [the] Species" in the same proportion as "a sweet Taste [was expected and required] in Grapes and China Oranges", was naïve. He continued that:

This Noble Writer [ Lord Shaftesbury] Fancies, that as Man is made for Society, so he ought to be born with a kind Affection to the whole, of which he is a part, and a Propensity to seek the Welfare of it. In pursuance of this Supposition, he calls every Action perform'd with regard to the Publick Good, Virtuous; and all Selfishness, wholly excluding such a Regard, Vice. In respect to our own Species he looks upon Virtue and Vice as permanent Realities that must ever be the same in all Countries and all Ages, and imagines that a Man of sound Understanding, by following the Rules of good Sense, may not only find out that *Pulchrum et Honestum* both in Morality and the Works of Art and Nature, but likewise govern himself by his Reason with as much Ease and Readiness as a good Rider manages a well-taught Horse by the Bridle.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Stanley Green, "Introduction to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*", in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. J. M. Robertson, p. xxxiv.

<sup>51</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 323.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324.

Indebted to La Rochefoucauld and Hobbes in his belief that individuals acted only from "temperament" and for their own advantage, Mandeville also argued that individuals were completely egoistic, and that all their apparently altruistic qualities were nothing more than a disguised form of pride and selfishness. Defining pride as that "Natural Faculty by which every Mortal that has any Understanding over-values and imagines better Things of himself than any impartial Judge", he continued:

What is very peculiar to this Faculty of ours is that those who are fullest of it are the least willing to connive at it in others; while the Heinousness of other Vices is the most extenuated by those who are guilty of 'em themselves. . . . As to wearing Apparel in particular, they'll tell you, that Pride, which sticks much nearer to us than our Clothes, is only lodg'd in the Heart, and that Rags often conceal a greater Portion of it than the most pompous Attire. . . Clothes were originally made for two Ends, to hide our Nakedness, and to fence our Bodies against the Weather, and other outward Injuries: To these our boundless Pride has added a third, which is Ornament. . . The poorest Labourer's Wife in the Parish, who scorns to wear a strong wholesom Frize, as she might, will half starve her self and her Husband to purchase a second-hand Gown and Petticoat, that cannot do her half the Service; because, forsooth, it is more genteel.<sup>53</sup>

Refusing to confine his examination of the effects of pride to any one class, Mandeville concluded that all individuals, even the clergy with "the fullness of [their] noble and spotless Garment[s]",<sup>54</sup> suffered from its effects. In contrast to Shaftesbury, who claimed that moral acts were based entirely on good affections, Mandeville asserted that pride motivated all good actions. With La Rochefoucauld, he believed that all actions stemmed from desires of the heart, which were governed by self-love, and that virtue was little more than vice disguised.

Mandeville's thoughts are important to this discussion on moral education in the eighteenth century because he, like Locke, argued that individuals were malleable. Following Locke's argument, Mandeville claimed that education could provide the means of teaching individuals correct, as opposed to incorrect, behaviour and manners. Moral education was necessary because, he believed, individuals could not distinguish good from bad by their natural instincts alone. Like Defoe, Mandeville criticised the way in which contemporary education had promoted the continuation of corrupt behaviour and

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-125, 127, 129.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

manners, rather than developing within individuals enlightened characters. Blaming "the excessive Force of Education", rather than "Nature", for creating the different standards of modesty between men and women, Mandeville continued:

*Miss* is scarce three Years old, but she is spoke to every Day to hide her Leg and rebuk'd in good Earnest if she shews it; while *Little Master* at the same Age is bid to take up his Coats and piss like a Man. It is Shame and Education that contains the Seeds of all Politeness, and he that has neither, and offers to speak the Truth of his Heart, and what he feels within, is the most contemptible Creature upon Earth, tho' he committed no other Fault. If a Man should tell a Woman, that he could like nobody so well to propagate his Species upon, as her self, and that he found a violent Desire that Moment to go about it, and accordingly offer'd to lay hold of her for that purpose; the Consequence would be, that he would be called a Brute, the Woman would run away, and himself be never admitted in any civil Company. There is no body that has any Sense of Shame, but would conquer the strongest Passion rather than be so serv'd. But a Man need not conquer his Passions, it is sufficient that he conceals them. Virtue bids us subdue, but good Breeding only requires we should hide our Appetites. A fashionable Gentleman may have as violent an Inclination to a Woman as the brutish Fellow; but then he behaves himself quite otherwise; he first addresses the Lady's Father and demonstrates his Ability splendidly to maintain his Daughter; upon this he is admitted into her Company, where, by Flattery, Submission, Presents, and Assiduity, he endeavours to procure her Liking to his Person, which if he can compass, the Lady in a little while resigns herself to him before Witnesses in a most solemn manner; at Night they go to Bed together, where the most reserv'd Virgin very tamely suffers him to do what he pleases, and the upshot is, that he obtains what he wanted without ever having ask'd for it.<sup>55</sup>

By emphasising the hypocrisy underlying the "virtuous" nature of the gentleman, Mandeville criticised both the way in which individuals were educated according to social convention, rather than on the basis of any genuine adherence to virtue, and the way in which these virtues served only to satisfy pride and selfish impulses.

Mandeville also blamed contemporary education for the hypocrisy of "well-bred men". He observed that, in accordance with the customs of manners and good breeding, all individuals had to make others believe that they not only had a disregard for their own interest, but that they also held a higher value of esteem for their neighbours than they did for themselves. Mandeville defined "this laudable Quality" as "Manners or Good-breeding, [which consisted] in a Fashionable Habit, acquired by Precept and Example, of flattering the Pride and Selfishness of others and concealing our own with Judgment and

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-73.

Dexterity".<sup>56</sup> He concluded that, underlying the apparently virtuous regard that individuals had for each other, there existed selfishness. Criticising the motives of "well-bred men", he continued:

A well-bred Man may be desirous, and even greedy after Praise and the Esteem of others, but to be prais'd to his Face offends his Modesty: the Reason is this; all Human Creatures, before they are yet polish'd, receive an extraordinary Pleasure in hearing themselves prais'd: this we are all conscious of, and therefore when we see a Man openly enjoy and feast on this Delight, in which we have no share, it rouses our Selfishness, and immediately we begin to Envy and Hate him. For this reason, the well-bred Man conceals his Joy, and utterly denies that he feels any, and by this means consulting and soothing our Selfishness, he averts that Envy and Hatred, which otherwise he would have justly to fear. When from our Childhood we observe how those are ridicul'd who calmly can hear their own Praises, it is possible that we may strenuously endeavour to avoid that Pleasure, that in tract of time we grow uneasy at the approach of it: but this is not following the Dictates of Nature, *but warping her by Education and Custom*; for if the generality of Mankind took no delight in being prais'd, there could be no Modesty in refusing to hear it.<sup>57</sup>

By using the example of the hypocrisy of the well-bred man, Mandeville placed the blame for the corrupt behaviour and manners of society upon custom and education. Thus, his view of the human situation was not as negative as many of his critics have proposed. Although he described individuals as hypocritical, Mandeville never hinted that this hypocrisy was universally premeditated; rather, he believed that individuals, possessing neither self-knowledge nor the ability to control their selfish natures, deceived themselves. He argued that individuals needed to be taught self-control and self-denial, if they were to achieve ultimate happiness.

Despite their differences in relation to human nature and its foundations, Shaftesbury and Mandeville possessed common views of what was either virtuous or vicious. Like Shaftesbury, Mandeville argued that individuals committed vicious acts in order to gratify their appetites, without any regard to the public interest. Still, many contemporaries, including Berkeley<sup>58</sup>, Law<sup>59</sup> and Bluett<sup>60</sup>, incorrectly accused

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-77.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-78. [Own italics]

<sup>58</sup> George Berkeley, *Discourse to Magistrates*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, ed. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1964), pp. 201-223.

<sup>59</sup> William Law, *Remarks upon a Book entitled The Fable of the Bees*, in *Works of the Reverend William Law*, Volume II, (1762; rpt. London: 1892), p. 3. He writes:

Mandeville of praising vice and denigrating virtue. In commenting about the sub-title, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, Berkeley protested that Mandeville was promoting such vices as prostitution, drunkenness, gambling, and robbery. However, this was not so; instead, Mandeville was an educator and moral reformer, who presented readers with an accurate account of the condition of society, with all its trappings. In this, he contributed to the development of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction by highlighting that narratives, firmly grounded in reality, could play an important role in the education of readers. However, in contrast to the genuine novel of moral instruction, which preserved the autonomy of its readers, Mandeville often intruded into the text to state explicitly the way in which readers should interpret his instruction. Commenting, for example, that luxury was responsible for the continuance of vice, he remarked:

But since I have seen something in the World, the Consequences of Luxury to a nation seem not so dreadful to me as they did. As long as Men have the same Appetites, the same Vices will remain. In all large Societies, some will love Whoring and others Drinking. The Lustful that can get no handsome clean Women, will content themselves with dirty Drabs; and those that cannot purchase true *Hermitage* or *Pontack*, will be glad of more ordinary *French Claret*.<sup>61</sup>

For many, this could have been interpreted, at first hand, as an acceptance of vice; however, such a view would have ignored the educative effect and the purpose for which Mandeville employed irony and satire in his work. It is ironical that the narrator should find that, after travelling, he is more willing to accept the vices which he had criticised so vehemently at an earlier date. Mandeville aimed at undermining the educative effects of both custom and travel upon individuals. Wary readers should be able to comprehend, from the irony in the author's words, the purpose of his instruction, which stressed that, while current manners and tastes prevailed, present vices would continue.

Mandeville was also accused of promoting vice when, in both *The Fable of the Bees* and *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews* (1724), he defended prostitution as

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"Sir, I have read your several Compositions in favour of the Vices and Corruptions of Mankind; and I hope I need to make no Apology, for presuming to offer a Word or two on the Side of Virtue and Religion".

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Bluett, *An Enquiry whether a general practice of Virtue tends to the Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or Disadvantage of a People* (London: 1725), Preface.

<sup>61</sup> Mandeville, op. cit., p. 118.



beneficial to the public. Arguing that it diminished the threat of the predatory male to the honour of chaste wives and maidens, he continued:

Who would imagine, that Virtuous Women, unknowingly, should be instrumental in promoting the Advantage of Prostitutes? Or (what still seems the greater Paradox) that Incontinence should be made serviceable to the Preservation of Chastity? and yet nothing is more true. A vicious young Fellow, after having been an Hour or two at Church, a Ball, or any other Assembly, where there is a great parcel of handsome young Women dress'd to the best Advantage, will have his Imagination more fired than if he had the same time been Poling at *Guildhall*, or walking in the Country among a Flock of Sheep. The consequence of this is, that he'll strive to satisfy the Appetite that is raised in him; and when he finds honest Women obstinate and uncomatable, 'tis very natural to think, that he'll hasten to others that are more compliable. Who wou'd so much as surmise that this is the Fault of Virtuous Women? They have no Thoughts of Men in dressing themselves, Poor Souls, and endeavour only to appear clean and decent, every one according to her Quality.

I am far from encouraging Vice, and think it would be an unspeakable Felicity to a State, if the Sin of Uncleanness could be utterly Banish'd from it; but I am afraid it is impossible: The Passions of some People are too violent to be curb'd by any Law or Precept; and it is Wisdom in all Governments to bear with lesser Inconveniencies to prevent greater. If Courtezans and Strumpets were to be prosecuted with as much Rigour as some silly People would have it, what Locks and Bars would be sufficient to preserve the Honour of our Wives and Daughters? For 'tis not only that the Women in general would meet with far greater Temptations, and the Attempts to ensnare the Innocence of Virgins would seem more excusable even to the sober part of Mankind than they do now: But some Men would grow outrageous, and Ravishing would become a common Crime. Where six or seven Thousand Sailors arrive at once, as it often happens, at *Amsterdam*, that have seen none but their own Sex for many Months together, how is it to be suppos'd that honest Women should walk the Streets unmolested if there were no Harlots to be had at reasonable Prices?<sup>62</sup>

Mandeville was not suggesting, as some asserted, that prostitution was not a vice; rather, he claimed that it served the interests of the general public by preserving the chastity of the majority of women. In his essay, *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews*, he outlined the evil consequences of private "whoring" so as to support his idea that London should establish legal prostitution. He even went so far as to advocate for London one hundred brothels, each with twenty women, and a set of "Rules and Orders". This change, he argued, would benefit the whole of society by controlling prostitution, infanticide and disease, and stopping "moneyed men" from seducing the wives and daughters of other men. He continued that, without public prostitution:

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-96.

[A man] must employ both his Time and Rhetorick, and perhaps too his Purse, in deluding some modest Girl, which, besides the Loss of Time in carrying on such an Intrigue, is apt to give the Head such an amorous Turn as is quite inconsistent with Business and may probably lead a Man into After-Expenses, which at first he never dreamt of.<sup>63</sup>

By legalising prostitution, Mandeville claimed that men would devote more time to their specific business duties, which would, in turn, provide a public benefit. More importantly, however, he stressed that prostitution provided a greater public benefit by preserving the institution of marriage,<sup>64</sup> for no longer would women have to fear unwarranted attacks upon their chastity which, had they occurred, would reduce their prospects of marriage.

Mandeville never derided virtue. Believing that virtue brought its own benefits for society, he argued that rational beings should never be offered inducements as rewards for virtuous behaviour. Despite protestations to the contrary, he also claimed that individuals valued material and sensual pleasures above true virtue. Thus, if society was to be improved, individuals had to be instructed against vice and taught how to achieve self-knowledge. Like the moral educators of the mid eighteenth century, Mandeville employed satire to expose the hypocrisy and self-deception of those who professed to have no concern for worldly pleasures, yet could not do without them. Of the "worldly-minded, voluptuous, and ambitious" individual, he commented:

He aims at spacious Palaces and delicious Gardens; his chief Delight is in excelling others. . . . To gratify his Lust, he wishes for genteel, young, beautiful Women of different Charms and Complexions that shall adore his Greatness, and be really in love with his Person. . . . He desires to have several sets of witty, facetious, and polite People to converse with. . . . The chief Officers of his Houshold [*sic*] he would have to be Men of Birth, Honour and Distinction, as well as Order, Contrivance, and Oeconomy; for tho' he loves to be honour'd by every Body, and receives the Respects of the common People with Joy, yet the Homage that is paid him by Persons of Quality is ravishing to him in a more transcendent manner.

While thus wallowing in a Sea of Lust and Vanity, he is wholly employ'd in provoking and indulging his Appetites, he desires the World should think him altogether free from Pride and Sensuality, and put a favourable Construction upon his most glaring Vices: Nay, if his Authority

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<sup>63</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews, or An Essay on Whoring*, 2nd edition. (1725), p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22. Hector Monro, in chapter four of *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), provides an enlightening discussion of the relationship between marriage and prostitution.

can purchase it, he covets to be thought Wise, Brave, Generous, Good-natur'd, and endu'd with the Virtues he thinks worth having. He would have us believe . . . that the highest of his Ambition is to promote the publick Welfare, and the greatest Pleasure to see his Country flourish, and every Body in it made happy.<sup>65</sup>

Mandeville's satire was levelled at those individuals who, convinced of their own virtue, expected others to believe that they always promoted the public good. Elsewhere, in *An Enquiry into the Origin and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*, he distinguished the qualities of the virtuous man from the man of honour, and concluded that "a virtuous Man expect[ed] no Acknowledgements from others; [for] if they [did not] believe him to be virtuous, his Business [was] not to force them to it".<sup>66</sup> In contrast to Shaftesbury's doctrine, which held all individuals to be virtuous beings if they promoted the construction of a harmonious society aimed at benefiting all its members, Mandeville argued that virtue was an ideal which could only be realised through a process of self-denial and self-knowledge.

Although Mandeville's philosophy differed markedly from that of Shaftesbury, he still shared some similar aims. Emphasising "the Duty of every Member" of every society, he claimed "that Virtue ought to be encourag'd, Vice discountenanc'd, the Laws obey'd, and the Transgressors punish'd".<sup>67</sup> In his fable, he likened individuals to bees, in the way that they complained about the dishonesty, hypocrisy and self-deceit of those around them, while practising those same evils themselves. Motivated by the excessive passions of a negative self-love, he argued that individuals either mistook their vices for virtues or "industriously" concealed<sup>68</sup> them out of a fear of public opinion, or in order to satisfy their pride or self-interest. In his *Free Thoughts on Religion*, he stated that his educative aim was "to make Men penetrate into their own Consciences and by searching without Flattery into the true Motives of their Actions, learn to know themselves".<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, pp. 148-150.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (London: J. Brotherton, 1732), "First Dialogue", pp. 43-44.

<sup>67</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 229.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>69</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, the Church and national Happiness, 2nd ed., (London: Printed for Jonh [sic] Brotherton, 1729), p. 11.

Thus, Mandeville's aim was similar to that of writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, who claimed that individuals could only pursue virtue after they had achieved some degree of self-knowledge.

Prior to writing his fable, Mandeville had offered social and philosophical commentary of a didactic nature in his use of prose dialogue. In 1709, in *The Virgin Unmask'd*, he commented upon the education and the role of women within society, a topic that caused heated debate during the eighteenth century. Many critics assumed incorrectly that the sexually-repressed Lucinda represented the viewpoint of the author. Lucinda acknowledges that:

In Reasoning, Women can never cope with Men, they have a Thousand Advantages beyond us . . . Women are shallow Creatures; we may boast of Prattling, and be quick at a Jest, or Repartee, but a sound and penetrating Judgement only belongs to Men, as the Masters of Reason and solid Sense.<sup>70</sup>

Lucinda's comment was misinterpreted by some to support the argument of conservatives who, like the Marquis of Halifax in his *Advice to a Daughter*, suggested that women were not only physically, but also intellectually and morally inferior to men. This interpretation, however, ignored the satirical intent of the writer in relation to his presentation of Lucinda who, instead of providing her niece, Antonia, with a moral instruction grounded in virtue, offered her an education in affectation, corruption, deceit, and hypocrisy. On one occasion, for example, Lucinda informs her niece, who is on the threshold of womanhood, that:

Sometimes when you thought you was not observ'd, how passionately would you throw yourself backward, and clapping your Legs alternatively over one another, squeeze your Thighs together with all the strength you had, and in an Quarter of an Hour repeat the same to all the Chairs in the Room? Many Times, Antonia, have I seen you sit in that Careless Manner. . . Every Action and every Limb betrayed your Desires, your Tongue only excepted; nay, I have often fear'd that that likewise would have been drawn into the Plot, and ask'd for Man as loud as they.<sup>71</sup>

Despite Mandeville's view of the necessity of marriage, documented at greater length in *The Fable of the Bees*, he allowed Antonia to be educated by Lucinda, a professed hater

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<sup>70</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *The Virgin Unmask'd* (1709; rpt. London: 1714), pp. 27-28.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

of men and marriage. In addition to being bitter about womanhood, Lucinda also hates the female body, which she describes as a "Fulsome Sight". Against those who argued that Mandeville was a conservative who shared Lucinda's view of women, readers should contrast the opposite view about women, expressed in *The Fable of the Bees*, in which he commented that:

A Woman is not to be found fault with for going with her Neck bare, if the Custom of the Country allows for it; and when the Mode orders the Stays to be cut very low, a blooming Virgin may, without Fear of rational Censure, show all the World.<sup>72</sup>

Alert readers should be able to comprehend Mandeville's reaction to Lucinda, even through his use of irony and satire. Motivated by pride, selfishness, and other vicious passions, Lucinda provided a deficient instructress in virtue for her pupil.

Mandeville also criticised the schooling received by girls, in his satire upon the life and behaviour of school-girls at the beginning of the century. He insisted that:

They lead Easie and Lazy Lives, and have abundance of Time upon their Hands, especially those whose Relations are rich and foolish enough to furnish them with as much Money as may enable them to bribe their Teachers to neglect their Duty, and wink at their Faults. . . . I have often taken notice, how they have run together in Shoals, whispering and hugging one another, and standing still between while, all at once, set up a Laughter with so much loudness, and so many Grimaces, as if they were tickled to death; and all this occasioned by some silly, naughty Word, they have got by the end; perhaps a baudy Monosyllable, such as Boys write upon Walls.<sup>73</sup>

Like Defoe, Mandeville was incensed at the way in which the schooling system had overlooked character training for both boys and girls. Arguing that girls had been bred to be "shallow Creatures",<sup>74</sup> he criticised the form of education, which taught girls how "to Sing and Dance, to Work and Dress . . . and how to be Mannerly . . . Things [which] chiefly concern[ed] the Body, [while their] Minds remain[ed] uninstructed".<sup>75</sup> He stressed that any inferiority on the part of women, in relation to men, was both educationally and socially engendered. What was significant about *The Virgin Unmask'd*

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<sup>72</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 69.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>74</sup> Mandeville, *The Virgin Unmask'd*, "Second Dialogue", p. 28.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, "Third Dialogue", p. 48.

was the use that Mandeville made of satire to expose the follies inherent in the education of young girls, both at home and at school. In that work, as in many sections of *The Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville was concerned with educational and social reform. What was of even greater importance, in terms of rhetoric, was Mandeville's movement away from the absolutist doctrine of sermonising towards the employment of fictional creations for more persuasive argumentation.

Mandeville directed his satire at the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of individuals. As was the case with Lucinda, in *The Virgin Unmask'd*, readers laughed not at instances of vice, but at the way in which individuals often refused to recognise their own vicious traits. Opposing Shaftesbury's philosophy, Mandeville argued that individuals considered their own interests prior to those of their fellow-creatures. No actions, therefore, could be described as truly virtuous, because they were motivated by selfish passions. Even when acting "from no other Motive but their Love [of] Goodness", Mandeville argued that individuals were inspired by selfish motives. He commented:

Such Men, I confess, have acquir'd more refin'd Notions of Virtue than those I have hitherto spoke of; yet even in these (with which the World has yet never swarm'd) we may discover no small Symptoms of Pride, and the humblest Man alive must confess that the Reward of a Virtuous Action, which is the Satisfaction which ensues upon it, consists in a certain Pleasure he procures to himself by Contemplating on his own Worth: Which Pleasure, together with the Occasion of it, are as certain Signs of Pride as looking Pale and Trembling at any imminent Danger are the Symptoms of Fear.<sup>76</sup>

From this philosophy, the best that individuals could hope for was that they did not allow their desires and self-interest to conflict with the public good. Even if not virtuous, such actions could, at least, be deemed meritorious.

Mandeville also attacked Shaftesbury's idea that individuals were happier when they subordinated their selfish affections to benevolent ones. In *An Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, Shaftesbury had insisted that:

To love, and to be kind; to have social or natural affection, complacency, and good-will, is to feel immediate satisfaction and genuine content.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>77</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p. 334.

He believed that individuals derived their greatest pleasure from "sharing contentment and delight with others",<sup>78</sup> and from helping others achieve happiness. He continued:

That to be well affected towards the public interest and one's own is not only consistent but inseparable; and that moral rectitude or virtue must accordingly be the advantage, and vice the injury and disadvantage of every creature.<sup>79</sup>

Through the character of Cleomenes, who proclaimed that he had been converted to "the lovely System of Lord Shaftesbury", Mandeville ridiculed Shaftesbury's view of the benevolence of individuals. Suggesting that all motives had their origin in self-interest, Mandeville had Cleomenes explain that:

Man centres everything in himself, and neither loves nor hates but for his own Sake. Every Individual is a little World by itself, and all Creatures as far as their Understanding and Abilities will let them, endeavour to make that Self happy: This in all of them is the continual Labour, and seems to be the whole Design of life. Hence, it follows, that in the Choice of Things Men must be determined by the Perception they have of Happiness; and no Person can commit or set about an Action, which at that then present time seems not to be the best to him.<sup>80</sup>

Only a few individuals achieved any degree of virtue and this was only through divine intervention, such as in the case of saints. Therefore, Mandeville aimed at demonstrating to readers that even "the good Qualities of Men . . . [were] the Result of Art and Education",<sup>81</sup> and the need to gratify their own desires. In *An Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools*, Mandeville argued that even charity was "often counterfeited by a Passion of ours, call'd Pity or Compassion, which consist[ed] in a Fellow-feeling and condolence for the Misfortunes and Calamities of others".<sup>82</sup> Pity, he continued, was a passion whereby individuals gratified their own desires; it was not a virtue, because it involved no act of self-denial. Associating pity with other passions, he added:

Pity, tho' it is the most gentle and the least mischievous of all our Passions, is yet as much a Frailty of our Nature, as Anger, Pride or Fear . . . it is an Impulse of Nature, that consults neither the publick Interest nor our own Reason, it may produce Evil as well as Good. It has help'd to destroy the Honour of Virgins, and corrupted the Integrity of Judges; and whoever acts

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>80</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, "Fourth Dialogue", Volume II, p. 178.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., "Sixth Dialogue", Volume II, p. 306.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Volume I, p. 254.

from it as a Principle, what good soever he may bring to Society, has nothing to boast of but that he has indulged a Passion that has happened to be beneficial to the Publick.<sup>83</sup>

For pity to be an effective virtue, Mandeville claimed that it had to be controlled by reason. He was, therefore, sceptical of the claim that benevolence was an innate tendency which aimed at the promotion of the public good. He saw individuals as either seeking public approval or self-approval. Consequently, he argued that, behind the whole concept of benevolence, lay self-deception.

Mandeville, like both Locke and Shaftesbury, made a significant contribution to the development of a literature of moral instruction. He was important not only for his commentary on virtue and vice, and for the way in which he used irony and satire in his writing, but also for the way in which he couched his instruction in examples from everyday life. In relation to the purpose of *The Fable of the Bees*, he wrote:

For the main Design of the Fable, (as it is briefly explain'd in the Moral) is to show the Impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant Comforts of Life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful Nation, and at the same time, be bless'd with all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing People, and wonderfully greedy after all the Benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the Beginning of the World to this present Day have been inseparable from all Kingdoms and States that ever were fam'd for Strength, Riches, and Politeness.<sup>84</sup>

With his method of instruction firmly grounded in reality, Mandeville specifically aimed at highlighting the vices of individuals so that, once these vices had been acknowledged, they could pursue moral improvement. He commented, for example, in the introduction to *The Fable of the Bees*, that:

*One of the greatest Reasons why so few People understand themselves, is, that most Writers are always teaching Men what they should be, and hardly ever trouble their Heads with telling them what they really are. . . . I have thought fit to enquire, how Man, no better qualify'd, might yet by his own Imperfections be taught to distinguish between Virtue and Vice.*<sup>85</sup>

Mandeville best summarised his didactic aim in his "Preface" to *The Fable of the Bees*,

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<sup>83</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 56.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., "Preface", pp. 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, Introduction, pp. 39-40.



where he emphasised that it was his objective to force individuals, who continually found fault with others, "to look at home, and [examine] their own Consciences".<sup>86</sup> In this aim, Mandeville anticipated the role of writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. Arguing that it was the task of writers to teach readers to examine their own consciences, he continued :

Few have Leisure and Ability both to read and examine the Scriptures, as they ought, for the thorough understanding of them; and all have not knowledge to work out their own Salvation. Vice should be continually expos'd, and Sinners reprov'd, and there is hardly a Christian so mindful of his Duty, as never to stand in need of Admonition, or that he wants not sometimes to be exhorted to true Piety and good Actions.<sup>87</sup>

With individuals unable to understand the Scriptures, and, more importantly, unwilling to accept an absolute doctrine far removed from reality, it was left to writers of fiction to expose vice and inculcate moral values to their readers.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

**Chapter V            Moral Education and the Theory of Benevolence:  
                                 Butler, Hutcheson and Hume**

Any discussion of eighteenth-century moral education must take into account the importance of benevolence in the composition of the virtuous disposition. Benevolence involves a direct concern for the happiness and well-being of other individuals. Possessing such, individuals should react to the good and ill fortune of others in the same way as they would react to their own. Defining the "good man" as "related to his friends as to himself (his friend being another self)",<sup>1</sup> Aristotle provided eighteenth-century moral educators with a solid definition upon which to base their theory of benevolence. Joseph Butler wrote:

When we rejoice in the prosperity of others, and compassionate their distress, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their interest for our own.<sup>2</sup>

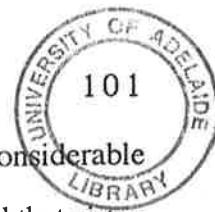
Provided that this "substitution" of the self did not cause excessive distress for individuals themselves, it was considered, by writers of moral instruction, a necessary ingredient of benevolence. Adam Ferguson, writing some time after the middle of the century, supported Butler's contention when he argued that "Benevolence, or the love of mankind, is the greatest perfection; . . . [and] the source of the greatest enjoyment".<sup>3</sup> It was this

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *Ethics*, tr. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1975), Section 1166a, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Butler, *The Works of Joseph Butler, LL.D.*, in Two Volumes, ed. Samuel Halifax (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1804), Volume II, Sermon V, p. 146. All future references to the works of Butler will be from this edition.

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Kincaid & W. Creech, and J. Bell, 1773), Part IV, Chapter II, Section vi, p. 143.



idea, of benevolence as a source of the "greatest enjoyment", which caused considerable debate during the eighteenth century between those who, like Shaftesbury, held that virtue consisted in genuine actions motivated by benevolence, and their opponents who, like Mandeville, denied the possibility of purely benevolent actions. John Brown summarized the debate in the following way:

Thus, most of the *Epicurean* Sect, tho' not the Founder of it, have discarded *Benevolence* and *Virtue* from their System of *private* Happiness. The modern Patronizers of this Scheme, Mr. Hobbes, Dr. Mandeville, and several *French* Writers, after heaping up a Collection of sordid Instances, which prove the *sensual* Inclinations and *Selfishness* of Man, leap at once to their desired Conclusion, that the pretended public Affections are therefore no more than the same low Passions in Disguise. That *Benevolence* makes no Part of Man's Nature; that the human Kind are absolutely unconnected with each other in Point of Affection: And that every Individual *seeks* and *finds* his *private* Happiness in and *from himself alone*.

The noble Writer [Shaftesbury], on the contrary, viewing the brighter Parts of human Nature, through the amiable Medium of the *Socratic* Philosophy: and fixing his Attention on the *public Affections*, as the Instruments both of public and private Happiness: rejects the *Epicurean's* Pretences with Disdain: And fully conscious of the high Claims and Energy of *Virtue*, affirms that the *private Affections* are, by no means, a Foundation for *private Happiness*: That, on the contrary, we must universally promote the Welfare of others, if we would effectually secure our own: And that in every Case, *Virtue* is the *Good*, and *Vice* the *Ill* of every one."<sup>4</sup>

Butler, Hutcheson and Hume entered into the debate over what constituted true virtue. They argued that, by promoting benevolence - the concern for the well-being, comfort, happiness and pleasure of others - individuals were also promoting the public good. However, they stressed that benevolence needed to be modified, or controlled, by reason. James Arbuckle, in his *Collection of Essays and Letters*, emphasised this point:

Tis true, no Man ever was, or will be able to exert his Good-will to that degree, that the whole *Universe* shall feel the immediate Effects of it; and but very few have it in their power to promote the Interest either of a large *Society*, or of any considerable number of their *Fellow-creatures*, in so extensive a manner as a generous Mind would desire. Yet still there is none among us but what is capable of having a *remote Influence* on the *universal Good*. Every one has a certain *circle* of Acquaintance, which, without a Pun, may be called the *Sphere of his Activity*, wherein he has room to employ all his *social Affection*, and by putting one small part in *Motion*, propagate in some measure the happy *Impulse* thro' the whole *System*. . . . For it is the Essence of that *godlike Principle* to rejoice in the *Happiness* of others, not as the Effect of our *own Power*, that being the Language of *Pride* and *Self-Interest*, but as a thing *intrinsically good*, let whoever be the

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<sup>4</sup> John Brown, *Essays on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury* (London: Printed for C. Davis, 1751), Essay II, Section vii, pp. 170-171.

*Causes or Instruments of it. And a virtuous Mind can never want Occasions of thus rejoicing, while we have a merciful Creator over us, who is daily conveying his Favours, and showering down Blessings on all the Children of Men.*<sup>5</sup>

Despite Arbuckle's definition concerning the limits of benevolence for writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, there were many who, like Thomas Sheridan, promoted the "principle of universal benevolence", a concept that gave rise to the novel of sentiment. By teaching individuals "to look on the whole world as [their] country, and to love all mankind as [their] brethren",<sup>6</sup> Sheridan advanced a false form of benevolence, which, lacking prudence and temperance, was open to abuse from the more vicious individuals in the world. It was against this "sham" benevolence - a sign of weakness of character, rather than virtue - that Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie instructed readers.

Although the theological vocabulary and the indoctrinating sermon approach of Joseph Butler was not conducive to moral improvement in relation to this dissertation, Butler was, nonetheless, an important figure in terms of his moral argument. Supporting Shaftesbury in his attack upon the Hobbesian theory of egoistic hedonism, Butler argued that individuals needed no external motivation, such as heavenly rewards, to act virtuously, as virtue brought with itself the reason for being virtuous. Like Shaftesbury, who had argued that motivation towards virtue was supplied by a non-rational factor, the moral sense, Butler, in his "Preface to the Sermons", commented "that virtue [was] naturally the interest or happiness, and vice the misery, of such a creature as man".<sup>7</sup> He believed that morality was founded on human nature, and that virtue consisted in the harmony of the soul. He aimed at showing that "self-love and benevolence, virtue and interest, [were] not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other".<sup>8</sup> He claimed that it was unnatural to seek to fulfil only self-interested desires. With

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<sup>5</sup> Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays on several subjects, lately published in the Dublin Journal*, Volume I, No. 13 (June 26, 1725), pp. 114-115.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Sheridan, *British Education: or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1756), Book I, Chapter XIV, pp. 58-59.

<sup>7</sup> Butler, *Works*, "Preface to the Sermons", Volume II, pp. 71-72.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, p. 79.

Shaftesbury, he concluded that benevolent desires were not only natural to individuals, but also produced a harmony within the soul, and brought with them the reward of a happy life.

Butler emphasised that individuals were motivated towards performing virtuous acts because this would bring them the most desirable results in the long run, either in the present or in the future life. Whereas Sheridan later asserted that the ideal nature of benevolence was to love the entire universe, Butler commented that "this [was] an object too general, and very much out of our view".<sup>9</sup> Instead, he claimed that only God was capable of achieving such benevolence.<sup>10</sup> For mortals, the scope of benevolence should be considerably narrower; they had to show benevolence to "that part of the universe, that part of mankind, that part of [the] country, which [came] under [their] immediate notice, acquaintance, and influence".<sup>11</sup> He stressed that individuals were responsible for promoting the greatest happiness of members of their society. William Norton Junior notes that Butler's principle of benevolence was aimed at drawing individuals consciously into society, and giving them certain capacities and relationships which directed their actions. For example, by such a virtue, the neighbour was expected to relieve the distressed and compassionate the suffering, in much the same way as a father was obliged to care for his family. Norton continues:

Within the benevolent agent, one can expect a meekness and easiness of temper, a readiness to forego his right for the sake of peace, freedom from mistrust, and a disposition to believe well of his neighbour.<sup>12</sup>

By suggesting that a "good man" would rather be deceived than be suspicious of those with whom he associated, Butler diverged significantly from Mandeville's philosophy. Although he realised that benevolence did not constitute "the whole of virtue", he attacked

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Volume II, Sermon XII, p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon XII, p. 261. Butler asserted that, "the perfection of the goodness consists in love to the whole universe. This is the perfection of Almighty God".

<sup>11</sup> Butler, Vol II, Sermon XII, p. 262.

<sup>12</sup> William J. Norton, Jr., *Bishop Butler, Moralists and Divine* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1940), p. 49.

Mandeville's assertions that individuals were motivated solely by selfish impulses. He commented that:

[If] there be in mankind any disposition to friendship; if there be any such thing as compassion, for compassion is momentary love; if there be any such thing as as the paternal or filial; if there be any affection in human nature, the object and end of which is the good of another; this is itself benevolence, or the love of another.<sup>13</sup>

According to Butler, benevolence presupposed a conscious endeavour to promote the good of others, and, as such, constituted a large part of virtue.

Like Shaftesbury, Butler contended that, for individuals, "virtue [was] natural, and vice unnatural". Although the common human nature in some individuals may deviate from the norm, he assumed that there was a standard to which human nature conformed. Individuals, therefore, resembled each other to the extent that they shared this common nature, moral and physical. Although God had endowed all individuals with a "real nature" designed to achieve certain moral ends, Butler believed that there were certain individuals who, owing to the disproportionate strength of a particular passion or desire, could act in ways which "violated" their proper natures;<sup>14</sup> thus, they acted unnaturally and immorally. He argued that the "real nature" of individuals led them "to be influenced in some degree by reflection and conscience".<sup>15</sup> Butler affirmed that reason, or "conscience", was necessary in controlling the disproportionately strong passions and desires, which resulted in individuals violating human nature by committing irrational acts. He continued:

From this comparison of benevolence and self-love, of our publick and private affections, of the courses of life they lead to, and of the principles of reflection and conscience as respecting each of them, it is manifest, that *we were made for society, and to promote the happiness of it; as that we were intended to take care of our own life, and health and private good.*<sup>16</sup>

Problems arose only when individuals allowed particular passions or affections to "rise too high, and be beyond [their] just proportion".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Butler, *Works*, Volume II, Sermon I, pp. 89-90.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon II, p. 113.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon II, p. 117.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon I, pp. 96-97.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon VI, p. 169.

Following Shaftesbury, Butler felt that the goal of individuals' seeking their own good was not always incompatible with their seeking the good of society. He believed that individuals could satisfy their appetites provided that, in doing so, this did not conflict with any moral obligations. He stressed that the passions were not, in themselves, defects of human nature, but had been implanted in the constitutions of individuals by God in order to fulfil some purpose in God's overall design. Unlike the appetites which could not be shared, some passions could be felt in common, such as anger, envy, pride, resentment and shame. Apart from resentment, these passions only fostered evil when they remained "ungoverned". Anticipating the philosophy of writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, Butler argued that the passions had to be moderated by prudence and reason. He commented:

And by prudence and care, we may, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, in the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please.<sup>18</sup>

By moderating the passions with prudence, individuals could promote their own happiness. Thus, prudence was a product of virtue, in much the same way as folly was a product of vice.

Butler defined the object of self-love as "a general desire to the happiness of the self", or the long-term interest of the self. As such, he believed that self-love could not exist without the "appetites, passions, and affections". The affections were needed, for example, to organise particular states of affairs which contributed to the long-term good or happiness of the self. According to Butler, benevolence, like self-love, was an affection, "the object and end of which [was] the good of another".<sup>19</sup> In addition, he associated benevolence closely with compassion, an inward feeling or perception experienced by individuals at the distress and sorrow "of [their] fellow creatures". He outlined the impact that compassion had upon benevolence in the following way:

Compassion is a call, a demand of nature, to relieve the unhappy; as hunger is a natural call for food . . . Thus, to relieve the indigent and distressed, to

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., "The Analogy of Religion", Volume I, Chapter II, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon I, pp. 90-91.

single out the unhappy, from whom can be expected no returns or future service, for the objects of our favours: to esteem a man's being friendless as a recommendation: dejection, and incapacity of struggling through the world, as a motive for assisting him: in a word, to consider these circumstances of disadvantage, which are usually thought a sufficient reason for neglect and overlooking a person, as a motive for helping him forward. This is the course of benevolence which compassion marks out and directs us to: This is that humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our nature and circumstances in this world.<sup>20</sup>

Butler affirmed that compassion was the affection which directly carried individuals, "with calmness and thought", to the assistance of their neighbours.<sup>21</sup> Thus, compassion, like benevolence, stemmed from "reason and duty". He continued:

And though it is our business and our duty to endeavour, within the bounds of veracity and justice, to contribute to the ease, convenience, and even cheerfulness and diversion of our fellow-creatures; yet, from our short views, it is greatly uncertain, whether this endeavour will, in particular instances, produce an overbalance of happiness upon the whole; since so many and distant things must come into the account. And that which makes it our duty, is, that there is some appearance that it will, and no positive appearance to balance this, on the contrary side; and also, that such benevolent endeavour is a cultivation of that most excellent of all virtuous principles, the active principle of benevolence.<sup>22</sup>

Butler argued that the object of any affection was particular; in the case of compassion, that object was to relieve the immediate distress of suffering persons. However, he also asserted that, where there was no suffering, one could not feel compassion because no relief was needed. Compassion, he added, had to have a legitimate object to relieve. For example, compassion was natural where certain individuals had had their health or estates ruined by unfortunate circumstances, but it was not natural for individuals to relieve those who had allowed their unruly desires to cause their suffering. In adopting this position, Butler foreshadowed the moral instruction of Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie.

Butler distinguished the affections, which existed for only a short temporal period, from self-love, which persisted as long as the self existed. Because benevolence and self-love had objects that were inclusive of each other, Butler concluded that, as long as individuals lived, there would always be objects for their benevolence. There was,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon VI, pp. 166-167.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon V, Note to paragraph i, p. 149.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., *Two Dissertations on Personal Identity*, "Of the Nature of Virtue", Dissertation II, Volume II, pp. 23-24.



however, some inconsistency in Butler's conception of benevolence. On some occasions, he considered benevolence as being formulated by reason; that is, its objects were intimately related to the reasoning, or reflective, element in human nature. This, however, was inconsistent with his statement in *Sermon XI*, "On the Love of our Neighbour", in which he stressed that benevolence was a particular affection. From Butler's Preface, written for the second edition of the *Sermons*, it became evident that he attempted to distinguish "the appetites, passions and affections" from the principle of reflection or conscience, by making a division between emotive or feeling elements and reasoning, the deliberate and intellectual elements. Accordingly, both benevolence and self-love, being affections, belonged to the emotive side of human nature.

For Butler, "conscience and self-love" should, like benevolence, "always lead [individuals] the same way".<sup>23</sup> He commented:

And then the comparison will be between the nature of man as respecting self, and tending to the private good, his own preservation and happiness; and the nature of man as having respect to society, and tending to promote public good, the happiness of that society. These ends do indeed perfectly coincide; and to aim at public and private good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other. . .

From this review and comparison of the nature of man as respecting society, it will plainly appear, that there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature, that we were made for society and to do good for our fellow-creatures; as that we were intended to take care of our own life and health and private good: and that the same objections lie against one of these assertions, as against the other.<sup>24</sup>

Butler acknowledged that benevolence and self-love were natural principles in all individuals, even though they could vary from individual to individual. He argued that individuals had to be taught to promote the happiness of society to the same degree as they promoted their own private good. He contended that the correct analysis of human nature disclosed a love for one's fellow-creatures that could not be reduced to self-love. He continued:

To have no restraint from, no regard to others in our behaviour, is the speculative absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our nature which has respect to our fellow-creatures, reduced to action and practice. And this is the same absurdity, as to

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon III, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon I, p. 88.

suppose a hand, or any part to have no natural respect to any other, or to the whole body.<sup>25</sup>

In proposing such, Butler attempted to counter the popular eighteenth-century view that virtue must, by its very nature, be incompatible with the aims of self-love. He claimed that the aims of a reasonable self-love were coincident with the deliverances of conscience. In addition, he emphasised, with Hutcheson, that virtue and benevolence, which "seem[ed] in the strictest sense to include in it all that is good and worthy",<sup>26</sup> were coincident.

With the exception of the "ruling class", whose responsibility it was to exercise a "uniform love" of their country, more than that expected from an ordinary person, Butler stressed that, for the majority of individuals, benevolence could only be directed towards the "good of [one's] neighbour". In doing so, individuals sought, by their actions, the happiness of others. Butler argued that the fulfilment of the desire to seek the happiness of others was, for some, most deeply satisfying and "the end of their life." In his Sermon, "Upon the Love of our Neighbour", he concluded that, after discovering that acting for the good of others gave individuals most satisfaction, self-love and benevolence were perfectly coincident. Arguing that "the greatest satisfactions to [individuals] depend[ed] upon [their] having benevolence in due degree", he claimed that "benevolence contribute[d] more to private interest, such as enjoyment, than any other of the particular affections".<sup>27</sup> Consequently, Butler concluded that there was no conflict between benevolence and self-love.

Butler suggested that benevolence, when it was aimed at promoting the good of others and guided by reason, included in it the sum of all virtues. In a theory which influenced the writers of moral instruction, he argued that, when it came to judging benevolent acts, it was not sufficient to establish that individuals had acted benevolently, in the sense of seeking the good or happiness of others intentionally, rather than accidentally or inadvertently; instead, what had to be established was the strength of the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon I, p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon XII, p. 279.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon I, p. 91.

benevolent motive in relation to other motives in their minds. Butler suggested that it was the responsibility of all individuals to decide for themselves the due proportion of, or relationship between, self-love and benevolence. Assuming that this relationship would vary with each person's differing circumstances, he contended that one individual could not decide for another what it ought to be. Instead, other affections associated with benevolence, such as friendship and compassion, had to be taken into account.

Reason, Butler argued, was responsible for informing individuals what they should do in order to act compassionately or benevolently. He commented:

There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgement upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly.<sup>28</sup>

Reason alone, however, was not a sufficient motive for action in individuals; feelings, or affections, also motivated actions. Anticipating many of the antagonists in the works of Richardson, Fielding and Goldsmith, Butler suggested that those individuals, who had become "insensible to most other satisfactions but those of the grossest kinds",<sup>29</sup> were often men of pleasure. In pursuing their sensual pleasures, these individuals had allowed the passions to prevail in their "unnatural" and uncontrolled states. Although they cared very little about the injuries done to their neighbours, vicious individuals were acutely sensitive to envy and pride, which indicated that the power of the conscience varied from individual to individual. Butler noted that:

Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path, and follow our guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon II, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon V, p. 115.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon III, p. 123.

Butler's concept of conscience was closely related to the traditional approach to moral education, because it provided the means by which individuals could distinguish between good and bad, or virtue and vice. As a result, individuals were obligated to follow the dictates of their consciences.

Butler claimed that it was much more within the power of individuals to relieve the distresses of the poor than it was to increase the happiness of others. Although benevolence was often weakened by selfish interests, he believed that the sight of the distresses of others rarely failed to arouse individuals to act benevolently; compassion acted as a powerful reinforcement for weak feelings of benevolence. One problem associated with benevolence, a problem addressed some years later by Goldsmith and Mackenzie, was that the affections often rose beyond their proportion, making it possible for some individuals to feel more sorrow for the distresses of another "than belong[ed] to [their] share". Where individuals responded with excessive benevolence, they could lack adequate resources to help those genuinely in need of benevolent attention. Alternatively, these same individuals could dissipate their resources so much that they had insufficient resources for their own, or their family's, welfare. Reason, and prudence, prohibited the dangers associated with excessive benevolence, by forcing individuals to discern the genuine need of those seeking benevolence, and by moderating benevolent feelings.

Although reason should gauge the correct degree of response to a particular situation, Butler acknowledged that the feelings could become so strong that they prompted individuals to act contrary to the dictates of reason. For Butler, this was as "unnatural" as lacking compassion, altogether. He commented that:

Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man: because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of these are. Conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied [*sic*] in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things. Thus, they who have been so wise in their generation as to regard only their own supposed interest, at the expense and to the injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the

relation of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness.<sup>31</sup>

Under the influence of reason, duty and interest were not only coincident, but helped individuals achieve true happiness which, because individuals were social creatures, could not be achieved exclusive of the happiness of others. Butler stressed that, when individuals failed to feel compassion on particular occasions, this was because they had allowed their more selfish feelings to overcome their compassionate impulses. He added that, when individuals consistently failed to respond to appropriate circumstances with compassion, the capacity to feel compassion could wither away. Such individuals became "unnatural". Like Aristotle, who also insisted that the passions must be controlled by reason, Butler commented that:

Reason alone . . . is not in reality a sufficient motive of virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason joined with those affections which God has impressed upon his heart: and when these are allowed scope to exercise themselves but under strict government and direction of reason; then it is we act suitable to our nature, and to the circumstances God has placed in us.<sup>32</sup>

Rather than accept the affections as defects of character, Butler held them to be an integral part of one's condition or nature, and something individuals could "not do without". Problems arose only when they became uncontrollable.

Butler's basic moral view held that individuals, where able, should respond to instances of distress and misery in others. Failure to experience benevolent feelings indicated that individuals had allowed other self-regarding feelings to dominate and conquer their benevolent affections. Butler believed that the opportunities for acting benevolently were far more numerous than those for acting compassionately. Arguing that, too often, individuals failed to act on their benevolent feelings, he claimed that an increase in the happiness and welfare of humanity required more benevolence. Defining benevolence as "an affection to the good and happiness of our fellow-creatures", Butler added that this implied "a disposition to produce happiness" for one's neighbours.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon III, p. 128.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon V, p. 151.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Sermon XII, p. 261.

Thus, by becoming more benevolent, individuals contributed to the public good, and developed a dispositional tendency towards benevolence.

In contrast to Hobbes' argument that benevolence was based on a love of exercising power over others, Butler argued that individuals acted benevolently because they possessed a genuine concern for the welfare of their neighbours. Emphasising that individuals must love others as they love themselves, Butler contended that:

The precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the same kind of affection to our fellow-creatures, as to ourselves, which disposes him to avoid misery, and consult his own happiness; so we should cultivate the affection of good-will to our neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same kind of regard to him. . . . There are blessings in life, which we share in common with others; peace, plenty, freedom, healthful seasons. But real benevolence to our fellow-creatures would give us the notion of a common interest in a stricter sense: for in the degree we love another, his interest, his joys and sorrows, are our own. . . love of our neighbour would teach us thus to appropriate to ourselves his good and welfare; to consider ourselves as having a real share in his happiness. . . .<sup>34</sup>

Although he did not consider that benevolence was the whole of virtue, Butler did believe that it formed an integral part in the make-up of virtuous individuals. He argued that if it were the whole of virtue then no bad consequences would follow one man's taking, "by fraud or violence, . . . from another the fruit of his labour with intent to give it to a third, who he thought would have as much pleasure out of it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it".<sup>35</sup> Such an action, however, would be condemned by one's moral faculty, since falsehood, injustice and unprovoked violence were incompatible with procuring the happiness of others and promoting the public good. Butler concluded that, as conscience was supreme over all subordinate affections and passions, it must therefore be supreme over benevolence. In emphasising the importance of both reason, in moderating the passions, and the role that benevolence played in the pursuit of virtue, Butler contributed significantly, albeit in an indoctrinating manner, to the development of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Sermon XII, p. 263.

<sup>35</sup> Butler, *Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue*, Volume II, Section V, p. 20.

Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow from 1730 and one of the most influential educators of moral thought in the eighteenth century, advanced the arguments of both Shaftesbury and Butler. In contrast to Butler, whose method was to indoctrinate readers with his instruction, Hutcheson was influential in developing the innovative, rhetorical discourse that resulted in the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. William Leechman, emphasising Hutcheson's "great fund of natural eloquence, and [his] persuasive manner", commented that:

He dealt . . . upon such moral considerations as are suited to touch the heart, and excite a relish for virtue, as when explaining or establishing any doctrine, even of real importance, with the most philosophical exactness: he regarded the culture of the heart as a main end of all moral instruction.<sup>36</sup>

It was Hutcheson's aim to teach his readers how to attain virtue. In his *Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*, Hutcheson argued for a moral faculty which approved and disapproved of certain actions, irrespective of their association with an individual's own interest. This faculty, or "moral sense", like Butler's "conscience", distinguished actions as either virtuous or vicious. In contrast to Hobbes and Mandeville, Hutcheson emphasized that the motivation for approval of virtuous actions stemmed neither from a selfish desire to win approval from one's peers, nor from a desire to gain future rewards; rather, it stemmed from the principle of benevolence. Arguing that "that action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers",<sup>37</sup> Hutcheson claimed that all virtuous actions were necessarily benevolent ones. However, instead of advocating that their benevolent characteristic made these actions virtuous, Hutcheson concluded that they were virtuous because they were pleasing to the moral sense. He believed that those affections which motivated individuals to act morally were "dispositions universally necessary to publick good".

Hutcheson maintained that the foundation of virtue was the moral sense, which obliged individuals to perform certain duties. He distinguished between the moral sense

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<sup>36</sup> William Leechman, "Preface" to Francis Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow: Printed and Sold by Rolf Foulis, etc., 1755), p. xxxi.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, In Two Treatises*, The Third Edition, Corrected (London: Printed for J. & J. Knapton etc., 1729), Treatise II, Section. III, p. 180.

and reason by stating that reasons could be given only up to a certain point before they became absurd, an argument carried on later by Hume and Bentham. He also heralded the teaching of David Hume, who commented that:

[If you ask a man] why he desires health, he may also reply, that it is necessary for the exercise of his calling. If you ask him, why he is anxious on that head, he will answer, because he desires to get money. If you demand why? It is the instrument of pleasure, says he. And beyond this it is an absurdity to ask for a reason. It is impossible that there can be a progress *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection.<sup>38</sup>

According to Hutcheson, the moral sense compelled individuals to respond to certain actions or characters in a particular way. This fulfilled one of the criteria of the traditional approach to moral education, in that this attitude was responsible for distinguishing morally good from morally bad acts. Where Hutcheson erred was in the part that correct moral instruction could play in educating individuals in the pursuit of virtue. Believing that the moral sense perceived "moral good and evil" and "virtue and vice", he informed readers that approbation of the moral sense was "excited" by benevolent affections and actions, and that such approbation was not peculiar to any particular type of person. He stated that the occasion of moral approval was the "perception of benevolent affections in ourselves, or the discovering the like in others".<sup>39</sup> Hutcheson claimed that the moral rightness of any act had to "evidence kind affections", or be motivated by benevolence.

Hutcheson subdivided virtue into "love of complacency or esteem, and love of benevolence". Defining benevolence as "the desire of the happiness of another",<sup>40</sup> he concluded that benevolent individuals would always promote "the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers".<sup>41</sup> Good actions, therefore, were motivated by moral motives, which had, as their objects, the well-being of others. In turn, this good raised in

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<sup>38</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding, and an Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Reprinted from the Posthumous Edition of 1777; ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1894), Appendix I, p. 293.

<sup>39</sup> Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise II, Section II, p. 135.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise II, Section II, p. 139. See also Treatise II, Section I, p. 114.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise II, Section III, p. 180.



perceivers "affection[s] of good will", which motivated morally benevolent actions towards others. If benevolence were to foster the well-being of others, then it had to be a mental state which was brought into existence by something which acted upon the mind. Individuals, although they could desire to be benevolent, could not choose to possess the affection of benevolence, as this could lead to their being bribed to feel good will towards their neighbours. Hutcheson argued that neither "benevolence nor any other affection or desire [could] be directly raised by Volition".<sup>42</sup> By acting generously towards others in deed or words, Hutcheson concluded that this raised in others a reciprocal affection of good-will.

For Hutcheson, the affection of benevolence was "natural" in the sense that individuals felt good-will towards those who performed acts of kindness for them, in much the same way as they naturally felt good-will towards their own friends. Like Butler, he stated that it was easy to have a generous disposition to close friends and relatives; instead, individuals needed to broaden their circle of acquaintance to embrace all their associates with benevolence. Such persons, he claimed, possessed "the universal calm affection of good-will towards all", a goal towards which all individuals should aspire. Hutcheson claimed that universal good-will was not so much natural in the sense that all individuals possessed it; rather, it was natural in the sense that nothing in the natures of individuals could prevent them from developing and acquiring it. For Hutcheson, the greatest example of virtue for individuals was not just benevolence, but benevolence towards their enemies. Following Shaftesbury, Hutcheson advocated that individuals should act in a disinterested manner; that is, without any thought of personal gain. Any self-interest gained from doing an action detracted from the benevolence of individuals. Thus, individuals, whose natural abilities were equal, could differ in moral worth according to the degree of benevolence that they possessed.

Like Butler, Hutcheson related benevolence to the concept of self-love. Although it could be argued that there was some hint of Mandeville's philosophy of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Treatise II, Section II, p. 138.

selfishness in his suggestion that the desire for eternal reward motivated the actions of individuals towards promoting the happiness of others, this was not the case. Commenting that "we begin to desire the happiness of others as the means of obtaining this happiness to ourselves, which are expected from the contemplation of others in a happy state",<sup>43</sup> Hutcheson implied a necessary connection between the happiness of others and one's own happiness. Only by promoting the happiness of others could individuals achieve personal happiness. Consequently, benevolence and self-love were not necessarily incompatible. Actions from self-love were consistent with striving for the good of the whole, if they "tend[ed] to the natural good of mankind, or some part of it". Such actions best secured the happiness of individuals, because they also "tend[ed] ultimately to [their own] advantage".<sup>44</sup> Like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson contended that vice, where it occurred, was motivated by a mistaken view of self-love, which had become too strong for benevolence. He admitted that there were times when individuals could be seduced from the desire to do their duty to others by considerations of what was in their own interest; for example, individuals could be bribed into performing vicious acts. However, like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson believed that individuals were rarely motivated purely by selfish desires.

Where a conflict between virtue and vice arose, reason was necessary in ensuring the promulgation of virtue and benevolence. Reason provided the sagacious means by which individuals "prosecute[d] any end". Although the moral sense guided individuals in promoting the public good, Hutcheson stressed that "the use of reason [was] as requisite to find the proper means of promoting public Good, as private Good".<sup>45</sup> Suggesting that all approval was based, to some degree, on calculations of advantage, he insisted that individuals approved of what was good because they believed that God would reward all good action. However, by arguing that reason alone could not provide a motive for acting in a certain way without the influence of the passions, he was simply

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Treatise II, Section II, p. 138.

<sup>44</sup> T. A. Roberts, *The Concept of Benevolence* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise II, Section IV, p. 207.

re-emphasising the view of Aristotle. Accordingly, Hutcheson anticipated the writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, not only in his use of persuasive rhetoric, but in the way he argued that all actions were resultant upon a combination of the passions and reason. The problem for individuals was that, on occasions, the passions became exorbitant and led to a corruption of manners.

David Hume, despite some minor variations, also shared a theory similar to that of Hutcheson in relation to benevolence and virtue. Described by Boswell, in 1762, as "the greatest Writer in Brittain",<sup>46</sup> Hume advanced the notion that the end of literature was to describe human nature and the passions, which remained constant beneath the fluctuations of manners and taste. Despite Samuel Johnson's criticism that his was a "pernicious philosophy", Hume's argument was reminiscent of Johnson's own spokesperson in *Rasselas*, Imlac, who comments:

The business of a poet . . . is to examine, not the individual, but the species. . . . His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the spriteliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of the age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same. . . . He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superiour to time and place.<sup>47</sup>

Hume, like Johnson, argued that great writers expressed, in their writing, universal truths about the life and nature of human beings. He accepted Johnson's argument that writers, although their art required that they "please" readers, should always write to be understood, and never neglect the task of providing their readers with moral instruction. In order to present the "truth", both Johnson and Hume argued that writers should adopt a clear, precise and familiar language. Hume emphasised that writers should "mould the heart and affections; and, by touching those principles which activate men, reform their

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<sup>46</sup> James Boswell, *Private Papers*, ed. G. Scott and F. A. Pottle (New York: University Paperbacks, 1928), Volume I, p. 130.

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*, ed. J. P. Hardy (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 26-27.

conduct".<sup>48</sup> In this regard, Hume's philosophy was particularly influential on the writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction.

Like exponents of the traditional approach to moral education, Hume stressed that, in order to instruct readers in morality, writers must present virtue in the most "amiable" way possible. In that way, readers would be persuaded to engage their affections in its pursuit. At the end of the second part of the *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, and an Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume commented:

But what philosophical truths can be more advantageous to society, than those here delivered, which represent virtue in all her genuine and most engaging charms, and make us approach her with ease, familiarity, and affection? The dismal dress falls off, with which many divines, and some philosophers have covered her; and nothing appears but gentleness, humanity, beneficence, affability; nay, even at proper intervals, play, frolic, and gaiety.<sup>49</sup>

Although Hume followed the "moral sense" theory, he did not discount the function of reason entirely. In his view, reason was concerned only with the discovery of truth and falsehood; it could "never be the motive for any action of the will".<sup>50</sup> He concluded that "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them".<sup>51</sup> He believed that morals and manners were not so much objects of the understanding, as they were objects of sentiment and taste; hence, the need for the moral sense.

In "Of the influencing motives of the will", Hume contradicted the philosophy of the Rationalists, who held reason to be pre-eminent over the passions. He stated that:

Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and the affections, it follows, that they cannot be derived from reason; and that because reason alone, as we may have already proved, can never have any such influence.<sup>52</sup>

Hume aimed at proving that, while reason could not motivate any action of the will, neither could it oppose a "passion in the direction of the will". Consequently, although

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<sup>48</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Section I, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IX, Part II, p. 279.

<sup>50</sup> Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Reprinted from the Original Edition, in Three Volumes, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1888), Book II, Part III, Section iii, p. 413.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Part III, Section iii, p. 415.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Book III, Part I, Section i, p. 457.

reason could instruct individuals in the means of attaining their objects, only sentiment could make distinctions in favour of those objects which were worth pursuing and against those which were not; between those which were pleasant or unpleasant; and between those which were to be approved or disapproved. Reason, being "the slave of the passions", was incapable of imposing itself upon the will. Norman Kemp Smith summarised Hume's argument in the following words:

What is central in his teaching is . . . the doctrine that the determining influence in human, as in other forms of animal life, is feeling, not reason or understanding. . . . 'Passion' is Hume's most general title for instincts, propensities, feelings, emotions, and sentiments, as well as for the passions ordinarily so called; and belief, he teaches, is a passion.<sup>53</sup>

The function of reason, therefore, was to direct the passions by distinguishing the means by which a desired object could be attained. Hume commented that it had been observed that:

Reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can have an influence on our conduct only after two ways: Either when it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it; or when it discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us a means of exerting any passion.<sup>54</sup>

Hume believed that the ultimate object of the desires of individuals was to produce pleasure, both for themselves and for others. He argued that individuals could not give a reason why they pursued pleasure, for a reason could only justify the end. He claimed, for example, that individuals pursued the pleasures of others because they liked seeing others happy. When judgements were required, the calm passion of sympathy, or the general liking for human happiness, ensured that they were made in the interests of the common good. What was important about Hume's notion of reason for writers of moral instruction was his opposition to the view that reason was superior to the passions and human nature. His theory restored order to the moral debate, by highlighting that the actions and the decisions of individuals were based neither entirely on reason nor on the passions. What individuals possessed was a moral sense.

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<sup>53</sup> Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, (London: Macmillan & Co. and St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1960), p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> Hume, *Treatise*, Book III, Part I, Section i, p. 459.

Hume suggested that emotions and feelings were private experiences in which the relation between a feeling and its object was contingent. He commented that:

Desires are of two kinds; either certain instincts originally implanted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil.<sup>55</sup>

Hume distinguished between the calm passions, which included beauty and benevolence, and the violent passions, which included love, hatred, humility and pride. He argued that the direct passions arose "immediately from pleasure and pain", while indirect passions "proceed[ed] from the same principle, but by the conjunction of other qualities". Desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security were examples of direct passions, whereas pride, humility, ambition, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, vanity and generosity were examples of indirect passions. Unlike the violent passions, benevolence did not arise from an original impression or idea, for it was, in itself, an "original instinct" in human nature. In contrast to Butler, Hume distinguished benevolence from compassion. He argued that benevolence was motivated, not by the sight of others in distress, but by benevolent impulses. By the fact that the object of benevolence was some person or persons other than the possessor of the passion, Hume claimed that benevolence resembled love. In contrast to Sheridan, he emphasised that individuals should limit benevolence to relatives, friends, and to those with whom they shared some recognisable and significant relations, such as a complete stranger who happened to be one's only fellow national in a foreign country. In an attack upon the notion of sensibility, Hume observed that, as the class of people to whom benevolence was directed widened, the impulse also became progressively weaker. Arguing against those who advocated benevolence on a universal scale, he advanced the notion that, when the circle was enlarged to include the whole of humankind, the passion to act benevolently weakened to almost vanishing point.

Hume associated benevolence and love by suggesting that, when others did some good for an individual, this good was indicative of their good intentions towards that

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Part III, Section iii, p. 417.

person. In return, this aroused the love of that individual towards the others. If, alternatively, the individual discovered that, in doing some good for him or her, others had acted accidentally or inadvertently, then their actions, even though agreeable or useful to the individual concerned, would no longer arouse the love of that individual towards the others. Hume believed that if individuals were related to others by ties of kinship or country, then love towards those other persons would be aroused in proportion to the strength of that relation. Hume overlooked the fact that acquaintance was frequently insufficient either as a means of arousing or sustaining love. Furthermore, he tended to discuss love as if there were only one kind, rather than a wide range. He assumed that love was akin to benevolence because it had, as its primary concern, the welfare of others, rather a love of the self.

Hume elaborated on the connection between love and benevolence in Book II of his *Treatise of Human Nature*. He observed that:

The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoin'd with benevolence and anger. 'Tis this conjunction, which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility.<sup>56</sup>

Hume believed that the emotion of love and the desire for happiness of the person loved were two separate passions. The conjoining of love and benevolence in human nature was due, contingently, to the original constitution of the mind. The concept of love implied that one person wanted to seek the good of another; that is, it implied a wish to act benevolently towards the other. Of course, this was not altogether true of all cases of loving for, where the affection was weak, such as when love grew cold, a very strong desire to act benevolently towards the other may have been lost. However, by affirming that the passions of love and benevolence were always conjoined, Hume implied that all instances of loving were accompanied by strong desires to act benevolently towards the beloved. As such, an instance of love was also an instance of benevolence and vice versa. The standard description of individuals acting benevolently towards others did not entail that agents loved those who were the object of their benevolence; in contrast, the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Book II, Part II, Section vi, p. 367.

standard description of individuals loving others implied that agents did desire to act for the happiness or good of their beloved.

Unlike Butler, who associated compassion and benevolence, Hume suggested that individuals could be affected by another's emotion and respond in a sympathetic manner. He believed that sympathy followed a "mechanical" process in which individuals felt an impression of an emotion, a state of mind, or something internal. This was followed by external expressions, or manifestations, of the emotion in the behaviour of individuals, which were assumed to be a sincere expression of their feelings. Hume also contended that "sympathy" entailed experiencing the same emotional experience as the person, or persons, to whom they were offering sympathy. Hume's experience, however, ignored the fact that sympathy could be an immediate reaction, rather than simply an assimilation of one into another's role. This, in turn, ruled out the possibility of prospective sympathy, in which sympathy could be offered for some anticipated misfortune, which may or may not have resulted from another's present circumstances. Hume argued that individuals could come to feel benevolence on observing another's misfortunes, or another's benevolent feelings. His difficulty was in dissociating himself from the idea that to sympathise with others involved sympathisers experiencing "impressions of pains and pleasures" which corresponded with the same impressions being felt by others. When individuals offered relief, they could be judged morally good or bad on the basis of the motives from which the action had sprung. Hume argued that "*no action [could] be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature, some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality*".<sup>57</sup>

As a consequence of public interest, or "extensive benevolence", being "too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind", Hume argued that it was not strong enough to counteract injustice and selfishness. He blamed "selfishness" upon the non-rational attempt of individuals to compare the worth and value of objects against those of others. He noted that:

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Book III, Part II, Section i, p. 479.



So little are men govern'd by reason in their sentiments and opinions that they always judge more of objects by comparison than from their intrinsic worth and value.<sup>58</sup>

For Hume, custom and practice had settled a value on everything. He understood, as did La Rochefoucauld and Mandeville, that the passions of individuals could, and did, motivate them to act selfishly. He commented:

Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be completed. In like manner our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections.<sup>59</sup>

Such violent passions could also bias individuals against the requirements of justice. Hume believed that when individuals became unjust, it was because they were unable to satisfy all their wants and needs. In order to realise their needs, he insisted, individuals had to co-operate with others. He continued:

So far from thinking, that men have no affection for anything beyond themselves, I am of the opinion, that tho' it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet 'tis as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not over balance all the selfish.<sup>60</sup>

Hume realised that the passions could govern the natures of individuals if they had not been restrained. In relation to the love of gain, for example, he observed that "this avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends [was] insatiable, perpetual, universal and directly destructive of society".<sup>61</sup> However, in spite of this, he held that individuals were essentially benevolent beings.

For writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, benevolence became a term synonymous with virtue. Through benevolence, writers promoted the requirement that individuals assume, as their direct concern in life, the promotion of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Book II, Part II, Section viii, p. 372.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Book II, Part I, Section iv, p. 283. In this, Hume was following Addison's notion of beauty producing even greater delight and joy within the mind when contemplated. Addison writes in *The Spectator* (No. 412, op. cit., p. 372): "But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the Soul than *Beauty*, which immediately diffuses a secret Satisfaction and Complacency through the Imagination, and gives a Finishing to any thing that is Great or Uncommon. The very first Discovery of it strikes the Mind with an inward Joy, and spreads a Cheerfulness and Delight through all its Faculties".

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Book III, Part II, Section ii, p. 487.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Book III, Part II, Section ii, p. 491-492.

well-being and happiness not only of themselves, but of all those with whom they came into contact. Joseph Highmore, writing in 1766, affirmed that there were "numberless instances" of the existence of benevolence in individuals, such as:

. . . when we are excited to charity, by compassion for the misfortunes and distresses of our fellow-creatures, without the consideration of any possible advantage to ourselves; the disposition we feel to assist other animals in misery, who can make no return, nor are sensible of the obligation; the tenderness for children, not only parents, but in strangers; . . . for it is supposed, that benevolence is implanted in us by the God of nature, as a principle of action. Hence the pain we feel, on the mere relation of the sufferings of others, who have no connection with us, who are utterly unknown to us, . . . and the ardent wishes to relieve, even where it is not within our power; the detestation of cruelty, which we properly call *inhumanity*, and the approbation of kind and beneficent actions. If it be pretended, that "this however centers all in self; that we are so made as to be subject to these sensations; and that therefore in relieving the distressed, we only remove our own personal uneasiness, or in wishing it, only wish to do so; that we gratify ourselves by making others happy:" -be it so, - this is the very thing contended for; and the true difference between a benevolent and a malevolent being consists plainly in this, that the former cannot be happy alone, while he sees others about him miserable, and therefore assists and relieves them if he can; and if he cannot, wishes to do so, and by sympathy suffers with those who suffer; whereas the happiness of the latter (if such there be) centers in himself alone, without regard to others, without being uneasy at their calamities, or pleased with their enjoyments, this being properly *selfish* in the bad sense of the word.<sup>62</sup>

In the passage, Highmore summarised the effects that benevolence should have on virtuous characters, as well as distinguishing between benevolent and malevolent individuals. Any excesses or deficiencies in benevolence became signs of vice because they indicated a self-love, based on the "selfish and vicious" principles of Hobbes and Mandeville. The hypothesis, upon which the theory of benevolence was based, stressed that the possession of a direct concern for the welfare of one's neighbours was an indispensable ingredient of virtue. Shaftesbury was, therefore, correct when he had Philocles comment to Palemon, in *The Moralists*, "that to be a friend to any one in particular, 'twas necessary to be first a friend to mankind".<sup>63</sup> Only by becoming such could individuals be described as possessing virtuous dispositions.

All three philosophers, Butler, Hutcheson and Hume, were important to the direction that the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction took, in a number of

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<sup>62</sup> Highmore, op. cit., Volume II, pp. 2-4.

<sup>63</sup> Shaftesbury, *The Moralists*, op. cit., Part II, Section ii, pp. 40-41.

ways. Firstly, they recognised, in opposition to the views of the Rationalists, that reason was neither solely responsible for motivating the actions of individuals, nor was it solely responsible for creating in them an awareness of their moral duty. They contended that individuals were motivated either by what Butler described as "the appetites, passions, and affectations", or by what Hutcheson and Hume labelled the "moral sense". Forbes, writing in 1734, outlined the function of this "moral sense", in a dialogue between his two characters, Lucinus and Æmilius, when he wrote:

*Lucinus:* That which is call'd *moral sense*, implies both a Tenderness of Affection, and a Relish of Justice; or *Benevolence* and *Honesty*. And 'tis remarkable that this Tenderness, or Benevolence it self, must be regulated by Justice, as appears in that Precept, *Not to respect the Person of the Poor*: for in a Claim of two Persons, the one in great Poverty, the other flowing in great Riches, there would be a natural Byass [*sic*] in the poor Man's favour; which would also be increased, if he were found to be the honester Man: and yet both these Considerations must be over-ruled, and Right take place.

*Æmilius:* This shews there is such a thing as Disinterestedness, and it seems to be the highest Quality in Man: *an honest Heart* implies a great deal. Nor is there any weight in the Objection, *that this Honesty is only from Considerations of the next World*: for such an Inclination to Justice may be found, where the belief of another World is not very strong. And if the *peevish* Objection be push'd farther, *that 'tis for the sake of a Character in this World*; this is nothing but an Assertion without proof, and the contrary may be asserted with more probability. Every one must judge for himself.<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, rather than accept the theories of La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes and Mandeville, each of whom insisted that individuals were preoccupied with their own selfish desires, these philosophers advocated that benevolence and self-love, far from being incompatible, could work simultaneously in the interests of both private and public good. Thirdly, they considered that reason, even though not maintaining the same degree of importance in relation to individuals as the Rationalists had asserted, was still necessary in controlling excessive passions, and differentiating truth from falsehood. Finally, they proclaimed that the benevolent individual was synonymous with the virtuous individual. Although they documented, as Shaftesbury had done, the main ingredients of the virtuous disposition, which all individuals should seek, they failed to impress their instruction upon the masses, because their indoctrinating style failed to meet the needs of those

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<sup>64</sup> Forbes, *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects*, Part I, xii, pp. 103-104.

individuals. What was required was a form of literature that persuaded individuals to pursue the path of virtue by assimilating readers into the world of the text, and couching the moral instruction in scenes from everyday life. The writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and, later, Mackenzie, realised this aim.

**PART TWO**

**MORAL INSTRUCTION**

**IN MID EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FICTION.**

## Chapter VI    Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and the Moral Education of Women

Samuel Richardson, a man "of middling note"<sup>1</sup> without aristocratic connections, initiated the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. Noting that it was his primary aim to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue, Mrs Barbauld recorded him as stating that "all [his] stories carried with them . . . a useful moral".<sup>2</sup> In this sense, Richardson conformed to what Arbuckle claimed should be the intention of all writers of fiction, the moral education of readers.<sup>3</sup> Like the other writers under discussion in this dissertation, Richardson aimed at correcting the existing ills of his society through the medium of the novel. Although far from innovative in his moral theory, presenting many of the maxims of the French philosophers, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, in narrative form, the philosophy of Locke, in particular his *Thoughts Concerning Education*, topical issues from *The Tatler*, elements of the traditional instruction manual, and, to some degree, drawing upon the plots of lesser recognised, anonymously published works, Richardson did, nonetheless, invent a new form of instructive writing which was based upon a realistic and truthful representation of everyday life. His aim was best summarised in a letter to George Cheyne, in which he described the function of *Pamela* in the following way:

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Linklater Thomson, *Samuel Richardson: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1900), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Laetitia Barbauld, *Samuel Richardson's Correspondence*, I. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Arbuckle noted that good writing must promote virtue above vice, and show the folly of pursuing vicious courses in life. *A Collection of Letters and Essays*, No. 39 (December 24, 1725), Volume I, pp. 324-325.

I am endeavouring to write a Story, which shall catch young and airy Minds, and when Passions run high in them, to shew how they may be directed to laudable Meanings and Purposes, in order to decry such Novels and Romances, as have a Tendency to inflame and corrupt.

In my Scheme I have generally taken Human Nature *as it is*, for it is to no purpose to suppose it Angelic, or to endeavour to make it so. There is a Time of Life, in which the Passions will predominate; and Ladies, any more than Men, will not be kept in Ignorance; and if we can properly mingle Instruction with Entertainment, so as to make the latter *seemingly* the *View*, while the former is *really* the End, I imagine it will be doing a great deal. For when the Mind *begins* to be attach'd to Virtue, it will improve itself, and outstretch the poor Scenes which I intend only for a *first Attractive* [sic].<sup>4</sup>

In each of his works, *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, Richardson focused upon didactic aims. In this sense, his writing was consistent with the aims of the traditional approach to moral education, which emphasised the need to produce virtuous individuals who would promote the public good. Richardson instructed his readers by portraying, before their eyes, models of virtue. The story, therefore, became crucial to the instruction. Donald Ball, in his study of Richardson, supports this hypothesis when he notes that the author's method implied that his works be seen as demonstrating moral doctrine worthy of emulation. He comments:

To achieve this end he follows these procedures . . . : (1) he announces at the beginning and reviews at the end of each novel the worthiness of the novel as moral doctrine, and (2) he points out, almost constantly and by various means throughout the novel, the value of the moral doctrine in the work and the reader's possible application of it.<sup>5</sup>

It followed that entertainment became subordinate to the writer's primary aim of morally instructing his readers. Thus, by couching his moral doctrine in the narrative, Richardson's method differed from the indoctrinating method of writers of sermons, tracts and instruction manuals, which had simply listed the ways in which individuals should behave. In contrast, Richardson aimed at providing readers with instruction on contemporary moral issues in a way which fully engaged their attention and persuaded them of the validity of his ideas. It was for this reason that he adopted a "new species of

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<sup>4</sup>Richardson, "Letter to Dr. George Cheyne" (August 31, 1741), in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> Donald L. Ball, *Samuel Richardson's Theory of Fiction* (Paris, The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 241.

writing". He emphasised that "Instruction without Entertainment . . . would have but few Readers. Instruction . . . is the Pill; Amusement is the Gilding".<sup>6</sup> In this way, Richardson combined entertainment with instruction, as providing the best means for instructing readers in the pursuit of virtue.

Richardson's method of instruction extended Francis Fox's innovative approach of teaching ethics to children. He stressed that readers would learn more about ethical values by being entertained and instructed simultaneously by the narrative. However, unlike the method of Fox, Richardson's method allowed readers to be assimilated more easily into the world of the text, so that they not only became judges of characters and events within the novel, but, more importantly, assumed the role of participants within the action. It was through this form of rhetorical discourse that Richardson hoped to persuade his readers to abandon their corrupt manners and pursue a path of virtue. Shortly after the appearance of *Pamela*, in 1741, he informed Aaron Hill that:

. . . the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitably to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue.<sup>7</sup>

Richardson believed that this "easy and natural manner" would persuade readers to return to the path of virtue. However, it was still a conservative approach, based on the doctrine of traditional philosophers, and presented in a way which was not conducive to promoting fully the autonomy of his readers.

It was not until Richardson was fifty years of age, in 1739, that he commenced writing novels. In that year, Mrs. Barbauld recorded his reply to the request of his publishers, Rivington and Osborne, that he compose a book of familiar letters on the most useful concerns of common life. He noted:

At last, I yielded to their importunity, and began to recollect such subjects as I thought would be useful in such a design, and formed several letters accordingly. And, among the rest, I thought of giving one or two cautions

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<sup>6</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters*, p. 322.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, "Letter to Aaron Hill" (January, 1741), in Barbauld, *Correspondences*, I, p. 76.



to young folks circumstanced as Pamela was. Little did I think at first of making one, much less two, volumes of it.<sup>8</sup>

However, the basis to his method of writing had begun many years earlier. As a result of the heavy monetary losses incurred by his father, Richardson, being unable to complete the genteel education required for him to enter "the Cloth", had to content himself with "common School-Learning", and become a printer. Recollecting that he was "early noted for Invention", Richardson continued:

I stole from the Hours of Rest & Relaxation, my Reading Times for Improvement of my Mind; & being engaged in a Correspondence with a Gentleman greatly my superior in Degree, & of ample Fortune, . . . Multitudes of Letters passed between this Gentleman & me. He wrote well, was a Master of ye Epistolary Style: Our Subjects were various: But his Letters were mostly narrative, giving me an Account of his Proceedings, and what befell him in ye different Nations thro' which he travelled. . . . From my earliest Youth, I had a Love of Letter-writing. I was not Eleven Years old, when I wrote, spontaneously, a Letter to a Widow of near Fifty, who, pretending to a Zeal for Religion, & who was a constant Frequenter of Church Ordinances, was continually fomenting Quarrels & Disturbances, by Backbiting & Scandal, among all her Acquaintance. I collected from ye Scripture Texts that made against her. Assuming the Style and Address of a Person in Years, I exhorted her; I expostulated with her. . . .

I was not more than Thirteen when three . . . young Women, unknown to each other, having an high Opinion of my Taciturnity, revealed to me their Love Secrets, in order to induce me to give them Copies to write after, or correct, for Answers to their Love Letters: Nor did any one of them ever know, that I was the Secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, & even repulse, when an Offence was either taken or given, at the very time that the Heart of the Chider or Repulser was open before me, overflowing with Esteem and Affection; & the fair Repulser dreading to be taken at her Word; directing *this* Word, or *that* Expression, to be softened or changed.<sup>9</sup>

Richardson learned a great deal about writing in his early youth, which he later applied to his novels. Firstly, he believed that individuals could learn a great deal about the ways of the world, through the process of reading. Secondly, he stressed the importance of the letter in relating matters of the heart to the readers, and in providing correction for individuals who had adopted corrupt manners. Thirdly, he gained considerable knowledge about the thought processes of women, especially after having been exposed

<sup>8</sup> Barbauld, *Correspondences*, I. 76.

<sup>9</sup> Richardson, "Letter to the Rev. Johannes Stinstra of Harlingen" (June 2, 1753), in Mrs Barbauld's Prefix to the *Correspondences* (1804) i. 37; Reprinted in Alan Duguld McKillop, *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist*, (U.S.A.: The Shoe String Press, 1960), pp. 4-7.

to their most intimate thoughts. Finally, by contriving replies to the women's lovers, he gained considerable practice in the art of invention.

In addition to these practical influences on his writing, Richardson's epistolary method was influenced by the Puritan technique of cataloguing the sins of individuals.<sup>10</sup> Richardson used this technique as the basis of his new form of writing, in which he documented the inner thoughts of his characters. "Writing to the moment" demanded that characters, within the novel, documented their thoughts as they occurred. Consequently, the events that occurred in the novel also took place simultaneously within the minds of readers. Correctly noting that "the letter-journal [was] filled with questioning",<sup>11</sup> Wolff continues:

The letters serve their writers in much the same way that the spiritual diary had served their puritan ancestors. They are the record of a trial - overfull of detail so that no morally incorrect interpretation might be imposed on them.<sup>12</sup>

By using this technique, Richardson forced readers to confront the ethical issues around which he developed his story, and to make judgements upon what they read. Although the technique did not allow the same degree of autonomy for readers as that promoted by Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, it did, nonetheless, allow readers a greater degree of autonomy than that permitted by writers of sermons, tracts or maxims. For example, whereas La Rochefoucauld "had preached" the maxim that "On parle peu quand la vanité ne fait pas parler",<sup>13</sup> Richardson included a similar idea within the scope of the narrative, such as when Clarissa examines her motives:

"Is not Vanity, or secret Love of praise, a principal motive with me at the bottom? - Ought I not to suspect my own Heart?"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff gives a detailed and valuable account of the influences of Puritanism on Richardson in her work entitled, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), Chapter II, pp. 14-57.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *op. cit.*, Maxim 137, p. 45. Translation: "We are slow to speak unless prompted by vanity".

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Edition, 1930), I, 134.

Richardson's rhetorical discourse forced readers to scrutinise their own motives at the same time as his protagonists examined theirs. Only when this had been done could any moral correction occur. Although there were occasions when Richardson seemed to be protecting the autonomy of readers by allowing them the opportunity of examining their own morality and choosing their own course of conduct in life, he rarely left them without a moral guide to direct their moral development. Unlike Fielding, he formulated his meaning, leaving readers little opportunity of misinterpreting his moral instruction.

In his first major work, *Pamela*, Richardson stressed his didactic intention from the outset. He began his Preface with the words:

If to *divert* and *entertain*, and at the same time to *instruct* and *improve* the minds of the YOUTH of *both sexes* :

If to inculcate *religion* and *morality* in so easy and agreeable a manner, as shall render them equally *delightful* and *profitable* :

If to set forth in the most exemplary lights, the *parental*, the *filial*, and the *social* duties:

If to paint VICE in its proper colours, to make it *deservedly odious*; and to set VIRTUE in its own amiable light, to make it look lovely: . . .

If to teach the man of *fortune* how to *use* it; the man of *passion* how to *subdue* it; and the man of *intrigue*, how, gracefully, and with honour to himself, to *reclaim*:

If to give *practical* examples, worthy to be followed in the most *critical* and *affecting* cases, by the *virgin*, the *bride*, and the *wife*:

If to effect all these good ends, in so probable, so natural, so *lively* a manner, as shall engage the passions of every sensible reader, and attach their regard to the story:

And all this without raising a *single idea* throughout the whole, that shall shock the exactest purity, even in the warmest of those instances where Purity would be most apprehensive. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Readers, therefore, were informed of the instructional nature of the narrative; a narrative in which an exemplary character would be rewarded, at the conclusion of the work, for her maintenance of virtue. *Pamela* conformed to the traditional approach to moral education because the writer offered a model of virtue for the readers' imitation and eventual moral improvement. At the same time, *Pamela* provided for young servant girls an instruction manual, similar in type to Defoe's instruction manual for English youth, *The Compleat English Gentleman*. The instruction manual was not new to Richardson; some years earlier, he had published *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum*, a handbook which,

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<sup>15</sup> Richardson, *Pamela* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), Preface, p. 31.

in addition to satirising the vices of the genteel and lower classes, also instructed the printer's apprentice on how to become, and remain, a virtuous craftsman. In *Pamela*, Richardson entered into the eighteenth-century debate concerning the role and status of women in daily life. Richard Allestree, in *The Ladies Calling*, a work with which Richardson would have been familiar, pronounced that women were men's spiritual equals, even though they did not face the same degree of temptations which confronted men. During the years preceding *Pamela*, the theory of the young, virtuous servant girl, surrounded by the wickedness of the predatory male was commonplace. In this novel, Richardson aimed at instructing young women, confronted by attacks on their virtue, on how to handle such situations.

Pamela Andrews, a fifteen year old, innocent servant girl, is thrust, like many young girls of her age, into this confrontation after the death of her mistress, Lady B. From Pamela's first letter to her parents, her naïveté becomes apparent when she assumes a great admiration for her master, solely on the basis that he supports her personal improvement in terms of reading and writing. Confused at his goodness, the innocent girl assumes that Mr. B. is "the best of gentlemen".<sup>16</sup> Pamela's reaction, however, is a realistic one; like many young girls, she ignores the reality of Mr. B.'s "wildish" character for a vain belief in his virtue. Consequently, her naïveté allows her virtue to become a target for the male predator. Twice, for example, she is reminded that it is her duty to "be dutiful and diligent",<sup>17</sup> quite unaware that this duty necessitates her relinquishing her virtue. Her father's reply emphasises the grave fears that her parents hold for their daughter's welfare. He comments:

Your letter was indeed a great trouble, and some comfort, to me, and to your poor mother. We are troubled, to be sure, for your good lady's death, who took such care of you, and gave you learning, . . . But our chief trouble is, and indeed a very great one, for fear you should be brought to any thing dishonest or wicked, *by being set so above yourself*. . . . But what avails all this, if you are to be ruined and undone! Indeed, my dear Pamela, we begin to be in great fear for you; for what signify all the riches in the world, with a bad conscience, and to be dishonest? . . . we would sooner live upon the water, and, if possible, the clay of the ditches I

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Letter I, pp. 44-45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Letter I, pp. 43-44.

contentedly dig, than live better at the price of our dear child's ruin. . . you seem so full of *joy* at his goodness, so *taken* with his kind expressions . . . that we *fear* - Yes, my dear child, we *fear* - you should be *too* grateful, and reward him with that jewel, your virtue, which no riches, nor favour, nor anything in this life, can make up to you.<sup>18</sup>

The indoctrinating tone of the letter is reminiscent of those sermons which constantly alerted young servant girls, employed in the households of young men, to the possible dangers to their virtue. This letter, ironic in its expression of fear for Pamela's virtue, emphasises the instructive nature of the tale. It served as a warning to all young and innocent girls, who believed that their masters had their best interests at heart. Echoing the moral views of his author, Mr. Andrews warns Pamela that it is her filial duty to be on guard against the advances of her master. He continues:

If, then, you love *us*, if you wish for *God's* blessing, and *your own* future happiness, we charge you to stand upon your guard.<sup>19</sup>

Richardson maintained that only those young girls who preserved their virtue could attain ultimate happiness. By extension, his narrative promoted these same rewards as the goals toward which readers should aspire.

Pamela's innocent, yet excessive, enjoyment of the kindnesses shown her by both her master and Mrs. Jervis makes her parents even more fearful of the possible threats to their daughter's virtue. Warning her about the necessity of maintaining virtue, her father continues:

I cannot but renew my cautions on your master's kindness, and his free expression to you about the stockings . . . Arm yourself, my dear child, for the worst; and resolve to lose your life rather than your virtue.

These are indeed very great favours that he heaps upon you, but so much the more to be suspected. . . . I trust that you will always be on your guard: yet, when you say, *he looked so amiably, and like an angel*, how afraid I am, that they should make too great an impression upon you! For though you are blessed with sense and prudence above your years, yet I tremble to think, what a sad hazard a poor maiden, of little more than fifteen years of age, stands against the temptations of this world, and a designing young gentleman, if he should prove so, who has so much *power* to oblige, and has a kind of *authority* to command as your master. . . .<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Letter II, pp. 45-46.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Letter II, p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Letter VIII, pp. 51-52.

Richardson used Pamela's parents to emphasise his own warning that all young girls should be wary of the favours bestowed upon them by "men of the world". In depicting Mr. B.'s offer of great favours to Pamela, Richardson was following the traditional arguments of La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Hobbes and Mandeville, each of whom professed that all individuals were motivated by selfish principles. For the "wildish" Mr. B., these "very great favours" are no great favours at all, when compared to the worth of Pamela's virtue. Her parents conclude the letter with the postscript:

Besure don't let people's telling you, you are pretty, puff you up: for you did not make yourself, and so no praise can be due to you for it.

It is virtue and goodness only, that make the true beauty.<sup>21</sup>

These words emphasized the traditional nature of Richardson's instruction, which was to recommend the maintenance of humility and goodness of heart as the chief means by which individuals could obtain heavenly rewards. Like La Rochefoucauld, Richardson presented his moral instruction in the form of a maxim; however, his method of instruction could be distinguished from that of the former's, by the way in which it was couched within the narrative. Thus, the advice of Pamela's parents to their daughter, on the need to maintain humility, goodness and virtue also offered sound moral instruction for readers of the text.

Richardson also used the correspondence of Pamela's parents to present, in written form, Locke's idea of the necessity of the emotional concomitant of rationality. They represent the stable mind acting against the instability of the passions, as depicted in the mind of the protagonist. Richardson's recommendation, that women should learn to conquer passion and vanity, was far from innovative. Writing in the first decade of the eighteenth century, Steele, in *The Tatler*, had made similar recommendations. The letter by Mrs. Jenny Distaff provided just one example of his numerous warnings to women:

It is very much to be lamented, that it is necessary to make discourses, and publish treatises, to keep the horrid creatures, the men, within the rules of common decency. . . . My brother and I have at least fifty times quarrelled upon this topic. I ever argue, that the frailties of women are to be imputed to the false ornaments which men of wit put upon our folly and coquetry. He lays all the vices of men upon women's secret approbation of libertine

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Letter VIII, p. 52.

characters in them. I did not care to give up a point; but, now he is out of the way, I cannot but own I believe there is very much in what he asserted: but if you will believe your eyes, and own, that the wickedest and wittiest of them all marry one day or other, it is impossible to believe, that if a man thought that he should be for ever incapable of being received by a woman of merit and honour, he would persist in an abandoned way; and deny himself the possibility of enjoying the happiness of well-governed desires, orderly satisfactions, and honourable methods of life. If our sex were wise, a lover should have a certificate from the last woman he served, how he was turned away, before he was received into the service of another: but at present any vagabond is welcome, provided he promises to enter into our livery. It is wonderful, that we will not take a footman without credentials from his last master; and in the greatest concern of life, we make no scruple of falling into a treaty with the most notorious offender in this behaviour against others. But this breach of commerce between the sexes proceeds from an unaccountable prevalence of custom, by which a woman is to the last degree reproachable for being deceived, and a man suffers no loss of credit for being a deceiver. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The passage highlights the anomaly in the way the sexes were treated; while the woman was reproached for her being deceived, she was still given no education on how to handle the "commerce" between men and women. Alternately, the man was praised for deceiving the woman. By including the semi-humorous idea about the need to obtain some reference from the "last woman", Steele attempted to alert all women to the necessity of scrutinising the characters of members of the opposite sex. Steele strengthened his argument by having Mrs. Distaff observe ironically that in situations where there was little chance of abuse to honour and virtue, such as in the hiring of footmen, there was a detailed examination of character; however, where the honour and virtue of women were at stake, "any vagabond [was] welcome, provided that he promise[d] to enter into [their] livery". She continues her warning to all women about the need to avoid the snares of men, by drawing upon her own experiences of life, concluding that:

The nobleman has since very frequently made his addresses to me with honour; but I have as often refused them; as well knowing that familiarity and marriage will make him, on some ill-natured occasion, call all I said in the arbour a theatrical action. Besides that, I glory in contemning a man, who had thoughts to my dishonour. If this method were the imitation of the whole sex, innocence would be the only dress of beauty; and all affectation by any other arts to please the eyes of men would be banished to the stews for ever. The conquest of passion gives ten times more happiness than we can reap from the gratifications of it; and she that has got over such a one as

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<sup>22</sup> Steele, *The Tatler*, No. 33 (June 25, 1709), in *The Tatler and The Guardian*, Complete in One Volume (London: William P. Nimmo, 1877), pp. 77-78.

mine, will stand among Beaux and Pretty Fellows, with as much safety as in a summer's day among grass-hoppers and butterflies.<sup>23</sup>

Through the persona of Mrs. Distaff, Steele emphasised that women, in order to maintain their honour and virtue, had to be instructed not only on how to scrutinise the characters of men, but on the need to control their passions.

The advice offered by Pamela's parents, on the need to assert reason in controlling the passions, advanced Steele's argument. At the same time, Richardson, although his heroines were far less sexually passionate than those of Mrs. Eliza Hayward, was following, in the strictest sense, that writer's idea that novels could, and did, serve a moral purpose. Some years earlier, she had commented that:

most of them contain Morals, which if well observed would be of no small Service to those that read 'em. - Certainly, if the Passions are well represented, and the Frailties to which Human Nature is incident . . . it cannot fail to rouse the sleeping Conscience of the guilty Reader.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to upholding middle class, Puritan values, Richardson, in making his heroine aware of the need to maintain her virginity, was also promoting those same values among both his own class and the working poor. Like Locke, he argued that individuals had to control their passions if they were to achieve virtue and self-worth.<sup>25</sup>

Richardson adopted much of Locke's theory in relation to the effect of the passions upon the characters in his novels. Unlike Lovelace, who was representative of the negative side of "amour-propre" and the theories of self-love expounded by both Hobbes and Mandeville, Mr. B. exemplified Locke's idea of the individual whose passions had been over-indulged in his youth. Although Mr. B.'s mother describes her son's carnal appetites as "wildish", she still accepts them as common in all "men of high condition". Mrs. Jewkes, on the contrary, holds that the woman, through her deficient moral education and lack of "controul", is responsible for both her son's passionate nature and "violent will".<sup>26</sup> Although Mr. B., "a man of warm Passions, youthful, [and]

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., No. 33, pp. 77-78.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Eliza Hayward, *The Tea-Table: or, A Conversation between some Polite Persons of both Sexes, at a Lady's Visiting Day* (London: 1725), p. 48.

<sup>25</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Sections 33, 38, pp. 103, 107.

<sup>26</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Journal, Sunday morning, three o'clock, p. 278.



unconverted",<sup>27</sup> is far less evil than Lovelace, he still represented Locke's conception of those individuals who, seizing as many pleasures as possible, abandoned themselves to a "brutish, vile, and irrational"<sup>28</sup> lifestyle without any thought of "heavenly reward". Thus, in addition to the education of the heroine, Richardson concerned himself with the education of men who, like Mr. B., failed to apply reason to their passions. Furthermore, in resisting the rakish nature of her master, Pamela advanced Steele's theory that women, who applied reason to their passions, could possibly change the behaviour of men. Richardson believed that his novels offered women an education in prudence, which could help them avoid the snares of vicious men.

Richardson provided all young women, through the character of Mr. B., with some knowledge of what was to be expected from men entertaining thoughts of dishonouring women. Margaret Anne Doody<sup>29</sup> notes correctly the similarity between Richardson's *Pamela* and Charles Johnson's *The Country Lasses*, in which the heroine of the latter work, Flora, disdains the offers of the rake, Heartwell, in the name of virtue. In spite of Heartwell's plea to provide an inheritance for the heroine and provide for all their children, Flora replies:

[A]ll the Inheritance I boast or wish for, is this low humble Cottage, and a Mind, I hope a virtuous Mind, that cannot even in this Situation bear Dishonour; take back your worthless Trifle, a Heart, and your more worthless Promises, and know I scorn as much to yield to the mean Bargain of your hireling Passion; as you do to submit to honourable Love.<sup>30</sup>

Obedient to the wishes of her aging father, Flora, as does Pamela, maintains her virtue.

Like Heartwell, Mr. B. also affects kindness towards Pamela, prior to allowing his mind to be overcome with lustful thoughts. In spite of her innocent self-reassurances that her "master would not demean himself so, as to think upon [or harm] such a poor girl"<sup>31</sup> as herself, Mr. B. still makes a number of attempts on her virtue, such as when he

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<sup>27</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters*, ed. Carroll, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> King, *Life of Locke*, p. 359.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Johnson, *The Country Lasses: Or, The Custom of the Manor* (1715), Extract from the 1727 edition, IV. i. p. 39.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Letter V, p. 49.

attempts to seduce her, twelve months after the death of her mistress, after promising her material rewards. She notes that he proceeded to lay hold of, and kiss, her "two or three times, with frightful eagerness".<sup>32</sup> Although several critics have eagerly tried to point out the hypocrisy in Pamela's character<sup>33</sup> for such things as her inability to burst forth from her suitor's arms and her "vanity and conceit, and pride too",<sup>34</sup> such an hypothesis denies the virtuous nature of a character who, being unworldly, knows no other course of action. It is this failure to ensnare Pamela by kindness that results in the rake attacking his object, firstly with invectives and then by physical force. Fearing the disgrace and shame that his reputation would have to endure if his actions were exposed to public scrutiny, Mr. B. tries to blame Pamela for acting foolishly and making "common talk of the matter".<sup>35</sup> On realising that she has told Mrs. Jervis, he adopts an angrier tone, labelling her "an equivocator", a "hussy", a "bold-face" and "a little hypocrite . . . who has all the arts of her sex".<sup>36</sup> In words reminiscent of the seventeenth-century rake, he continues:

"Pretty fool! . . . how will you forfeit your innocence, if you are obliged to yield to a force you cannot withstand? Be easy, for let the worst happen that can, *you'll* have the merit, and *I* the blame; and it will be a good subject for letters to your father and mother, and a pretty tale moreover for Mrs. Jervis".<sup>37</sup>

In arguing that "the shame lay on the ravisher only", words commonly used by rakes to trick their victims into relinquishing their virtue, Richardson drew upon Steele's conclusion to the story of Cælia, in *The Tatler*, which highlighted the inconsistency of public justice toward women deprived of their virtue. He wrote:

It seems a wonderful inconsistence [*sic*] in the distribution of public justice, that a man who robs a woman of an ear-ring or a jewel, should be punished with death; but one who by false arts and insinuations should take from her, her very self, is only to suffer disgrace. . . . This has given way to such unreasonable gallantries, that a man is hardly reproachable that deceives an innocent woman, though she has ever so much merit, if she is below him in

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XI, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Clara Linklater Thomson, in her work *Samuel Richardson* (1900), comments that "each letter betrays the vulgar, practical little soul of the heroine, and her struggle between gratified vanity and conventional principle" (p. 156).

<sup>34</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Letter XIV, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XV, p. 61.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Letters XV, XVI, pp. 61- 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XV, p. 63.

fortune. The man has no dishonour following his treachery; and her own sex are so debased by custom, as to say in the case of the woman, "How could she expect he would marry her?"<sup>38</sup>

There is considerable evidence of the influence of eighteenth-century philosophical thought in the development of Richardson's characters in *Pamela*. Despite the attacks of her master, who personifies the theory of self-interestedness advocated by Hobbes and Mandeville, Pamela advocates the philosophy of Shaftesbury, albeit with some tinges of Lockean colour. Pamela always maintains an optimistic view of the innate goodness of humankind; she is, for example, convinced that her "master is a fine gentleman", despite evidence of some "unnatural affections" which serve only "to gratify his own pride".<sup>39</sup> Even after the attempted rape, Pamela can still comment that, "wicked as he has been to me, I wish his prosperity with all my heart".<sup>40</sup> Richardson combined, in the character of Pamela, the innocence of youth and the rationality of a person many years her senior. As such, she offered readers sober advice on how to behave when virtue was put to the test. Mrs. Jervis emphasises the reaction that all readers should have towards Pamela when she acknowledges that, "Her innocence deserves the love of us all".<sup>41</sup> In her unwillingness to compromise her principles, Pamela personifies the ideal of the virtuous woman. Even in relation to her belongings, she informs Mrs. Jervis that her conscience will not permit her to take anything, other than what rightfully belongs to her. She comments:

"I have far less right to these of my worthy master's: for you see what was his intention in giving them to me. So they were to be the price of my shame, and if I *could* make use of them, I should think I should never prosper with them".<sup>42</sup>

In refusing to accept what does not belong to her, Pamela presents herself as a model for emulation for her sex, on both moral and legal grounds. On moral grounds, her conscience cannot allow her to accept those gifts which would symbolize her own dishonour and loss of virtue, and bring shame upon her family. Alternatively, from a legal point of view, her appropriation of her master's gifts, on leaving his household,

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<sup>38</sup> Steele, *The Tatler*, No. 199 (July 18, 1710), pp. 369-370.

<sup>39</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Letter XIX, p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XXVI, p. 99.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XXVI, p. 97.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter XIX, p. 111.

could have exposed her to prosecution. Furthermore, even when Mr. B. offers to enrich her father, she refuses to compromise her virtue.

Richardson assumed the task, in his novels, of alerting his female readers to the true motives of malicious men. With Mandeville, Richardson was aware that there were men who adopted false appearances in the hope of luring unwary women into relinquishing their virtue. With the offer of marriage to Williams, Pamela, alerted to the dissembling nature of her master's promises, comments:

O black, perfidious creature . . . what an implement art thou in the hands of Lucifer, to ruin the innocent heart! Yet still I dissembled; for I feared much both him and the place I was in . . . What a scene of wickedness was here contrived for all my wretched life!<sup>43</sup>

However, the dissembling nature of men finds its greatest expression in the story of Sally Godfrey, a story which offers readers a thematic contrast to Pamela's own history. Sally exemplifies the young girl, fails to preserve her virtue against the deceptive and seductive advances of men. In the case of Mr. B., he not only deceives Pamela with the prospect of marrying Williams, but, in order to preserve his reputation, writes to the Andrewses to notify them that Pamela has been sent to London as punishment for an intrigue with Mr. Williams. Ironically, Mr. B. chastises the old man for neglecting the moral education of his daughter when, in fact, the problem of a deficient education, that of being unable to control the passions, lies within himself. Taunting the old man, he comments:

I must tell you, that you ought not to have countenanced such culpable freedoms in the girl. . . nor would you [have] known, . . . that ever since the death of her kind lady, she has given herself up to the reading of novels and romances, and such idle stuff, and now takes it into her head, because her glass tells her she is pretty, that every body who looks upon her is in love with her. Hence, silly girl! her misrepresentations of those innocent familiarities of mine to her, on certain benevolent occasions . . . about which she so much alarms you. . . . But there is a time of life, Goodman Andrews, which may be looked upon as a test of prudence in girls, and in which misconduct blasts many a shining hope.

She has already acquainted you, that she is dismissed from my service; and you expect her soon with you. But . . . I have thought it worthy of my promises made to her late dear lady, to send her for a little while out of the parson's way, to a family of great repute; where she will have extraordinary opportunities of improvement, and be treated with great kindness.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Letter XXXI, pp. 119-120.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Letter XXXI, p. 124.

Like the "old man", readers, too, should be concerned by the contents of the letter; however, they, aware of Mr. B.'s motives, cannot be deceived. Readers know that Pamela has maintained exemplary behaviour against the continued attacks of the rake. Rather than Pamela, Richardson implied that it was Mr. B., the "worldly-minded, voluptuous, and ambitious Man" of Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*, who, "wallowing in a Sea of Lust and Vanity, [and] wholly employ'd in provoking and indulging his Appetites, [while proclaiming himself] free from Pride and Sensuality, and . . . [other] most glaring Vices",<sup>45</sup> most urgently needed moral correction.

In attempting to win the confidence of Pamela's father, Mr. B. suggests that it is Pamela's passion and vanity, influenced by her reading of romances and love stories, that brought about her moral demise. Richardson blamed the influence of romances for corrupting the manners of young girls. Arguing that literature could have either a positive or negative effect on its readers, he stressed that romances provided the latter effect. Ironically, however, it is Mr. B.'s irrational and passionate nature, incensed by Pamela's refusal to submit to his appetites, that needs to be governed by reason. In this, Richardson was following the argument of James Arbuckle, who wrote that:

The *first Motives* to action in all Men are their *Appetites*, of what kind soever they be . . . Hence in vulgar Speech the most usual Definition of *Happiness* is, to enjoy our Wish, or in other words, to gratify our *Appetites* and Inclinations.

On these accounts, I say, it is a dangerous Maxim, that Happiness consists at all times in the gratification of Appetite. Tho' we can have no Happiness without Appetite, yet the Weariness and Satiety produced in gratifying many of our Appetites, all the sensual ones in particular, is a Proof, that our Happiness does not lie there, but must have some nobler and higher Principle for its Origin. To discover and pursue this is the true Use and End of Reason; and the only Method of doing so, is careful Recollection and Observation on what passes in our own Breasts. . . . The Passions are the same in all Mankind.<sup>46</sup>

Richardson, like Arbuckle, believed that the same passions affected all individuals. Problems, however, only arose when individuals failed to apply reason to their passions.

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<sup>45</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 150.

<sup>46</sup> Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays on Several Subjects*, No. 5 (May 1, 1725), Volume I, pp. 38-39.

Consequently, the uncontrolled appetites acted as a prop for the already corrupt "self-love" of morally uneducated human beings.

With Locke, Richardson also emphasised that, where irrational impulses were allowed to run unchecked within a family, these impulses affected all the children. In the case of Mr. B.'s family, the over-indulgent nature of the parents, unlike the moral education given to Pamela by the Andrewses,<sup>47</sup> is responsible for the affected and selfish behaviour of the children. Lady Davers represents the female equivalent of the selfish male. Symbolising the woman of upper class circles whose pride has been over indulged in her youth, Lady Davers has utter contempt for poorer girls who allow themselves to be seduced by men, in the hope of bridging class barriers. She comments:

"Well, child, . . . how dost find thyself? Thou'rt mightily come on of late! I hear strange reports about thee! Thou'rt got into fool's paradise, I doubt; but wilt find thyself terribly mistaken, in a little while, if thou thinkest my brother will disgrace his family for the sake of thy baby-face!

"Poor wench! . . . I did indeed pity you, while I thought you innocent; and when my brother brought you down hither, without your consent, I was concerned for you. I was still *more* concerned for you, and loved you, when I heard of your virtue and resistance, and your laudable efforts to get away from him. But when, as I fear, you have suffered yourself to be prevailed upon, and have lost your innocence, and added another to the number of the fools he has ruined" [*This shocked me a little*] "I cannot help shewing you my displeasure".<sup>48</sup>

In spite of Pamela's remonstrations about the sincerity of her relationship with Mr. B. and her virtue,<sup>49</sup> Lady Davers, refusing to accept that her brother could marry beneath himself, berates Pamela's innocence and reminds her, in a lesson designed to educate readers against trying to bridge class barriers, that she is "not the first in the list of his credulous harlots".<sup>50</sup>

Lady Davers believes that Pamela, like many other young unfortunates who have followed the vicious examples of the romances, has been rewarded with material gifts for relinquishing her virtue. Resenting the fact that Pamela has attempted to trap her brother

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<sup>47</sup> Pamela comments in her conversation with Mr. B. that "My father and mother took care to instil into my mind lessons of virtue from *my very cradle*". *Pamela*, Journal, Saturday, six o'clock, p. 269.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Journal, Monday morning 3.00 am, pp. 403, 405.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 409-414.

into marriage, Lady Davers, prior to attempting to force her, under threat of violence, into a position of subservience, berates Pamela with the derogatory titles of "harlot" and "wench". However, refusing to fall below the dignity that she owes her husband and fall victim to the excessive wrath of the woman, Pamela flees the household, with the aid of the reformed Colbrand, to Sir Simon's where Richardson uses Lady Darnford to remind readers that Pamela is "an exemplar for all [her] sex".<sup>51</sup> There, the newly-educated Mr. B. explains, in Lockean terms, that his sister's hostility stems from her over-indulgence as a child, and the "pride and violence of her spirit". He continues:

"My sister . . . was always passionate. My mother had enough to do with us both. For we neither of us wanted spirit. . . . we quarrelled: for she, being seven years older than I, was always for domineering over me, and I could not bear it. I used, on her frequently quarrelling with the maids, and being always at a word and a blow with them, to call her Captain *Bab*. (Her name is Barbara.) In my Lord Davers's courtship of her, my mother has made up quarrels between them three times in a day; and I used to tell her, she would certainly beat her husband, marry whom she would, if he did not break her spirit. Yet has she . . . very good qualities. She was a dutiful daughter; is a good wife . . . ; she is bountiful to her servants, firm in her friendships, charitable to the poor, and, I believe, never any sister better loved a brother, than she me; and yet, she always delighted to vex and teaze me; . . . she would be one moment the most provoking creature in the world, and the next would do anything to be forgiven. . . . But my marriage piques her the more, because she had found out a match for me, with a woman of quality, and had set her heart upon bringing it to effect. She had even proceeded far in it, without my knowledge; and cannot therefore bear the thoughts of my being now married, and to her mother's waiting-maid too, as she reminds my Pamela".<sup>52</sup>

Following Shaftesbury's argument, which emphasised that individuals were not entirely corrupt but became vicious through a deficient education, it is possible for Lady Davers, as it was with her brother, to be re-educated with the aid of the exemplary Pamela.

Prior to any change in Lady Davers' passionate character, Pamela is subjected to further outbursts of violence when she and Mr. B. are found in bed together.<sup>53</sup> On this occasion, Lady Davers berates her brother on undermining their social privilege by marrying beneath his social standing. Equating Pamela's social status with that of her "father's groom", she questions whether there is any "difference . . . between a beggar's

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 431-432.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Journal, Tuesday morning, p. 435.

son married by a lady, or a beggar's daughter made a gentleman's wife?"<sup>54</sup> Through this question, Richardson introduced into the text one of the central controversies of the eighteenth century - the argument between those who maintained the right of individuals to marry whom they saw fit, and the traditionalists who refused to acknowledge marriages between the classes. To the question, Mr. B. replies:

"The difference is, a man ennobles the woman he takes, be she *who* she will; and adopts her into his own rank, be it *what* it will: but a woman, though ever so nobly born, debases herself by a mean marriage, and descends from her *own* rank, to that of him she stoops to marry. . . .

"Now, Lady Davers, do you not see a difference between *my* marrying my mother's deserving waiting-maid, with such graces of mind and person as would adorn any rank; and *your* marrying a sordid groom, whose constant train of education, conversation, and opportunities, could possibly give him no other merit, than that which must proceed from the vilest, lowest taste, in his sordid dignifier. . . .

"Again, let me observe to you, Lady Davers, that when a duke lifts a private person into his own rank, he is still her *head*, by virtue of being her husband: but when a lady descends to marry a groom, is that groom not her *head*?"<sup>55</sup>

Richardson presented the conservative view that a man had the power to raise the status of a woman through marriage, a view that was shared by Mary Astell, in spite of her efforts to promote the notion of the "freedom" of women in a male dominated society.<sup>56</sup> The words offered sound instruction for readers who believed that young women could generally rise above their stations in life. Pamela rises above her station not by relinquishing her virtue or submitting to her passions, as many other young women before her had done, but by maintaining her virtue and honour and subjecting her passions to the control of reason. In this way, Pamela provides readers with a model upon whom they can base their own lives.

Pamela's actions and thoughts provide a constant reminder of the respect that is due to the rich from the poor. In spite of her love for Mr. B., Pamela realises that she must uphold the social restrictions placed upon women and never acknowledge her love

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 440-442.

<sup>56</sup> Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, 4th ed. (1730), p. 97. Mary Astell, despite her progressive ideas concerning the role of women in marriage, still argued that all women, with the exception of the queen only, must obey their husbands in marriage.



of a man until she has secured marriage. Ian Watt expresses the point in the following way:

Courtly love separated the sexual roles in a similar way - the carnal male adored the godlike purity of the female, and the contradiction between the two roles was absolute. In theory, at least; for if the lady yielded to her lover's suit it meant a total breakdown of the convention. . . . Richardson had explained in his popular contribution to the *Rambler* in 1751, the feminine role in courtship made it immoral as well as impolitic for a girl to allow herself to feel love for a suitor until he had actually asked for her hand in marriage.<sup>57</sup>

Pamela is an example to all women of the lower classes, of the necessity of keeping to their own station in life. Even before her marriage to Mr. B., Pamela is aware of what her master may have to endure as a result of marrying beneath himself. She comments:

"But, good sir, . . . my greatest concern will be for the rude jests you will have yourself to encounter with, for thus stooping beneath yourself. For, as to *me*, considering my low birth, and little merit, even the slights and reflections of the ladies will be an honour to me: and I shall have the pride to place more than half their ill-will to their envying my happiness".<sup>58</sup>

Even on her marriage day, Pamela realises that many individuals will disdain her. She also anticipates the disdain and ridicule that Mr. B. will receive from his equals, his companions, and his relatives. She continues:

"O how shall I compensate him for the disgraces which he will bring upon himself for my sake! I can only do the best I can; and pray to God to reward him, and resolve to love him with a pure heart, and serve him with a sincere obedience. I hope he will continue to love me for *this*; for alas! I have nothing else to offer".<sup>59</sup>

However, although he supported the maintenance of the social status quo, Richardson, like Locke, promoted the idea of spiritual and moral equality. He commented:

Besides do they not know, that the richest of princes, and the poorest of beggars, are to have one great and just Judge, at the last day; who will not distinguish between them, according to their circumstances when in life.<sup>60</sup>

The same idea was continued in his poem, "Wise Providence", in which he asserted that, despite their social distinctions, all individuals would be judged by God in the same way at the Last Judgement, and all would share a common end, death. He wrote:

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<sup>57</sup> Watt, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>58</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Wednesday Morning, p. 298.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Thursday, Six o'Clock in the Morning, pp. 370-371.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 294.

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 levelled, *king* and *slave*,  
 Without distinction, in the silent grave.<sup>61</sup>

Throughout his works, Richardson argued that all beings were equal before the eyes of God. Furthermore, like Locke, he advocated that all individuals, who lived virtuous lives, would be rewarded by God. By maintaining virtue in the face of adversity, Pamela provided readers with an exemplary model of womanhood.

In order to present Pamela as an exemplar for all young women, Richardson emphasised the way in which she maintained her virtue and her belief in the power of God to reward the good throughout all trials. For example, she withstands the attempted rape by Mr. B., the attack of the ferocious Colbrand, and the taunts of the vicious Mrs. Jewkes by reminding herself of the necessity in remaining "virtuous". On hearing of Mr. B.'s plot to "thaw" her by kindness and "melt her by love", she prays that God will enable her "to be proof against [the] vileness" of the "abominable man".<sup>62</sup> From Pamela's comments, Richardson's educational technique became clearly recognisable. His aim was to use the exemplary nature of his protagonist to instruct readers that, in order to avoid disaster, they must not only obey the moral dictates of their parents but, more importantly, place themselves in the care of God. Pamela notes:

I hoped for nothing but to return to my poor parents; and to employ myself in serving God, and comforting them.<sup>63</sup>

Even on leaving Mr. B., Pamela, the moral instructress of readers, informs her father that only prayer, "resignation to the Divine Will, and the benefits of [his] good lessons and examples" would enable her to overcome her predicament.<sup>64</sup> Richardson expected that "ideal readers" of the text would imitate Pamela's example; for, it was only by being obedient to God that individuals could expect to maintain their virtue in the midst of a

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>62</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Journal, Tuesday night, p. 246.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Journal, Wednesday night, p. 254.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Journal, Sunday night, ten o'clock, p. 284.

corrupt society. Thus, in contrast to Oliver Elton's suggestion that the author "speaks only in the guise of an 'editor', who provides a preface, or a 'conclusion', or footnotes that give references to or fro",<sup>65</sup> readers are never allowed to forget that the author's didacticism runs parallel with the narrative.

Throughout *Pamela*, Richardson placed heavy emphasis, as did the writers of sermons and tracts in the early part of the eighteenth century, upon the importance of God in the lives of individuals. However, rather than lose the attention of his readers with excessive moralising, Richardson employed a didactic method that allowed his story to promote the moral instruction. Even in attaining her position of social distinction, Pamela's saint-like piety never lets her forget the duty that she owes God and her parents.

She comments:

"But one thing, sir, I ought not to forget, because it is chief: my duty to God, and my prayers for you and myself, will always employ some good portion of my time: for *myself* particularly, that I may be enabled to discharge my duty to you, and be grateful for all the blessings I shall receive at the hands of Providence, by means of your generosity and condescension".<sup>66</sup>

While praising God for providing her with the strength to withstand the attacks on her virtue by "the black angel", she continues, in an exemplary manner:

Doubly blessed shall I be, in particular, if I can return the hundredth part of the obligations I owe to such honest good parents, to whose pious instructions and examples, under God, I owe all my present happiness, and future prospects. . . . Hence, in every state of life, and in all the changes and chances of it, for the future, will I trust in Providence, who knows what is best for its creatures, and frequently makes the very evils we most dread, the cause of our happiness, and of our deliverance from greater.<sup>67</sup>

The moral instruction inherent in Pamela's words, derived directly as it was from eighteenth-century sermons and Puritan tracts, was both conservative and traditional in its emphasis upon the need for all individuals to put their trust in Providence. Only by so doing, argued Richardson, could they maintain virtue and be rewarded with eternal happiness. The author believed that whatever occurred in the lives of individuals was for

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<sup>65</sup> Oliver Elton, *A Survey of English Literature: 1730-1780*, Volume I (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1928), p. 170.

<sup>66</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Journal, Wednesday Morning, p. 300.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308, 312.

a reason. Thus, in Pamela's case, the temptations which she has to endure provide the means by which the strength of her virtue is tested.

In addition to his emphasis on the eternal happiness awaiting those who maintained virtuous dispositions in this life, Richardson also offered considerable hope for the reformed sinner. Using characters to inculcate his doctrine, Richardson had Mr. B. direct the attention of readers to the fact that "*There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance*".<sup>68</sup> It is this belief in the possibility of repentance that persuades Mr. B., guided by Pamela's exemplary character, to abandon the vicious passions of "conceitedness, vanity, and pride"<sup>69</sup> and pursue a life of virtue. In the cases of both Pamela and Mr. B., Richardson supported Locke's premise that individuals who led virtuous lives would be rewarded with ultimate happiness. Although he believed that readers could never attain the exemplary level of virtue exhibited in Pamela, he did offer them, unlike many of his contemporaries, some hope of achieving eternal happiness. Pamela's exemplary behaviour, then, was documented for the purpose of encouraging readers to pursue higher ideals. It is Mr. B. who defines those "infinitely" valuable gifts upon which Pamela's character is based; these include "an experienced truth, a well-tryed virtue, and an understanding and genteel behaviour that [would] do credit to [her] station, . . . [and a] natural meekness and sweetness of disposition, in which [she had] no equal".<sup>70</sup> Richardson's instruction, however, found its highest expression in the actions and words of the protagonist herself. Towards the conclusion of the first part of *Pamela*, the protagonist presents the moral instruction of her author, when she comments, in relation to herself, that:

What I value myself upon, is, that God has raised me to a condition to be useful to better persons than myself. This is my pride: and I hope this will be *all* my pride. For, what was I of myself? All the good I can do, is but a poor third-hand good! for my dearest master himself is but the second-hand. GOD, the All-gracious, the All-good, the All-bountiful, the All-

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Saturday, p. 342.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Tuesday, One o'Clock, p. 363.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Wednesday Evening, p. 368.

mighty, the All-merciful GOD, is the first: to HIM, therefore, be all the glory!<sup>71</sup>

In the same way as she had instructed Mr. B., Pamela informs readers that there is, in human life, an "ordering of duties"<sup>72</sup> for all Christian individuals. Although these duties had been stressed in conduct books and sermons, well before the advent of *Pamela*, Richardson observed that they had been neglected by a society in which individuals had pursued corrupt manners, self-interest and sensual pleasures in preference to virtue. Pamela's instruction provides the moral education necessary for reforming the characters of readers. Thus, it became Richardson's aim to inculcate into the minds of his readers the necessity of maintaining obedience to God and to one's own conscience. Only by pursuing virtue, he argued, could individuals promote the public good and attain eternal happiness.

Mrs. Barbauld recorded, in her preface to *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, that *Pamela* attracted great popularity. She noted that "it was usual for ladies to hold up the volumes of *Pamela* to one another, to shew they had got the book that every one was talking of".<sup>73</sup> It was not surprising that the English reading public appealed to Richardson for a sequel to the life of Pamela. Although he acquiesced to the requests, the agreement was more likely a reaction against those who had been imitating, and publishing pirate copies of, his work. Richardson's friend, Solomon Lowe, drew his attention to this, in a letter he wrote, in 1741. In it, he commented:

[*Pamela*] . . . has proved of . . . much Service to your very Brethren; witness the Labours of the Press in Piracies, in Criticisms, in Cavils, in Panegyrics, in Supplements, in Imitations, in Transformations, in Translations, &c, beyond anything I know of.<sup>74</sup>

McKillop notes that even the *Universal Spectator*, for April 24, 1742, published a performance titled "Pamela the Second". The introduction read:

In the Course of my Lucubrations I have frequently inveigh'd against that barbarous Part of Modish Gallantry, of Gentlemen endeavouring to seduce

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., Friday, p. 515.

<sup>72</sup> Harris, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>73</sup> Mrs. Barbauld, *The Life of Richardson*, prefaced to *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (1804), p. lviii.

<sup>74</sup> Alan Dugald McKillop, op. cit., p. 66.

young Women of inferior Fortune: Whenever I hear such an Attempt has been unsuccessful, through the innate Virtue of a sensible Maid, I am charm'd at her Contempt of Allurements to Vice, as it does an Honour to her Sex. For this Reason I was at first pleas'd with the Story of *Pamela*, and have this Week been the more so, as a Kind of a Parallel Case has lately happen'd in *Buckinghamshire*.

As was the case in *Pamela*, the drama concluded with the Farmer's Daughter being happily united to her lover. It was against such imitations, in addition to the anti-*Pamela* critics, that Richardson completed his sequel, which was to be more implicitly instructional, and have more overt derivations from Locke, than the original.

Richardson took considerable care in making the second part of *Pamela* as worthy as the original in its moral doctrine. Introducing his work as a conduct book, he commented, in the "Author's Original Preface", that:

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*.<sup>75</sup>

In accordance with the first part of *Pamela* and the traditional approach to moral education, Richardson again portrayed Pamela as a model of virtue, upon whom readers could model their own natures. According to the author, she was:

to shine as an affectionate *wife*, a faithful *friend*, a polite and kind *neighbour*, an indulgent *mother*, and a beneficent *mistress*; after having in the former Part supported the character of a dutiful *child*, a spotless *virgin*, and a modest and amiable *bride*.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout the whole of the second part, Pamela is concerned entirely with propriety of her conduct and praised for the example she sets for others. Even Lady Davers, after reading about the trials that Pamela had endured at Lincolnshire, declares:

What a bewitching girl thou art! What an exemplar to wives now, as well as thou wast before to maidens! Thou canst tame lions, I dare say, if thoud'st try. - Reclaim a rake in the meridian of his libertinism, and make such an one as my brother, not only marry thee, but love thee better at several months' end, than he did the first day, if possible!<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, Volume Two, hereafter referred to as *Pamela II*.(London: Everyman's Library, 1969), p. v.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. v.

<sup>77</sup> Richardson, *Pamela II*, Letter XIX, pp. 59-60.

Such a comment, from the same woman who had abused and taunted Pamela at the time of her marriage to Mr. B., is indicative of the reaction that all characters have toward the heroine in the sequel. Even Polly Darnford acknowledges:

So you see, my dear Mrs. B., how your virtue has shamed every one into such a sense of what they ought to have done, that good, bad, and indifferent, are seeking to make excuses for past behaviour, and to promise future amendment, like penitent subjects returning to their duty to their conquering sovereign, after some unworthy defection.<sup>78</sup>

The second part of *Pamela*, however, offered readers an extension of the moral instruction of the first. Pamela, however, is to be praised for another important Christian quality, her forgiveness of those who had previously used her foully. Even against the wishes of the Davers family, Pamela benevolently forgives Mrs. Jewkes. Arguing that resentment would be inappropriate for a girl of her former station in life, she insists that the evil inflicted upon her by Mrs. Jewkes should be seen as a test instituted by Providence in order "to exalt [her] to that state of happiness" she enjoys each day. Presenting herself as the epitome of benevolence, she comments:

You give me, Mrs. Jewkes, very great pleasure, to find, that, at length, God Almighty has touched your heart, and let you see . . . the error of your ways. . . . As I have often prayed for you, even when you used me the most unkindly, I now praise God for having heard my prayers, and with delight look upon you as a reclaimed soul.

The notion of the "reclaimed soul" continued the theme of repentance introduced by Richardson in the first part of the work. However, in the second part, Pamela's words to Mrs. Jewkes provide a far more direct warning, for both Mrs. Jewkes and readers alike, about the need to abandon their former behaviour, and the consequences of failing to do so. She continues:

Let me, therefore, dear Mrs. Jewkes . . . caution you against two things; the one, that you return not to your former ways, and wilfully err after this repentance; for the Divine goodness will then look upon itself as mocked by you, and will withdraw itself from you; and more dreadful will your state then be, than if you had never repented: the other, that you don't despair of the Divine mercy, which has so evidently manifested itself in your favour, and has awakened you out of your deplorable lethargy. . . . But go on cheerfully in the same happy path. Depend upon it, you are now in the right way, and turn not either to the right hand or to the left; for the reward

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Letter XXI, p. 70.

is before you, in reputation and a good fame in this life, and everlasting felicity beyond it.<sup>79</sup>

Although Pamela offers her former antagonist sound moral instruction, there is a considerable change in the tone of her remarks. In a style reminiscent of the writers of sermons, Richardson adopted a much more forceful form of moral instruction. Using Pamela as a direct medium for the presentation of moral doctrine, Richardson lost some of the "naturalness" with which the first part was written. No longer were readers being simultaneously entertained and instructed by the story; instead, the sequel placed Pamela in the role of the direct, moral instructress, a role which assumed total control over the autonomy of readers in decoding the meaning of the text.

By allowing Mr. B. the opportunity to reflect upon his former behaviour in attempting to seduce the innocent girl, Richardson provided readers with some insight into the mind of the reformed rake in society. Mr. B. comments:

Love, as I said before, subjects its inconsiderate votaries to innumerable meannesses, and unlawful passion to many more. I could not live without this dear girl. . . . All this tends to demonstrate the strength of my passion: I could not conquer my love; so I conquered a pride, which every one thought unconquerable; and since I could not make an innocent heart vicious, I had the happiness to follow so good an example; and by this means a vicious heart has become virtuous. I have the pleasure of rejoicing in the change, and hope I shall do so still more and more; for I really view with contempt my past follies; and it is now a greater wonder to me how I could act as I did, than that I should detest those actions, which made me a curse, instead of a benefit to society. I am not yet so pious as my Pamela; but that is to come; and it is one good sign, that I can truly say, I delight in every instance of her piety and virtue.<sup>80</sup>

In maintaining that Pamela's virtue provided the light of reason which usurped control over the passions of the vicious man, Richardson was defending the traditional and early eighteenth-century philosophy, which had stressed that the application of reason was necessary for individuals in their pursuit of a virtuous life. Only when individuals applied reason to their passions could they be rewarded with true happiness. In following this line of argument, Richardson was drawing upon the philosophy of Thomas Morgan who, in his "Dialogue between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanes, a Christian Jew", had his protagonist, Philalethes, stress that:

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Letter XX, pp. 63-65.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Letter XXX, pp. 118-119.



Every Victory thus gain'd over the Appetites and Passions, yields the Mind an unspeakable Pleasure; and while a Man is laying in a Fund of Happiness, and making Provision for all Futurity, he has his Account in his Hand, and pays nothing but for Value receiv'd; for abstracting from all farther Considerations, the wise, virtuous, and good Man, is certainly the rich, honourable, and happy Man in this World. . . . [One] ought to abstract his Thoughts, as much as he can, from the deceiving Colourings, and outward gaudy Appearances of Wealth and Power, Lust and Appetite, Ambition and Sensuality; he must withdraw himself, upon all proper Occasions, from the Noise, Hurry, and Bustle of the World about him, and retire into the silent Solitude of his own Mind, there to advise and consult in all difficult Cases with his cool impartial Reason. When a Man does this he converses with God.<sup>81</sup>

Richardson also affiliated himself closely with the philosophical and religious arguments of Joseph Butler, who argued that individuals were motivated towards performing virtuous acts by the very notion of virtue itself. Butler had emphasised that, by maintaining virtue, individuals contributed both to their own happiness and the happiness of others. Happiness, he contended, could only be achieved when individuals withdrew themselves from the corruptions of life. Unlike Richardson's subsequent protagonist, Lovelace, Mr. B. is able to win a victory over his appetites and passions, and, through the influence of Pamela, reform his character. As a result, he is rewarded with happiness. Similarly, argued the author, readers who followed the example of Pamela would also be rewarded, with happiness.

A further test to the happiness and virtue of the heroine is encountered with the arrival of the cantankerous Sir Jacob Swynford, who would have inherited Mr. B's property had the latter not married. Ironically, Richardson juxtaposes his arrival, full of contempt for others, particularly Pamela, with the absence of the heroine, who was performing benevolent tasks for "four sick families". Swynford, with his "haughty supercilious look" and "swaggering gait", epitomizes the man overcome by passion and vanity. Even Lady Davers, commenting upon the way in which he "struts" about seeking compliments, observes that her uncle is "more of an ostler than a gentleman; . . . [who] loves respect from others, though he never practises common civility himself".<sup>82</sup> Sharing the initial view of the uneducated Lady Davers, Sir Jacob is totally opposed to the union

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* (1737), pp. 428-429.

<sup>82</sup> Richardson, *Pamela II*, Letter XXXIII, p. 156.

of Pamela and Mr. B. on the basis of the necessity of maintaining "degree or distinction"<sup>83</sup> within society. However, there is a further reason for his opposition to the marriage, than just a hatred of a woman attempting to bridge class barriers; rather, he despises the idea that a "rake" should be reformed. He exclaims:

"Ha! - He has made a fine kettle on't - han't he? - that ever such a rake should be so caught! They tell me, she's plaguy cunning, and quite smart and cunning".<sup>84</sup>

By introducing Pamela to Sir Jacob as "Lady Jenny", the Countess of C.'s niece, on the basis that he refuses to speak to woman of low birth, Richardson re-introduced the theme of deceit. On this occasion, however, the theme, culminating with the suppression of Sir Jacob's excessive passions, supports the cause of virtue. After meeting Pamela, he too, like all other characters, confesses his admiration for the young woman. The conversion of Sir Jacob into an admirer of Pamela emphasised Richardson's belief that the world could not help but love truly virtuous individuals.

In addition to the traditional instruction on the decorum that a wife should observe in relation to her husband,<sup>85</sup> much of the remainder of Richardson's work was preoccupied with his instruction against the ills of contemporary society. With the arrival of Miss Darnford, for example, Richardson took the opportunity, through the character of Pamela, of discussing the condition of the London stage. In a letter to Lady Davers, after having attended the play-house on several occasions, Pamela notes:

But nothing more convinces one of the truth of the common observation, that the best things, corrupted, prove the worst, than these representations. The terror and compunction for evil deeds, the compassion for a just distress, and the general beneficence which those lively exhibitions are so capable of raising in the human mind, might be of great service, when directed to right ends, and induced by proper motives: particularly where the actions which the catastrophe is designed to punish, are not set in such

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Letter XXXIII, Thursday, p. 168.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Letter XXXIII, p.158.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Letter XXXVIII, p. 209. Pamela, unable "to contradict" the view of her husband in relation to the role of women in marriage, records that: "You know not, my dear, what a disgrace a haughty and passionate woman brings upon her husband, and upon herself too, in the eyes of her own sex, as well as ours. . . you cannot imagine how much a woman owes to her husband, as well with regard to *her own* peace of mind, as to *both* their reputations, . . . if he be a man who has discretion to keep her encroaching passions under a genteel and reasonable control!"

advantageous lights, as shall destroy the end of the moral, and make the vice that ought to be censured, imitable; where instruction is kept in view all the way, and where vice is punished, and virtue rewarded.<sup>86</sup>

Pamela's words emphasise Richardson's own belief in the necessity of writers' including models of virtue in their texts, for both the imitation and subsequent moral improvement of readers. It was for this reason that Richardson chose, for his heroine, a woman of exemplary character. The author argued that contemporary plays and romances exhibited excessive passions, which encouraged individuals to accept that corrupt manners were a natural part of the society in which they lived. Voicing Richardson's criticism of the excessive and "indelicate" treatment of the passions in contemporary drama, Pamela notes:

I think there is hardly one play I have seen, or read hitherto, but has too much of love in it, as that passion is generally treated. How unnatural in some . . . when the authors want to paint it strongly . . . their aim seems to raise a whirlwind, as I may say, which sweeps down reason, religion, and decency; and carries every laudable duty away before it; so that all the examples can serve to shew is, how a disappointed lover may rage and storm, resent and revenge.<sup>87</sup>

In her attack on both Ambrose Philips' *The Distressed Mother*, because of its indelicate treatment of Hermione's love and the notion of suicide, and Addison and Steele's *The Tender Husband*, because of their representation of evil characters on the stage, Pamela criticises the way in which authors "have forgotten the moral[s] all the way".<sup>88</sup> According to Richardson, the problem with contemporary literature was that writers had ignored the necessity of instructing their readers in morality.

Much of Richardson's educational and moral instruction in the second part of *Pamela* was derived directly from Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. At the request of Mr. B., who has asked her "to fill up [her] leisure-time with observations on that treatise",<sup>89</sup> Pamela writes a series of eight letters outlining her reaction to Locke's treatise. Once more, Richardson replaced his original aim, that of instructing his readers through a story with a "natural air", with his enthusiasm to demonstrate his own

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Letter LIII, p. 252-253.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Letter LIII, p. 253.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Letter LIV, p. 255.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Letter LXXXIX, p. 371.

reflections on Locke's treatise. After agreeing with the general train of Locke's thought in relation to the effect of good health, nourishment and sleep upon the development of the child, Pamela turns her mind to the important topic of punishment. In contrast to Locke's suggestion that punishment not be dealt to children until such time as parents had regained reason, Pamela believes that it would prove beneficial if children were punished in the "height of passion". The difference in opinion can be attributed to Richardson's conservative view that children should be taught immediately what it was they could, and could not, do. If left until later, the punishment, and lesson, could be undermined by either the parents, who may have relented, or the children, who would offer excuses for their behaviour. Locke had also cautioned parents against "flattering" children with "rewards of things that [were] pleasant to them". He added that, in order "to make a good, a wise, and a virtuous man, [it was] fit he should learn to cross his appetite, and deny his inclination to riches, finery, or pleasing his palate, &c".<sup>90</sup> Although he argued against the doctrine of "self-denial", Richardson believed that all individuals should be taught to control their "an unreasonable appetite[s]". Speaking on behalf of the author, Pamela continues:

What I would then humbly propose, is, that the encouragement offered to youth, should, indeed, be innocent ones, as the gentleman enjoins, and not such as would lead to luxury, either food or apparel; but I humbly think it necessary, that rewards, *proper* rewards, should be proposed as incentives to laudable actions: for is it not by this method that the whole world is influenced and governed? Does not God himself, by rewards and punishments, make it our *interest*, as well as our *duty*, to obey him? And can we propose ourselves, for the government of our children, a better example than that of our Creator?<sup>91</sup>

Pamela proposes that innocent rewards be offered to children as inducements to a love of virtue. Contrary to Locke, she argues that children, as they learn to reason, be taught, through "the love of *inducement*", to raise their minds "to the love of *duty*".<sup>92</sup>

Richardson offered his readers instruction on many of the issues raised by Locke in his treatise on education. Although he accepted Locke's view that tutors should be

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<sup>90</sup> Locke, Section 52, in *Pamela II*, Letter XCI, p. 377.

<sup>91</sup> Richardson, *Pamela II*, Letter XCI, p. 377.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

discreet, sober and wise, as well as diligent,<sup>93</sup> he argued, through Pamela, that such perfection would be, in reality, difficult to find. Advising parents that they should avoid choosing tutors who are "of bigoted and narrow principles", Pamela suggests that she would choose a man:

who has travelled, and yet preserved his moral character untainted; and whose behaviour and carriage is easy, unaffected, unformal, and genteel, as well as acquiredly so, if possible; who shall not be dogmatical, positive, overbearing, on one hand; nor too yielding, suppliant, fawning, on the other; who shall study the child's natural bent, in order to direct his studies to the point he is most likely to excel in; and to reserve the respect due to his own character from every one, he must not be a busy body in the family, a whisperer, a tale-bearer, but of a benevolent turn of mind, ready to compose differences; who shall avoid, of all things, that foppishness of dress and appearance, which distinguishes the *petit-maitres*, and French ushers (that I have seen at some boarding schools), for coxcombs rather than guides of education.<sup>94</sup>

Opposing the view of many contemporary writers, that only children and tutors should exhibit "laudable" behaviour, Pamela, in a theory which was not too distant from that of Locke, insists "upon the regular behaviour of the whole family".<sup>95</sup> Not only tutors, but all members of a family should be virtuous if children are develop into virtuous individuals. Evidence of the truth of this lesson could be observed by contrasting the goodness of the Andrewses with the passionate nature of Mr. B.'s family, in the first part of *Pamela*. Pamela even disputes the necessity of keeping children from "the conversation of meaner servants", considering it not only difficult, but also unnecessary.

In contrast to Locke's claim that some distance should be kept between children and their inferiors, Pamela advocated a more humanitarian approach towards "inferiors". She recalls that Locke had commented that:

Another way to instil sentiments of humanity, and to keep them lively in young folks, will be, to accustom them to civility in their language and deportment towards their inferiors, and meaner sort of people, particularly servants. It is not unusual to observe the children in gentlemen's families treat the servants of the house with domineering words, names of contempt, and an imperious carriage, as if they were another race, or species beneath them. Whether ill example, the advantage of fortune or their natural vanity, inspire this haughtiness, it should be prevented or weeded out; and a gentle,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Letter XCII, pp. 381-383.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Letter XCIII, pp. 387-388.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Letter XCIV, p. 391.

courteous, affable carriage towards the lower ranks of men placed in the room of it.<sup>96</sup>

Pamela's benevolent attitude towards her inferiors, throughout the novel, sets an exemplary precedent for readers. Richardson implied that all individuals who, like Pamela, treated their inferiors in a benevolent way would win the same acclaim and admiration as his protagonist. Thus, Pamela, by advocating the philosophy of her author, promotes the same principles of universal benevolence as those expounded by Butler and Hutcheson. Stressing that she will strive to educate Billy in accordance with these principles, she continues:

The advantage of this universal benevolence to a young gentleman, as he grows up, will be . . . so to diffuse itself over his mind, as to influence all his actions, and give a grace to every thing he does or says, and make him admired and respected from the best and most durable motives; and will be of greater advantage to him for his attaining a handsome address and behaviour (for it will make him conscious that he *merits* the distinction he will meet with, and encourage him still *more* to merit it), than the best rules that can be given him for that purpose.

I will therefore teach the little dear courteousness and affability, from the properest motives I am able to think of; and will instruct him in only one piece of pride, that of being above doing a mean or low action. I will caution him not to behave in a lordly or insolent manner, even to the lowest servants. . . that *humility* . . . is a charming grace, and most conspicuously charming in persons of distinction; for that the poor, who are humbled by their condition, cannot glory in it, as the rich may; and that it makes the lower ranks of people love and admire the high-born, who can so condescend: whereas *pride*, in such, is meanness and insult. . .

Thus will the doctrine of benevolence and affability, implanted early in the mind of a young gentleman, and duly cultivated as he grows up, inspire him with the requisite conduct to command respect from *proper* motives, . . . and *his* good behaviour will render him, in some measure, an instructive monitor to the whole family.<sup>97</sup>

The author, through Pamela, expounded a philosophy which equated universally benevolent individuals with virtuous individuals. His instruction, therefore, stressed the need for readers to abandon the "principles of pride", and replace them with the "proper motives" of benevolence and affability. For this reason, in one of the instructive stories which conclude the second part of *Pamela*, Richardson, like Locke and Defoe before him, emphasised that tours of England would do much more to promote good manners and virtue in "gentlemen", than those taken on the Continent.

<sup>96</sup> Locke, op. cit., Section 111, in *Pamela II*, Letter XCIV, p. 394.

<sup>97</sup> Richardson, *Pamela II*, Letter XCIV, pp. 395-396.

Richardson also commented upon the issue of female education. Following Locke, he argued that, if given further emphasis, the education of girls would result in their being given more respect by their male counterparts. Furthermore, women would no longer have "to look upon that sex in so high a light, as to depreciate [their] own".<sup>98</sup> Representing the view of the author, Pamela claims that educated women would be able to "distinguish [between] the *pedant* and the *gentleman*".<sup>99</sup> It was upon this issue, the education of women, that Richardson closed his novel. Readers are offered a glimpse of Pamela, the ideal mother, telling stories to her children, stories in which good is rewarded and vice punished. The story about the "two little boys and two little girls" is morally instructive for readers, in the way that it promotes the ideal of the virtuous family and the effect of such a family upon children. Pamela continues:

They were all so good, and loved one another so well, that every body who saw them admired them, and talked of them far and near; that they would part with any thing to one another; loved the poor; spoke kindly to the servants; . . . were not proud; . . . would not tell a fib for the world, and were above doing any thing that required one; . . . No one idle; all prettily employed; the Masters at their books; the Misses at their books too, or at their needles; except at their play-hours, when they were never rude, nor noisy, nor mischievous, nor quarrelsome: . . . for well did they know their papa and mamma loved them so dearly, that they would refuse them nothing that was for their own good; and they were sure when they were refused, they asked for something that would have done them hurt, had it been granted. . . And they grew up; and the Masters became fine scholars, and fine gentlemen, and every body honoured them: and the Misses became fine ladies, and fine housewives . . .<sup>100</sup>

The story, in contrast to that of the vicious children whose excessive passions bring them to untimely ends, emphasises the necessity of parents being models of virtue for their children. However, the story went beyond this; for, it emphasised, in a tone similar to that adopted by the writers of sermons and tracts, Richardson's moral instruction that virtue would always be rewarded and vice punished.

Richardson concluded the second part of *Pamela* with the didactic story of four young women of distinction. Pamela uses the allegory, about the need for "young ladies [to be] watchful over . . . their reputation" lest they like "tender flowers . . . wither to the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Letter CIII, p. 467.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 467.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 462-463.

root",<sup>101</sup> to instruct Miss Goodwin, and readers, in the pursuit of virtue. Pamela informs Miss Goodwin that three of the women in the story are brought to their downfalls because of defective moral educations. In the first story, about Coquetilla, the daughter of a "worthy baronet [and] lady . . . who took not the requisite care of her daughter's education", Pamela instructs Miss Goodwin against assuming a similar behaviour. She continues:

[Coquetilla] admired nobody but herself, fluttered about, laughing at, and despising a crowd of men-followers, whom she attracted by gay, thoughtless freedoms of behaviour, too nearly treading on the skirts of immodesty: yet made she not one worthy conquest, exciting, on the contrary, in all sober minds, that contempt of herself, which she so profusely would be thought to pour down upon the rest of the world.<sup>102</sup>

As a result of this behaviour, Coquetilla "became too easy and cheap a prey" to men of vicious intentions. Meeting "with a man more bold and more enterprising than herself, and who was as designing as she was thoughtless", Coquetilla is robbed of her virtue and forced to flee the country. Miss Goodwin is told that Coquetilla:

unable to support a life so unsuitable to the natural gaiety of her temper . . . pined herself into a consumption, and died, unpitied and unlamented, among strangers, having not one friend but whom she bought with her money.<sup>103</sup>

In the second example, Richardson continued the theme about the effects of a deficient moral education in Pamela's relation of the story of Prudiana, the daughter of a widower, who had taught his daughter to "avoid all sort of conversation with men". Failing to teach his daughter "the right turn of mind", and a "sense of her religious duties, which would have been her best guard against all temptations", the man neglects his moral responsibility to his daughter. Pamela continues:

For, provided she kept out of the sight and conversation of the gentlemen, and avoided the company of those ladies who more freely conversed with the other sex, it was all her papa desired of her. This gave her a haughty, sullen, and reserved turn; made her stiff, formal, and affected. . . . So that pride, reserve, affectation, and censoriousness, made up the essentials of her character.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Letter CIII, p. 464.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 465.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 465.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 466.



Being despised by both sexes, Prudiana, "scorned by all that knew her" and able to communicate only with her servants, is forced to marry "a wretch so infinitely beneath her". Profusiana, a woman "struck with the grandeur and magnificence of what weak people call the *upper life*", provides the third example of the lady of vicious passions. Of Profusiana, Pamela comments:

She becomes the favourite toast of the place she frequents, is proud of that distinction; gives the fashion, and delights in the pride, that she can make apes in imitation, whenever she pleases. But yet endeavouring to avoid being thought proud, makes herself cheap, and is the subject of the attempts of every coxcomb of eminence; and with much ado, preserves her virtue, though not her character. . . . All the women she sees, if she excels them hate her: the gay part of the men, with whom she accompanies most, are all in a plot against her honour.<sup>105</sup>

According to Pamela, Profusiana's name is "prostituted" throughout the town by "every profligate and sot", so that all men of "noble heart" ignore her, and leave her to be "cheated into the arms of some vile fortune-hunter". Miss Goodwin summarises the moral of each story for readers when she observes that "every one that is naughty, first or last, must be *certainly* unhappy".<sup>106</sup> By italicizing the word, "certainly", Richardson impressed upon readers his moral instruction that all individuals of vicious character would remain unhappy, both within this life and the life hereafter.

Richardson completed his moral instruction against the vicious passions which ensnared contemporary women of distinction, by having Pamela provide her disciple, Miss Goodwin, with the rules upon which she can attain a virtuous and happy life:

"In your *maiden state*, think yourself *above* the gentleman, and they'll think you so too, and address you with reverence and respect, if they see there be neither pride nor arrogance in your behaviour, but a consciousness of merit, a true dignity, such as becomes virgin modesty, and untainted purity of mind and manners, like that of an angel among men; for so young ladies should look upon themselves to be, and will then be treated as such by the other sex.

"In your *married state* . . . you must think yourself subordinate to your husband; for so it has pleased God to make the wife. You must have no will of your own, in *petty* things; and if you marry a gentleman of sense and honour, such a one as your uncle, he will look upon you as his equal; and will exalt you the more for your abasing yourself".<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 468.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 470.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 467-468.

In educating Miss Goodwin, Pamela presents the moral instruction of her creator, who believed that young women, by avoiding all forms of passion and vanity, could lead virtuous and exemplary lives. In a lengthy passage, Pamela outlines what Richardson specified as the necessary attributes of all virtuous women. She claims that Prudentia:

"By reading, by observation, and by attention, . . . daily added new advantages to those which her education gave her. She saw, and pitied, the fluttering freedoms and dangerous flights of Coquetilla. The sullen pride, the affectation, and stiff reserves, which Prudiana assumed, she penetrated, and made it her study to avoid. And the gay, hazardous conduct, extravagant temper, and love of tinselled grandeur, which were the blemishes of Profusiana's character, she dreaded and shunned. She fortifies herself with the excellent examples of the past and present ages, and knows how to avoid the faults of the faculty, and to imitate the graces of the most perfect. She takes into her scheme of that future happiness, which she hopes to make her own, what are the *true* excellencies of her sex, and endeavours to appropriate to herself the domestic virtues, which shall one day make her the crown of some worthy gentleman's happiness: and which, *of course* . . . will secure and heighten her own.

"That noble frankness of disposition, that sweet and unaffected openness and simplicity, which shines in all her actions and behaviour, commend her to the esteem and reverence of all mankind; as her humility and affability, and a temper uncensorious . . . do to the love of every lady. . . . She meets with no address but from men of honour and probity: the fluttering coxcomb, the inveigling parasite, the insidious deceiver, the mercenary fortune-hunter, spread no snares for a heart guarded by discretion and prudence, as hers is. They see that all her amiable virtues are the happy result of an uniform judgement, and the effects of her own wisdom, founded in an education to which she does the highest credit. And at last, after several worthy offers, enough to perplex a lady's choice, she blesses some one happy gentleman, more distinguished than the rest, for learning, good sense, and *true politeness*, which is but another word for *virtue* and *honour*; and shines, to her last hour, in all the duties of domestic life, as an excellent wife, mother, mistress, friend, and Christian; and so confirms all the expectations of which her maiden life had given such strong and such edifying presages".<sup>108</sup>

Like alert readers, Miss Goodwin recognises that "PRUDENTIA" is Pamela; however, she is only partly correct, for she too, under Pamela's guidance, will be a "SECOND PRUDENTIA". More importantly, however, the passage summarised Richardson's didactic aim in writing *Pamela*. At the conclusion of the work, Richardson insisted that there existed an opportunity for female readers of the text to become "PRUDENTIAS" themselves, by following his moral instruction. Although the instruction was conservative and, particularly in the second part, somewhat indoctrinating, it still succeeded in outlining the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 470-471.

moral necessity of following "the excellent examples of the past and present ages", instead of pursuing the follies and vain pursuits of contemporary society.

Both parts of *Pamela* supported Richardson's didactic theory, that all works of literature should focus primarily upon moral instruction. In presenting an exemplary figure, Pamela, the author provided readers with a model upon whom they could base their own lives. In this sense, the didactic aims of *Pamela* were consistent with those of the novels based on the traditional approach to moral education. In couching his instruction in the form of entertainment, Richardson initiated the novel of moral instruction that developed during the mid eighteenth century. Although his method deviated radically from that adopted by writers of sermons and tracts, there was still considerable reliance upon indoctrinating readers in issues of morality, rather than allowing them total autonomy in decoding the meaning of the text for themselves. What was important, however, about the didactic method of the author was the innovative way in which his moral instruction was delivered in the course of the narrative, rather than through a listing of maxims. Despite being criticised by Fielding for presenting unattainable examples of virtue, Richardson sought to promote virtue at all times. He believed that individuals could be corrected, or made aware of their follies, through the educative processes of the novel. Although he stressed that, ultimately, individuals would be rewarded for their virtue, he was also aware that virtue did not always bring with it earthly rewards. It was on the basis of this that Richardson wrote *Clarissa*, a novel in which virtue was to be rewarded in terms of earthly fame and heavenly glory.

**Chapter VII                      Virtuous Women and Heavenly Reward:  
   Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa***

In his next major work, *Clarissa*, Richardson extended the innovative and didactic writing technique, begun in *Pamela*, of using models of exemplary behaviour to instruct his readers in the pursuit of virtue. Adopting a line of thought similar to that propounded by the exponents of the traditional approach to moral education, and incorporating some of Locke's ideas from his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Richardson maintained that readers could only be taught virtue through a process of direct "Observation",<sup>1</sup> in which they saw "repeated Practice[s]" of "the same [virtuous] Action done over and over again . . . until they [had] got the habit of doing it well".<sup>2</sup> For this reason, convinced that the exemplary behaviour of Pamela provided the most appropriate means of educating readers in the pursuit of virtue, the author adopted the same didactic technique in *Clarissa*, save for two significant changes. These two changes, which were resultant upon some dissatisfaction with the educational consequences of his earlier work, stressed that the virtuous were not always rewarded with earthly rewards for the maintenance of exemplary behaviour, and that reformed rakes did not always make the best husbands. In his Preface to *Clarissa*, he stressed that his didactic design, in addition to a great variety of subjects, was to :

caution parents against the undue exertion of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage: and children against preferring

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<sup>1</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Section 82, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 66, p. 122.

a man of pleasure to a man of probity, upon that dangerous but too commonly received notion, *that a reformed rake makes the best husband*.<sup>3</sup>

In order to achieve his didactic aims, Richardson stressed, as he had done in *Pamela*, that "in all works of this, and the dramatic kind, *story* or *amusement* should be considered as little more than the vehicle to the more necessary *instruction*".<sup>4</sup>

In his correspondence with Aaron Hill, Richardson emphasised that Clarissa, like Pamela, was to be seen as a model of virtue. Although he accepted that "going off with a man was inexcusable", Richardson emphasised that it was his principal intention, having shown that Clarissa's actions were not based on "common Motives", "to make her so faultless, that a Reader should find no way to account for the Calamities she met with, and to justify Moral Equity but by looking up to a future Reward".<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, he distinguished between the conclusion of *Clarissa* and that of *Pamela*, when he commented that:

A Writer who follows Nature and pretends to keep the Christian System in his Eye, cannot make a Heaven in this World for his Favourites; or represent this Life otherwise than as a State of Probation. Clarissa I once more averr [*sic*] could not be rewarded in this World. To have given her her Reward here, as in a happy Marriage, would have been as if a Poet had placed his Catastrophe in the Third Act of his Play, when the Audience were *obliged* to expect two more. What greater moral Proof can be given of a World after this, for the rewarding of suffering Virtue, and for the punishing of oppressive Vice, than the Inequalities in the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments here below?<sup>6</sup>

In addition to documenting the fact that virtue often went unrewarded in this world, Richardson realised that, if he were to maintain his role of moral educator, he could not compromise his principles by offering his heroine some earthly reward after she had suffered the loss of her virtue at the hands of Lovelace. He continued:

My story is designed to strengthen the tender Mind, and to enable the worthy Heart to bear up against the Calamities of Life. May no real Evils ever happen to ruffle, to shock, a Mind so beautifully tender! . . .

Read my Story through and you will see that in the Example Clarissa sets, the Meekness of Heart is intirely consistent with that Dignity

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<sup>3</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Angus Ross (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985), Preface, p. 36. Further references to *Clarissa* will be from this edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters*, ed. Carroll (October 29, 1746), pp. 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, (December 15, 1748), p. 108.

of Mind, which on all proper Occasions she exerts with so much distinguishing Excellence, as carries her above the irascible Passions.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, in a society in which chastity was held as the highest of feminine virtues, Clarissa had to die. The problem was summarised in the words of the anonymous writer of *Woman Triumphant*, a work addressed directly to men. The writer commented that:

If a woman falls into your snares, so cruel and unjust are you, that it is impossible she should ever retrieve her character, you can find an hundred excuses to extenuate the crimes of your own sex, you call them slips, tricks of youth, heat of young blood, or the like, and such a one has no more to do, than to take a trip into the country, or a voyage at most, and upon his return, put on a demure countenance, carry an air of gravity, and all's forgiven and forgotten; O he's become a mighty sober man! his wild oats are sown, and he'll make the better husband, now he has had his swing, and has seen his folly. But if a woman, decoy'd by the flattery and subtle arguments of treacherous men, steps the least awry, the whole world must ring with it, it's an indelible blot in her 'scutcheon, not to be wiped out by time, for it even pursues her after death, and contrary to all justice, the very children are upbraided with their mother's misfortune; no excuses are sought for her, no pity can be afforded to a ruin'd woman, but the fault is exaggerated with bitter expressions and railings against the whole sex, they are all immediately condemn'd of lewdness and wantonness.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the exemplary character of Clarissa, Richardson portrayed the vicious nature of the rake who, if he could not deceive women into surrendering their virtue, applied force. Of Lovelace's character, Richardson wrote to Aaron Hill:

Lovelace's Character I *intend* to be unamiable, as I hinted: I once read to a young Lady Part of his Character, and then his End; and upon her pitying him, and wishing he had rather been made a Penitent, than to be killed, I made him still more and more odious, by his heighten'd Arrogance and Triumph, as well as by vile Actions, leaving only some Qualities in him, laudable enough to justify her first Liking.<sup>9</sup>

Had Richardson allowed Lovelace the opportunity of becoming penitent, he could have been accused of ignoring his moral responsibility of warning women against the snares of vicious men, and of promoting the romantic fantasy that all men could be reformed. It was for this reason that the author made the character even more odious to readers. In his inability to control the excessive nature of his passions and in his quest for self-gratification, Lovelace personifies the negative philosophies of Hobbes and Mandeville.

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<sup>7</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (December 15, 1748), p. 116.

<sup>8</sup>Anonymous, *Woman Triumphant* (1721), pp. xii-xiii; quoted in Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth Century Women: An Anthology* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (October 29, 1746), pp. 73-74.

Thus, being unable to compromise with the forces of evil,<sup>10</sup> Clarissa has no other alternative than to accept death, lest she be described as "lewd" and "wanton".

Although much of Richardson's technique was innovative, his plot was largely derived from the conduct books and romances of the seventeen-twenties. At the same time, he included in his text many of the issues highlighted by such female novelists as Mary Davy, in *The Ladies Tale* (1725), and Mrs. Eliza Haywood, who had been rebelling against the notions of male domination, and the accepted role, of women. One work which had considerable impact upon Richardson's writing of *Clarissa* was the anonymously published, *The Forced Virgin; or, The Unnatural Mother. A True Secret History*. This work, based on Mrs. Eliza Haywood's belief that novels should not only instruct, but "remind the unthinking part of the world, how dangerous it is to give way to passion,"<sup>11</sup> warned readers to avoid the dangers of excessive passion. The narrator comments that:

Love, when opposed in its directive Way, swells like a rapid Torrent over all little Bounds, and Deluge-like sweeps wide Destruction round - Such were the first Accidents of the lost *Lominia!* - And, now, if the Trouble I have taken, should meet with your Liking, and warn those, (if any) Guilty, from the rash Actions she committed, my Endeavours will obtain their Ends.<sup>12</sup>

Like Clarissa, Lominia, a woman of "discerning Judgement" and "the Wonder of her own Sex, and the Desire of the other",<sup>13</sup> is presented as a model among women. However, while Lominia is walking with her lover, Arastes, in her father's garden, she is kidnapped by four men, acting under the instructions of "the cursed" Lysanor, who had been unable to win Lominia's love by any other means than treachery. Despite her pleas to "Spare but [her] Virtue"<sup>14</sup> and warnings that the "Almighty Power . . . will too soon justly punish the Offender", Lysanor, possessed by an uncontrollable lust, lays siege to her. The narrator informs readers of the effect of his uncontrolled passion:

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<sup>10</sup> R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1974), p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Eliza Haywood, *Lasselia* (1724), Preface.

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous, *The Forced Virgin; or, The Unnatural Mother* (London: Seven Stars, 1730), Dedication.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Lust, not Love, sway'd his Soul, and nothing less than *Lominia's* Ruin possessed his Brain. The Door at his first Entrance he secured; when with a sudden Turn he seized the trembling Maid; - The beauteous Fair, press'd in his rough and harden'd Arms, by more than manly Force he bore with Pleasure to his stately Bed: in vain she prayed, his Lust had shut his Ears to such Intreaties. - In vain she strove to stay his raging Flames; Regard to her Virtue, or Fear of future Punishment, could make no room for a Moment's Delay; he had her now in full Possession, and was resolved to use the wished-for Hour; with one Hand intangled in her Hair, he held the Maiden down; while the other furthered him to compleat his hellish Purpose.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly after the rape, the offender's excessive passion is punished when Lominia kills him, using his own dagger, prior to returning to her parents, "ruined, undone [and] . . . polluted". On her return, the recovered Arastes, consumed with desire and passion asks for Lominia's hand in marriage. However, the thought of "the weighty Burthen of *Lysanor's* filthy Embraces, [and] the dreadful Product of her destructive Ravishment", condemn the protagonist to a life devoid of "everlasting peace".

Readers are given a psychological insight into the changed heart of the girl, whose virtue has been lost. The narrator continues:

Love and Pleasure, the former Delights of her Soul were lost, gone, and never to be retrieved. Wild with her crowding Fancies, and fearful of a blasted Fame, Reason had left her Throne, and grinding Thoughts possessed her aking Brain: In this dreadful Confusion of her Mind, with a sudden Joy, she had straightway recourse to the Attempt of a thing, even detested by Nature; and with wild Exclamations which strengthen'd her former Resolve, thus broke out the Anguish of her Soul. "If the *Fætus*, (cried she) now ripening in my polluted Womb, should ever see Light; my Name, my Reputation, will be lost for ever; the only Blessing known to Mankind; nor will the censorious World give themselves time to examine into the Foundation, and the original Cause of this my Woe; but with inconsiderate Speeches blast my Fame, ridicule the clouded Carriage of the much-thought-prudent *Lominia*, with the Serpent-Tongue of Woman's utmost Malice. - What, (continued she) shall I be made the Jest of the World? O dismal Scene of approaching Scorn! No; avert it every Power! The Means of Relief croud [*sic*] in my receiving Brain, and I will use the welcome Offer."<sup>16</sup>

As was the case with the ravisher, passion also overcomes the reasoning faculty of the victim, forcing Lominia to contemplate suicide, an act most detested by nature. The passage also emphasises the scorn bestowed upon women who were seduced and raped, even though the fault was not their own; thus, rather than looking at the cause of the woe,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.



society censured the victims of treachery. Fearing this censure, Lominia becomes seriously ill, after drinking a "liquor" designed at procuring an abortion. In her subsequent comments, she identifies this illness with the notion of divine retribution. The narrator informs readers that Lominia, who "had straight recourse to Prayers, like an offending Sinner, required Heaven's Forgiveness, and vow'd an entire Obedience to the Almighty Will".<sup>17</sup> It was this notion, the ability of sinners to repent their past actions, that influenced Richardson's own thoughts.

In the ensuing events, the writer continued the moral instruction of the tale by informing readers that even good-natured men, when overcome by passion, could lay siege to a woman's virtue, if the opportunity presented itself. Subsequently, it should come as no surprise for readers to learn that Arastes, after having been spurned by Lominia, allows his passions to overcome reason, and seduces the unsuspecting girl. While she is overcome with "Numbness", continues the narrator:

*Arastes*, overjoyed at the Success of his Design, snatched up the Captivated Fair, laid her on an adjacent Bed, and there performed the Act his Desires had long urged him to. Again, the tender Unfortunate was Enjoyed, though to herself unknown; the Liquors were of so strong a Mixture, that they still retained her every Faculty in the fleecy Folds of Sleep. The next Day she awaked, Innocent and thoughtless of her compleated Ruin; and arising from the Bed, whereon she thought she had securely reposed, prepared her Departure for her Father's House, wherein she residing passed her Hours with an undisturbed Felicity.<sup>18</sup>

One of the moral issues emphasised by the author concerned the inability of women who, being uneducated in the thoughts and ways of men, succumbed to the snares of vice through a failure to understand the uncontrollable nature of men's passions.

Although Lominia is fortunate in having Arastes, a "Man so far different from the rest of his changing Sex", continue his drive for her hand, the consequences of her naïveté cannot be avoided. Falling pregnant and unaware that the child is Arastes', Lominia contrives to kill the child in order to avoid public scorn. The child, however, is saved by Arastes who, some years later, informs Lominia of its upbringing. Lominia,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

distressed at the thought that "Part of *Lysanor* was in Being",<sup>19</sup> "seduces the child to an adjacent Wood . . . where, with an uncommon Vengeance [and overcome by passion], she struck the lovely Boy three or four desperate Blows on his snowy Bosom, . . . [until] the Lamb-like Babe sunk under the heavy Strokes, in the folds of Death".<sup>20</sup> When she is told of the truth, she, consumed by passion, realises her own "detestable Sin" and "pour[ing] out Curses on her wretched Head", accepts that she must "suffer for this cruel Act".<sup>21</sup> Prior to carrying out the sentence, she outlines the truth to Arastes, who, in turn, failing in his own suicide attempt, leaves his homeland never to be seen again. At the conclusion of the tale, the writer intervened to remind readers of the moral instruction. Readers are told:

*From hence, ye Fair, learn to detest the Deed,  
Which made this Guilty Maid as Guilty Bleed.*<sup>22</sup>

In addition to drawing the attention of readers to the dangers associated with excessive passion, the novel also sounded a stern, moral warning of the consequences which could befall women who, either innocently or willingly, relinquished their virtue. Edward Cobden summarised the plight of such women when, in his "Sermon on Chastity", he commented:

"Alas! that virgin innocence, which was once her comfort and her glory, which was her brightest ornament, and most valuable dowry, is lost, irrecoverably lost; and shame, guilt and sorrow are to be her continual attendants." What can she do? Her betrayer will not deal with her on terms of honour and no other man will venture to marry a woman who he cannot think will be faithful to him. "The best and wisest course she can take is, to endeavour to wash away the stain she has contracted, with the tears of unfeigned repentance, and to take off her reproach in the eyes of the world by giving the regularity of future conduct, as evidence of the sincerity of her contrition. . . . There is no reflecting on so wretched an object, without the deepest compassion for her misery, as well as the utmost detestation for her guilt".<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Cobden, "Sermon on Chastity" (December 11, 1748), in Utter and Needham, *Pamela's Daughters* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1936, Re-issued 1972), p. 288.

In contrast to the method of instruction adopted by the writer of *The Forced Virgin*, Richardson, following the example of Lord Chesterfield,<sup>24</sup> advocated that the epistolary technique provided the most effective and most persuasive means of instructing readers in the pursuit of virtue. Richardson, like Chesterfield, used the epistolary style as "a compass [by which] to direct [the reader's] course, or reason sufficient to steer the vessel". Believing that individuals were easily "seduced by fashion" and vice, and "blindly adopt[ed] nominal pleasures" at the cost of the real ones,<sup>25</sup> he argued that letters provided the best means of "setting off" the instruction and thoughts of writers, and of returning readers to the path of virtue. Although Malvin Zirker Junior is correct in assuming that the primary merit of the letter form "lies in its power to convince us of the immediacy and authenticity of the subjective inner state of the writer",<sup>26</sup> he still fails to supply all the reasons for Richardson's use of this literary form, which the author outlined in a letter to Sophia Westcomb. Commenting that letters, "written on occasions of necessary absence", provided the best display of "the force of friendship, that [could] be wished for by a friendly heart", he continued:

This correspondence is, indeed, the cement of friendship: it is friendship avowed under hand and seal: friendship upon bond, as I may say: more pure, yet more ardent, and less broken in upon, than personal conversation can be even amongst the most pure, because of the deliberation it allows, from the very preparation to, and action of writing.<sup>27</sup>

Through the use of the letter, Richardson aimed at creating, by proxy, "the cement of friendship" between himself and his readers. Only by this means, the seal and bond of friendship, could readers complete their reading of the text in agreement with the author's moral doctrine.

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<sup>24</sup> Lord Chesterfield had suggested, in a letter to his son, that the epistolary method provided the best means of pleasing and instructing; thus, it was "of the greatest importance to write letters well". Lord Chesterfield, *Letters to His Son*, (October 4, 1738), in *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Fourth Earl of Chesterfield*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (London: 1932), I, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, (March 27, 1747) p. 890.

<sup>26</sup> Malvin R. Zirker, Jr., "Richardson's Correspondence: The Personal Letter as Private Experience", in *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. Anderson et al. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (1748), p. 65.

In his Preface to *Clarissa*, Richardson defended the length of his "history", which was recorded in a series of letters between "two young ladies of virtue and honour, bearing an inviolable friendship for each other", and between "two gentlemen of free lives; . . . professed libertines as to the fair sex". In addition to containing the history of "the excellent person whose name it bears" and the "lives, characters and catastrophes of several others", the author explained that:

Length will naturally be expected, . . . from the following considerations: that the letters on both sides are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects: the events at the time generally dubious - so that they abound not only with critical situations, but with what may be called instantaneous descriptions and reflections, which may be brought home to the breast of the youthful reader: as also, with affecting conversations, many of them written in the dialogue or dramatic way.<sup>28</sup>

Richardson maintained that letters best documented the undisguised, unpremeditated and sincere thoughts of the personalities within the novel. Consequently, they allowed readers the opportunity of judging characters on the basis of the evidence presented directly to them. Furthermore, the letters offered instruction to female readers by permitting them to inspect the minds of both the virtuous women and rakish men within the novel. In this sense, Richardson used the epistolary style as a means of mirroring the inner recesses of the minds of individuals, in the same way as Samuel Johnson suggested it should be used, some years later, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale:

A man's letters . . . are only the mirror of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process. Nothing is inverted, nothing distorted, you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives.<sup>29</sup>

Richardson introduced readers to the educative function of the novel in the first letter, when he had Miss Howe inform them that Clarissa, like Pamela before her, should be seen as a model of virtue. Because she "excels all [her] sex", Miss Howe reminds Clarissa that other individuals have come to hold her as "answerable to [them for her]

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<sup>28</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Preface, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Johnson, "Letter to Mrs. Thrale" (October 27, 1777); quoted in Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, p. 217.

conduct in points so very delicate and concerning".<sup>30</sup> However, in addition to his emphasis on the importance of exemplary characters for moral improvement, Richardson included the theme of filial duty. In *Clarissa*, the issue of filial duty and obedience to one's parents is discussed more fully, than it was in *Pamela*. The Harlowe family, in its quest for money and status, attempts to force Clarissa into a marriage with the "odious" Roger Solmes. Many individuals accepted the right of parents to forbid their daughters marrying suitors whom they deemed unsuitable; however, this did not mean that parents could force their daughters to marry men whom the latter detested. Richardson documented his view in a letter to Susanna Highmore, when he commented that:

. . . in the poor *ineffectual* History of Clarissa, the parents are made more cruel, more implacable, more punishable in short, in order to inculcate this very doctrine, that the want of duty on one side enhances the merit on the other, where it is performed. And you see how Clarissa shines in her's; nor loses sight of her gratitude and love, cruel as they were in the nineteenth year of her life, for their kindness and favour to her in the preceding eighteen. Nor will I allow, that she shall be judged in this respect by any thing but by the duty on her part (as they are to be condemned, on theirs, by the want of it); much less by the partial passions of such as think she should not have been able to act as she did. An example is an example; right is right; and wrong is wrong; whether we can or cannot come up to the one, or avoid the other.<sup>31</sup>

Although traditional in his belief that children should obey their parents, Richardson believed that, in this case, Clarissa's parents were remiss in their duty to her. In contrast to the relationship between Clarissa and her parents, therefore, the author presented the relationship between the protagonist and her grandfather as representative of the normal bond that should exist between parents and children. Ironically, in bestowing his favours upon his "dearest and beloved grand-daughter", who "has been from infancy a matchless young creature in her duty to [him],<sup>32</sup> the old man helps to create, unknowingly, the feelings of resentment that other members of the family, overcome by the passion of excessive ambition, have towards "the extraordinary child". In relation to her brother's ambition, for example, Clarissa notes:

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<sup>30</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 1, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters*, ed. Carroll (November 26, 1749), p. 132.

<sup>32</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 4, p. 53.

But when my grandfather's will . . . had lopped off one branch of my brother's expectation, he was extremely dissatisfied with me. Nobody indeed was pleased: for although everyone loved me, yet being the youngest child, father, uncles, brother, sister, all thought themselves postponed as to matter of right and power (who loves not power?); and my father himself could not bear that I should be made sole, as I may call it, and independent, for such the will as to that estate and the powers it gave (unaccountably, as they all said), made me.

To obviate therefore everyone's jealousy, I gave up to my father's management . . . not only the estate, but the money bequeathed me. . . contenting myself to take, as from his bounty, what he was pleased to allow me, without desiring the least addition to my annual stipend. And then I hoped I had laid all envy asleep; but my brother and sister . . . were every now and then occasionally doing me covert ill offices . . . .<sup>33</sup>

In a normal family situation, Clarissa, by entrusting her inheritance to her father, would have done what Richardson, and society, would have expected her to do. This, however, is not the case with the Harlowe family. By maintaining her duty towards her family, in spite of her recognition of their existing envy and jealousies,<sup>34</sup> Clarissa not only exposes the vicious passions of her immediate family, but puts herself above such passions. Anna Howe advances the author's moral instruction when she comments that:

AVARICE and ENVY are two passions that are not to be satisfied, the one by *giving*, the other by the envied person's continuing to *deserve* and *excel* - Fuel, fuel both, all the world over, to flames insatiate and devouring.<sup>35</sup>

In order to educate readers against the excessive nature of such passions, Richardson emphasised their destructive influence upon family life.

Richardson documented, in considerable detail, the abuse endured by Clarissa so as to indicate to readers that she was blameless for her actions. Despite Clarissa's dislike of Solmes, Mrs. Harlowe reminds her daughter that the "honour and interest of the family" are at stake, that the "settlements are actually drawn", and that, above all, she must obey her father's wishes. She continues:

You have never been put to a test till now, that deserved to be called a test. This *is*, this *must* be, my last effort with you. Give me hope, my dear child; my peace is concerned. I will compound with you but for *hope*; and yet your father will not be satisfied without an implicit, and even a cheerful obedience.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Letter 13, pp. 77-78.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Letter 19, p. 104. Clarissa notes that she "found jealousies and uneasiness rising in every breast, where all before was unity and love".

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Letter 10, p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Letter 20, p. 108.

Until such time as she complies with the dictates of the family, Clarissa is labelled "ungrateful", refused communication with her father, and forbidden intercourse with either Lovelace or Miss Howe, the latter of whom is blamed for giving her such "high airs".<sup>37</sup> Even her uncle chastises her for disobedience and "obstinacy", adding that he has "always found a most horrid romantic perverseness in [the opposite] sex", who invariably do, and love, what they should not.<sup>38</sup> The abuse she receives at the hands of her own family only adds to the confusion within Clarissa's own mind. On the one hand, she knows that, as a child, she is bound to be dutiful to her parents; however, on the other, she also realises that she is being forced, entirely against her wishes, to participate in a union devoid of any love or mutual respect. Therefore, in spite of her comments that she "would sooner beg [her] bread than litigate for [her] right" with her father, being convinced that "whether or not the parent do his duty by the child, the child cannot be exempted from doing hers to him",<sup>39</sup> Clarissa is unable to comply with her father's wishes. The author, by juxtaposing the honourable motives of his protagonist with the dishonourable ones of her family, discharged Clarissa of any lack of duty towards her parents. Far from being reasonable and based on a genuine love of their daughter, the requests of Clarissa's parents are based entirely on the negative passions of selfishness and social advancement.

In order to provide readers with further evidence of the virtue of his protagonist, Richardson used the didactic technique of allowing those outside the Harlowe family to offer incisive commentary upon Clarissa's character and situation. Another such character, in addition to Anna Howe, is Mrs. Howe. After warning her daughter not to judge the Harlowes solely on the basis of Clarissa's letters alone, she continues:

"I cannot but think, Nancy, said she, after all, that there is a little hardship in Miss Harlowe's case: and yet, as her mamma says, it is a grating thing to have a child who was always noted for her duty in *smaller* points to stand in opposition to her parents will in the *greater*; yea, in the *greatest of all*. And now, to middle the matter between both, it is a pity that the man they insist upon her accepting has not that sort of merit, which so delicate a mind

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Letter 24, p. 121.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Letter 32.4, p. 155.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Letter 55, p. 235.

as Miss Harlowe's might reasonably expect in a husband - But then, this man is surely preferable to a libertine: to a libertine too, who has had a duel with her own brother. *Fathers* and *mothers* must think so, were it *not* for that circumstance. . . . *They* must know best. Miss Harlowe, as fine a young child as she is, must have *done* something, must have *said* something (you know how they loved her) to make them use her thus".<sup>40</sup>

Naturally, the conservative parent, Mrs. Howe, believes that parents will always do the best for their children. By having Mrs. Howe emphasise the ideal relationship that should exist between parents and their children, Richardson demonstrated to readers, partly through the application of irony, that such a relationship did not exist in the Harlowe household. Far from acting in the best interests of their daughter, as Mrs. Howe naïvely suggests they do, the Harlowes are motivated solely by selfish instincts. Richardson used this gulf, between Mrs. Howe's conception of the Harlowes and the reality of Clarissa's situation as a didactic instrument in convincing readers that they should censure the behaviour of members of the Harlowe family. In fact, it is Mrs. Howe rather than her daughter, who is myopic in both her argument and vision. Anna Howe replies to Clarissa:

I must needs say, that I think duty to parents is a very meritorious excellence: but I bless God I have not your trials. We can all be good when we have no temptation nor provocation to the contrary - but few young persons (who can help themselves too) would bear what you bear.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to the exemplary nature of the heroine, Anna's role is to offer both Clarissa, and readers, the more practical side of womanhood. Contrasting herself with Clarissa, Miss Howe correctly notes that, while she "is fitter for this world", Clarissa is fitter than her "for the *next*".<sup>42</sup> By implication, she emphasises the author's argument that those who are too perfect lack the ability to combat evil in this world.

In her role as confidante, Anna Howe personifies the faculty of reason for Clarissa, who is caught in a train of events in which uncontrolled passion attempts to destroy reason. While acknowledging that all children owe their parents duty and obedience, Anna is "afraid all opposition will be in vain". She continues:

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Letter 27, pp. 131-132.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Letter 27, p. 132.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Letter 10, p. 69.



You must, you will, I doubt, be sacrificed to this odious man! - I know your family! - There will be no resisting such baits as he has thrown out - Oh, my dear, my beloved friend! and are such charming qualities, is such exalted merit, to be sunk in such a marriage! - You must not, your uncle tells my mamma, dispute their authority. AUTHORITY! what a full word is that in the mouth of a narrow-minded person, who happened to be born thirty years before one! - Of your uncles I speak, for as to the *parental* authority, that ought to be sacred. But should not parents have *reason* for what they do?<sup>43</sup>

Miss Howe is used by the author to guide the response of readers, in relation to Clarissa's situation. Although she believes that parental obedience is sacred, she undermines this, in the minds of readers, in her implied criticisms of the Harlowe family. In addition, her language censures the behaviour of the family. She uses, for example, the religiously symbolic word "sacrifice" to describe the family's offering of Clarissa to Solmes, and later claims that "authority" is a word by which the "narrow-minded" maintain their power. Consequently, readers should accept the validity of Miss Howe's rhetorical statement, when she comments on behalf of her creator, that parents should apply reason to all their actions and beliefs, especially when they affect the lives of their children.

Throughout the course of the novel, Richardson offered readers, in addition to his warning that women should be made aware of "the base arts" and designs of men, continued instruction about the need to control excessive passion, lest they be subjected to some form of punishment. *Clarissa* is riddled with numerous examples of excessive passion, such as Miss Howe's warning to readers about the passionate nature of James Harlowe, who is disliked by many "because of his natural imperiousness and fierce and uncontrollable temper".<sup>44</sup> Readers are alerted to two reasons behind his support of Clarissa's marriage to Solmes: his ambition and his pride. In relation to the first, his vindictiveness towards his sister is resultant upon her receiving their grandfather's favour, which stopped him from inheriting "a noble fortune . . . [which] might entitle him to hope for a peerage".<sup>45</sup> The second reason concerns her brother's pride. By forcing Clarissa to marry Solmes, James believes that he is avenging the injury done to him in his

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Letter 15, pp. 84-85.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Letter 1, p. 39.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Letter 13, p. 77.

duel with Lovelace. Clarissa notes the reaction of her brother, when he hears of Lovelace's intended visit:

The moment Mr. Lovelace's visits were mentioned to him, he, without either hesitation or apology, expressed his disapprobation of them. He found great flaws in his character, and took the liberty to say in so many words that he wondered how it came into the hearts of his uncles to encourage such a man for *either* of his sisters . . .

He justified his avowed inveteracy by common fame, and by what he had known of him at college; declaring that he had ever hated him; ever should hate him; and would never own him for a brother, or me for a sister if I married him. . . . His native haughtiness could not bear a superiority so visible.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, Clarissa aptly describes her relationship with her brother, when she imagines herself as a "silly bird, entangled" and struggling to escape the "snares of her predator".<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, because of his influence within the family, James can conceal his true feelings under the guise of concern for his sister. Richardson, by supplying comments about the character of James Harlowe, was instructing readers on how to distinguish hypocritical characters, whose existences were based upon ambition and pride, from their good-natured opposites.

Bella Harlowe's insistence on her sister's marriage to Solmes is also motivated by excessive passions: those of jealousy and revenge. Clarissa observes that her sister, while disclaiming "all manner of regard for" Lovelace, is only too ready to join her brother "in his resentments against the man he hated".<sup>48</sup> Anna Howe, however, provides readers with the reasons behind Bella's "unsisterly behaviour" and her affected concern for the honour and reputation of the family, when she informs Clarissa that:

Her *outward eye*, as you have owned, was from *the first* struck with the figure and address of the man whom she pretends to despise, and who 'tis certain thoroughly despises her; but you have not told us that *still* she loves him of all men. Bell has a meanness in her very pride, and no one is so proud as Bell. She has owned her love, her uneasy days, and sleepless nights, and her revenge grafted upon it, to her favourite Betty Barnes - To lay herself in the power of a servant's tongue! - Poor creature! - But LIKE little souls will find one another out, and mingle, as well as LIKE great ones. This, however, she told the wench in strict confidence; and thus by way of the *female round-about*, as Lovelace had the sauciness on such another occasion, in ridicule of our sex, to call it, Betty (pleased to be thought

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Letter 4, pp. 48-49.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Letter 22.2, p. 119.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Letter 4, p. 49.

worthy of a secret, and to have an opportunity of inveighing against Lovelace's perfidy, as she would have it to be) told it to one of *her* confidants; that confidant, with like injunctions of secrecy, to Miss Lloyd's Harriot - Harriot to Miss Lloyd - Miss Lloyd to *me* - I to you - with leave to make what you please of it. And now you will not wonder to find in Miss Bell an implacable rivaless rather than an affectionate sister; . . . and for her driving on for a fixed day for sacrificing you to Solmes: in short, for her rudeness and violence of every kind - What a sweet revenge will she take, as well upon Lovelace as upon you, if she can procure her rival and all-excelling sister to be married to the man that sister hates, and so prevent her having the man whom she herself loves (whether *she* have hope of him or not), and whom she suspects her sister loves! Poisons and poniards have often been set to work by minds inflamed by disappointed love and revenge; will you wonder then, that the ties of relationship in such a case have no force, and that a sister forgets to be a sister.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to directing the attention of readers to the real reasons for Bella's scorn, Miss Howe also warns them of the destructive and vindictive nature of unreciprocated love. Such excessive love, argued Richardson, could destroy the reputation of women. Not only does Bella act in a manner contrary to all notions of social custom by acknowledging her love of a man, prior to being offered any hope of a permanent relationship, but she also acts foolishly by entrusting her secret to a woman far below her own social standing - her female servant, Betty Barnes. Consequently, readers are unable to sympathise with her. The disclosure of her secret, and the accompanying ridicule, offers a just punishment for such an inappropriate action. Because of her excessive pride and vanity, Bella sets her mind upon a course of vengeance against an innocent victim. Bellario, in his letter to Miss Harriet Gibson in the anonymously published, *Remarks on Clarissa*, summarises correctly the characters of both James and Arabella Harlowe, when he comments:

In *James Harlowe's* Letters, we see how the Mind infected with the complicated Distemper of Envy, Insolence and Malice, can blot the fair Paper, and poison it with Venom. In *Arabella Harlowe*, the sly Insinuations of feminine Envy break forth in every taunting Word.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 15, p. 85.

<sup>50</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa. Addressed to the Author. Occasioned by some critical Conversations on the Characters and Conduct of that Work. With Some Reflections on the Character and Behaviour of Prior's Emma*, (London: 1749), p. 38.

Disappointed love, pride and revenge, warned Richardson, had no bounds. Thus, Anna Howe concludes her letter by warning Clarissa, and readers, of the dangers that both pride and selfishness can cause to an individual's happiness.

In contrast to the ideal picture of married life that he painted in *Pamela*, Richardson offered readers an example of the woman who, on marriage, submits her autonomy to male domination. Although concerned for the plight of her daughter, the weak and submissive nature of Mrs. Harlowe forces her to comply with all the dictates of her husband. When her mother becomes ill, even Clarissa notes that she is a woman of "a gentle and sensible mind",<sup>51</sup> who prefers submission to a disruption of tranquillity. It is for this reason that Mrs. Harlowe advises her daughter to "behave as [she] used to do to [her] brother and sister; for [her] behaviour to them will be one test of [her] cheerful obedience to [her parents]".<sup>52</sup> Knowing no other alternative than to submit to her husband's will, she accuses Clarissa of rejecting her concern and love.<sup>53</sup> However, despite these accusations against her daughter, the natural goodness of the lady is evident in her exclamations to Clarissa that, "You *have* my love! You *have* my *pity*!" Even after Clarissa has absconded with Lovelace and the family has severed all forms of communication with her, the lady is still affected by feelings of compassion, love and tenderness for her daughter. Although she still loves Clarissa, she admits, in her letter to Mrs. Norton, that:

I must sail with the tide; my own judgement joining with it, or I should make the unhappiness of the more worthy still greater (my dear Mr. Harlowe's particularly); which is already more than enough to make them unhappy for the remainder of their days. This I know; if I were to oppose the rest, our son would fly out to find this libertine; and who could tell what would be the issue of that, with such a man of violence and blood as that Lovelace is known to be.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 6, p. 54.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 17, p. 97.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 20, p. 107.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 376, p. 1157.

Although she admits to a "mother's tenderness", the weak-willed Mrs. Harlowe is unwilling, and too powerless, to upset the happiness and tranquillity of the rest of the family. Consequently, she bears her misery alone.

Although she refuses to concede any responsibility on the part of the Harlowe family for Clarissa's predicament, Mrs. Harlowe's comments offer considerable insight into the education of children during the eighteenth century. In a letter to Mrs. Norton, she comments that:

The easy pardon perverse children meet with, when they have done the rashest and most rebellious thing they can do, is the reason (*as is pleaded to us every day*) that so *many* follow their example. They depend upon the indulgent weakness of their parents' tempers, and in *that* dependence harden their own hearts: and a little humiliation, when they have brought themselves into the foretold misery, is to be a sufficient atonement for the greatest perverseness.

But for such a child as this (*I mention what others hourly say, but what I must sorrowfully subscribe to*) to lay plots and stratagems to deceive her parents, as well as herself; and to run away with a libertine; can there be any atonement for her crime? And is she not answerable to God, to us, to you, and to all the world who knew her, for the abuse of such talents as *she* has abused?<sup>55</sup>

Mrs. Harlowe's words echo Richardson's own criticism about the problems which existed between parents and their children. Like Locke, the author blamed the corrupt standard of manners upon the over-indulgence of parents towards their children. He argued that children, after exploiting this weakness in their parents, hardened their hearts, and only returned to their parents for consolation when things went wrong. Although Richardson believed that readers would share Mrs. Harlowe's view on the education of children, he used irony to undermine her comments in relation to Clarissa. Readers, for example, are well aware that Clarissa's plight has been caused by her parents' inability to act "reasonably" toward her. Richardson's moral instruction was contained in his argument that Clarissa was neither answerable to her parents nor anyone else in this world; rather, she was answerable only to God.

Mrs. Harlowe's genuine feelings toward her daughter can be gauged from her indecision about whether or not to accept any communication from Clarissa, and the way

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Letter 376, p. 1156.

in which she juxtaposes positive and negative behavioural adjectives, when discussing her. Complaining of her "heavy lot", she muses:

Should I therefore gratify my yearnings after her so far as to receive privately the letter you mention, what would the case be but to torment myself, without being able to do her good?- And were it to be known - Mr. Harlowe is so passionate - And should it throw his gout into his stomach, as her rash flight did - Indeed, indeed, I am very unhappy! - For, my good woman, she is my child still! - But unless it were more in my power - Yet do I long to see the letter - you say it tells of her present way and circumstances - The poor child, who ought to be in possession of thousands! - and *will!* - for her father will be a faithful steward for her - But it must be in his own way, and at his own time.

And is she *really* ill? - so *very* ill? - But she *ought* to sorrow. - She has given a double measure of it.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of wanting to know more about her daughter's circumstances, Mrs. Harlowe's submissive nature forbids her initiating any further form of enquiry. Instead, failing to see that her husband's illness has been caused by Clarissa's rebellion against his passionate nature, she conceals her true feelings under the guise of wishing neither to compound her husband's illness nor to be seen as condoning her daughter's disobedience. The italicised words emphasise her inner longing to receive further information about "the naughty one"; for, as she admits to Mrs. Norton, "A mother . . . cannot forget her child".<sup>57</sup> Although she lacks prudence in entrusting her true thoughts to a woman of servant status, she is more fortunate than Bella in being able to distinguish trustworthy characters from their opposites.

By emphasising Mrs. Harlowe's concern at the "liberties" taken by Miss Howe against her family and her admission of distress at "the general cry against [the family] abroad, . . . and the *visible* and not seldom *audible* disrespectfulness which high and low treat [them] with . . . even *at church*", Richardson informed readers that the Harlowe family was guilty of having wronged Clarissa. Ironically, she continues, in a statement which documents the didactic stance of the author, that it is "as if none of us had been regarded but upon her account".<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Harlowe's words indicate that the earthly punishment for the family's treatment of the virtuous girl has begun. Even church offers

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Letter 376, p. 1157.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Letter 376, p. 1158.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Letter 376, p. 1157.

no sanctuary to those who contravene the unwritten laws of morality and virtue. The fact that Mrs. Harlowe is not vindictive toward Miss Howe, combined with her continual expressions of love for her daughter, suggests that the woman, had she not submitted her will to the passionate nature of her family, would share the same expressions of compassion and concern for Clarissa as those articulated by other members of her community. Her true feelings are exhibited towards the conclusion of the novel, when Colonel Morden records the effect of the young daughter's dead body on her. He notes:

The poor lady but just cast her eye upon the coffin, and then snatched it away, retiring with passionate grief towards the window; yet addressing herself, with clasped hands, as if to her beloved daughter; Oh my child! my child! cried she; thou pride of my hope! Why was I not permitted to speak pardon and peace to thee! - Oh forgive thy cruel mother!<sup>59</sup>

Unlike other malicious members of her family, Mrs. Harlowe is essentially a good-natured woman. Miss Gibson, in her criticism of the novel, best describes the woman's character when, in a reply to a letter from a young girl, she states that "Virtues themselves, if not carefully watched, may produce very hurtful Maladies". Suggesting that a "very useful Moral" may be drawn from the character of Mrs. Harlowe, Miss Gibson continues:

"Meekness, therefore, and a long Habit of Submission, is often accompanied by a want of Resolution, even where Resolution is commendable. To be all Softness, Gentleness and Meekness, and at the same time to be steadily fixed in every Point 'tis improper to give up, is peculiar to *Clarissa* herself, and a Disposition of Mind judiciously reserved by the Author for his Heroine alone".<sup>60</sup>

Unlike Clarissa, who is resolved to be virtuous, Mrs. Harlowe's "softness and meekness" are little more than examples of "Tameness and Folly".<sup>61</sup> Richardson, therefore, used her character to educate female readers against the view that, in married life, total submission was a virtuous trait. Adopting Locke's philosophy, which held that virtue would be rewarded with happiness either in this life or the next, Richardson instructed readers that there was no happiness for the unvirtuous. Thus, after Clarissa's

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Letter 500, p. 1398.

<sup>60</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

death, Mrs. Harlowe pines away her own life, without any hope of future happiness or reward. Like her husband, she too dies in anguish.

Whereas he had presented readers with the figure of the "reformed rake" in the person of Mr. B., Richardson, in *Clarissa*, depicted Lovelace as the personification of the doctrine of the innate selfishness of individuals. Through the use of his character, the author aimed at educating women to be wary of the "base arts and designs" used by vicious males to entice them into relinquishing their virtue. In his "l'amour de soi-même" and his desire to be "le tyran des autres", Lovelace exhibits all the traits associated with La Rochefoucauld's individual of excessive passion and pride.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, he should remind readers of the character of Lysanor who, in *The Forced Virgin*, unscrupulously kidnaps, drugs and rapes the unsuspecting Lominia. Richardson argued that women had to be educated to deal with men who knew no limits to their passions. Brissenden summarises Lovelace's character in the following words:

He believes that man is innately selfish, an intelligent animal who cloaks his savagery, lusts and cruelty beneath the conventions of morality. He trusts no one. Most people, in his view, are hypocrites, frightened to acknowledge the emotional realities of the situations they are in, terrified to admit that, in their inmost hearts, they are sexually attracted to some people, and hate and despise others. He is a man of reason, and a highly intelligent one. He is an ambiguous character, by no means entirely a villain. Like Clarissa he acts according to principle, and his principles are not altogether despicable.<sup>63</sup>

Although Brissenden is correct in describing Lovelace both as an innately selfish individual, who disguises his excessive passions, and one means by which the hypocrisy, cruelty, and selfishness of the Harlowe family is revealed to readers, his character is not as ambiguous as Brissenden suggests. Unable to control his passions with reason, Lovelace stood against that form of morality about which Richardson was instructing his readers.

Although Richardson believed that moral education at an early age could encourage virtue in individuals, he also acknowledged that some individuals were either virtuous or vicious by nature. Lovelace, for example, admits that:

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<sup>62</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes Supplémentaires*, No. 1, p. 162.

<sup>63</sup> Brissenden, op. cit., p. 171.



I have a confounded mischievous one [heart] - by *nature* too, I think! - A good motion now and then arises from it: but it dies away presently - a love of intrigue! - an invention for mischief! - a triumph in subduing! - fortune encouraging and supporting! - and a constitution.<sup>64</sup>

Clearly, this "mischievous nature", which results in his never being able to satisfy his desires, is based on his being over-indulged when a child. Despite comments that he can reform his own character, readers should be aware that his passionate nature, in which the power of reason has been usurped by the passions, makes this impossible. Indeed, he is far removed from the view of Myer, who suggests that his "behaviour and ruthlessness make him seem an overgrown schoolboy".<sup>65</sup> Instead, his character is based upon deceit and an over-indulgence of the appetites, reflecting, as some critics have suggested, traits similar to those displayed by Satan.<sup>66</sup> Bellario, in *Remarks on Clarissa*, draws this analogy, when he informs Miss Gibson that:

As for Example; the Behaviour of *Lovelace* to his Rosebud must strike every one, at first View, with Admiration and Esteem for him; but when his Character comes to blaze in its full Light, it is very apparent that his Pride preserved his Rosebud, as well as it destroyed *Clarissa*; like *Milton's Satan*, he could for a time cloathe himself like an Angel of Light, even to the Deception of *Uriel*.

*For neither Man, nor Angel can discern  
Hypocrisie; the only Evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone,  
By His permissive Will, through Heaven and Earth:  
And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps  
At Wisdom's Gate, and to Simplicity  
Reigns her Charge; while Goodness thinks no ill  
Where no Ill seems; which now, for once, beguiled  
Uriel, through Regent of the Sun, and held  
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven.*

Proud Spirits, such as *Satan's* and *Lovelace's*, require Objects of their Envy, as Food for their Malice, to compleat their Triumph and applaud their own Wickedness. From this Incident of the Rosebud, and the frequent Behaviour of *Lovelace*, arises a Moral which can never be too often inculcated; namely, that Pride has the Art of putting on the Mask of Virtue

<sup>64</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 34, p. 163.

<sup>65</sup> V. G. Myer, *Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence* (London: Vision and Barnes and Noble, 1986), p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> Cynthia Griffin Wolff gives the best analysis of this theory in her work, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character*, p. 103. She comments that "Calculation, deception, and scheming are the standard characteristics of the devil, and it seems entirely likely that at least part of the inspiration for Richardson's representation of this arch-fiend came from some portrait of Lucifer such as the one in Milton's *Paradise Lost*".

in so many Forms, that we must judge of a Man upon the whole, and not from any one single Action.<sup>67</sup>

Like Satan, Lovelace has the ability to deceive all individuals, even the most wary. Even Clarissa, the model of virtue, is duped by a hypocrisy which can only be detected by God. Lovelace's very presence personifies the attack of vice upon virtue in the earthly realm. In this sense, his character opposes the concept of the innately benevolent man promoted by Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, and depicted in the reformed nature of Mr. B.

Richardson used the story of Rosebud, the "all humble; all officious; all innocent" young girl, to warn readers against the pride and vicious designs of men who, like Satan, affected the "Mask of Virtue". Too many individuals, argued the author, looked no farther, in their judgements of the characters of individuals, than a single, apparently good action. Richardson used Lovelace's letter to warn naïve readers to judge characters on the totality of their deeds. Lovelace comments:

I never was so honest for so long together since my matriculation. . . . Oh Jack! spare thou therefore . . . my Rosebud! - Let the rule I never departed from but it cost me a long regret be observed to my Rosebud! Never to ruin a poor girl whose simplicity and innocence was all she had to trust to; and whose fortunes were too low to save her from the rude contempts of worse minds than her own, and from an indigence extreme. . . . Unsuspicious of her danger, the lamb's throat will hardly shun thy knife! - Oh be not thou the butcher of my lambkin! . . . The gentle heart is touched by Love!<sup>68</sup>

The apparent "goodness" of Lovelace, in not seducing the young girl, is based not on any principles of benevolence, but rather on a concern to maintain his reputation. Even Anna Howe is so deceived by the "vile wretch",<sup>69</sup> in his relationship with Rosebud, that she declares "the man is innocent" of anything vicious. She continues:

I have seen the girl. She is really a very pretty, a very neat, and what is still a greater beauty, a very innocent young creature. He who could have ruined such an undesigning home-bred must have been indeed infernally wicked. Her father is an honest simple man; entirely satisfied with his child, and with her new acquaintance. . . . He is resolved, her father says, to make one couple happy, and wishes he could make more so.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>68</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 34, p. 163.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 71, p. 284.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 72, pp. 286-287.

In reality, however, Anna Howe is much closer to the truth in her initial assessment and censure of the "abominable wretch". Ironically, she too must be educated to scrutinise the motives of all individuals - a theme common to the works of Richardson, Fielding and Goldsmith - prior to making any "hasty judgements".

In emphasising that behind the affected virtue of characters lay a concern for their own reputation, Richardson drew heavily upon the philosophy of Mandeville, who held virtues to be essentially selfish, or activated by selfish impulses or passions. Although the Rosebud story seemed to support this theory,<sup>71</sup> this was not the only theory advanced by Richardson. In fact, Richardson's education of readers conformed very closely to the philosophy of Joseph Butler, who argued that true benevolence must include all that is "good and worthy", and be directed towards promoting "the good of [one's] neighbours". Butler stressed that the strength of benevolent motives had to be measured in relation to the other motives which existed in the mind. In the case of Lovelace, readers are aware that, beneath his benevolent actions, lies an ulterior motive, the conquest of Clarissa. Consequently, far from being an example of the man's virtue, Lovelace's treatment of Rosebud serves only to support the vicious nature of his character. Lovelace, therefore, is "unnatural" because his self-regarding feelings have been allowed to dominate and conquer his benevolent affections. Richardson's instruction was clear in the sense that he warned all individuals, especially women, to avoid judging well of characters on the basis of one virtuous deed alone. Instead, individuals had to be taught to scrutinise the motives of their fellow creatures.

Lovelace's true nature, that of a man governed by uncontrolled passions and vicious motives, is on display throughout the course of the novel. Although Clarissa admits that she would prefer Lovelace to Solmes, she is well aware of his defects. Offering her reasons for not loving Lovelace, Clarissa continues:

Indeed I would not be *in love* with him, as it is called, for the world: first, because I have no opinion of his morals . . . Next, because I think him to be a vain man, capable of triumphing, secretly at least, over a person whose heart he thinks he has engaged. And thirdly, because the assiduities

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<sup>71</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, pp. 76-77.

and veneration which you impute to him seem to carry a haughtiness in them, as if his address had a merit in it that would be an equivalent for a lady's favour. In short, he seems to me so to behave when most unguarded as if he thought himself above the very politeness which his birth and education oblige him to show. In other words, his very politeness appears to me to be constrained; and, with the most remarkably easy and genteel *person*, something seems to be behind in his *manner* that is too studiously kept in.<sup>72</sup>

Despite her feelings for Lovelace, ambivalent as they are at times, Clarissa always maintains the objectivity necessary in judging the true nature of individuals. In this sense, Clarissa is presented as a model upon whom readers can base their own characters. In a letter to Anna Howe, Clarissa reveals the contents of a deceitful and hypocritical letter that Lovelace had written to her. She writes:

He owns, "That he is passionate: all good-natured men, he says, are so, and a sincere man cannot hide it. . . Solemn vows of reformation and everlasting truth and obligingness he makes; all in the style of desponding humility; yet calls it a cruel turn upon him, to impute his protestations of the necessity there is for making them from his bad [public] character.

"He despises himself, he solemnly protests, for his past follies: thanks God he has seen his error; and nothing but my more particular instructions are wanting to perfect his reformation."<sup>73</sup>

Hoping to entice Clarissa into surrendering her virtue, Lovelace, like all vicious men, affects virtue in order to lay siege to her virtue.

Only after escaping the ill treatment of her family does Clarissa discover Lovelace's true character. In a letter to Belford, Lovelace tries to blame Clarissa's pride for the "horrible" awakening of his passionate nature. He comments:

What a horrible thing that my talents point all that way! - when I know what is honourable and just; and would almost wish to be honest? - *Almost*, I say; for such a varlet am I, that I cannot altogether wish it, for the soul of me! - Such triumph over the whole sex, if I can subdue this lady! - My maiden vow, as I may call it! - . . . when a girl is put, or puts herself, into a man's power, what can he wish for further? While I always considered opposition and resistance as a challenge to do my worst.<sup>74</sup>

Through the persona of Lovelace, Richardson allowed his readers significant insight into the mind of the rake, whose aim it was to triumph over the virtue of women, by deceiving them "into a man's power". Lovelace, comparing his stolen kiss from Clarissa with

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<sup>72</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 11, p. 72.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 61, p. 259.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 103, p. 413.

achieving the "*ultimatum* with any other woman", applies the imagery of the spider and the fly as a means of anticipating his future dominance over Clarissa. He informs Belford that:

But had I even gone in with her unaccompanied, I think I had but little reason for apprehension: for well thou knowest that the tame spirits which value themselves upon reputation, and are held within the skirts of the law by political considerations only, may be compared to an infectious spider; which will run into his hole the moment one of his threads is touched by a finger that can crush him, leaving all his toils defenceless, and to be brushed down at the will of the potent invader. While a silly fly, that has neither courage nor strength to resist, no sooner gives notice by its buzz and its struggle, of its being entangled, but out steps the self-circumscribed tyrant, winds round and round the poor insect, till he covers it with his bowel spun toils; and when so fully secured, that it can neither move leg nor wing, suspends it, as if for a spectacle to be exulted over: then stalking to the door of his cell, turns about, gloats over it at a distance; and sometimes advancing, sometimes retiring, preys at leisure upon its vitals.

But now I think of it, will not this comparison do as well for the entangled girls, as for the tame spirits? - Better, o' my conscience! - 'Tis but comparing the spider to us brave fellows; and its quadrates.

Whatever our hearts are in, our heads will follow. Begin with spiders, with flies, with what we will, the girl is the centre of gravity, and we all naturally tend to it.

Nevertheless, to recur; I cannot but observe that these tame spirits stand a poor chance in a fairly offensive war with such of us mad fellows as are above all law, and scorn to skulk behind the hypocritical screen of reputation.<sup>75</sup>

Richardson's use of the image aptly described the relationship between vicious men and their victims who, by relinquishing their virtue and reputation, allowed rakes to "prey upon their vitals". However, unlike other girls, Richardson emphasised that Clarissa was "more than [Lovelace's] match"; for, despite his treachery, he was far from being "*already* lord of the destiny of a Clarissa Harlowe".<sup>76</sup>

Richardson continued his education of readers by describing to them what happened once females had been lured into the webs, woven by these males. Having deceived Clarissa, Lovelace tries to force her to relinquish her virtue, prior to proposing marriage which, he knows, decorum must make her refuse. Confused and overcome by resentment and shame at his insolence, the "unhappy" and indignant Clarissa realises how "tame" and "silly" she has become by surrendering her independence to him.<sup>77</sup> Although

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Letter 106, pp. 418-419.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Letter 109, p. 425.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Letter 137, p. 490.

Lovelace, like Mr. B. with Pamela, is checked, in his attack upon Clarissa's chastity, "by casting his eye upon her terrified but lovely face", he is unable to moderate his lustful appetite, even though Belford remonstrates with him "to reflect before it is too late, before the mortal offence be given". Belford continues:

Let not pride and wantonness of heart ruin thy fairer prospects. By my faith, Lovelace, there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in our wild schemes. As we grow older, we shall be wiser, and looking back upon our foolish notions of the present hour, shall certainly despise ourselves (our youth dissipated), when we think of the honourable engagements we might have made. Thou, more especially, if thou lettest such a matchless creature slide through thy fingers. A creature pure from her cradle. In all her actions and sentiments uniformly noble. Strict in the performance of all her even *unrewarded* duties to the most unreasonable of fathers, what a wife will she make the man who shall have the honour to call her his! <sup>78</sup>

In addition to promoting the "graces and merits" of Clarissa, Belford's advice serves a warning to Lovelace about the need to control his passions. Belford's recommendation that Lovelace control his passions by applying reason, rather than seek the false happiness which is found in self-gratification or sensual pleasure, echoed the didactic instruction that Richardson was providing his readers. Continuing, he adds:

Thou mayst by trick, chicane, and false colours, thou who art worse than a pickeroon in love, overcome a poor lady so entangled as thou hast entangled her; so unprotected as thou hast made her. But consider how much more generous and just to her, and noble to thyself, it is to overcome *thyself*.<sup>79</sup>

Richardson used Belford to promote Butler's theory of benevolence that, by promoting the happiness and welfare of others, individuals were, at the same time, promoting their own happiness and good.

Although Lovelace realises that his plan to seduce Clarissa is based solely on excessive passions, he refuses to let the "*matchless creature slide through [his] fingers*". Reflecting the views of contemporary rakes, he believes that Clarissa must submit because she has allowed herself to become entangled in his web. He continues:

*If I ruin such a virtue, sayest thou? - Eternal monotonist! - Again; the most immaculate virtue may be ruined by men who have no regard to their honour, and who make a jest of the most solemn oaths, &c.* What must be

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Letter 189, p. 604.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Letter 189, p. 605.

the virtue that will be ruined without oaths? Is not the world full of these deceptions? And are not *lovers' oaths* a jest of hundreds of years' standing? And are not cautions against the perfidy of our sex a necessary part of the female education?<sup>80</sup>

It was against such comments as these that Richardson wrote *Clarissa*, the aim of which was to educate women not only against, but also to recognise examples of, the perfidy of men. Lovelace echoes the traditional belief of society when he comments that virtue is not virtue unless it can withstand temptation and deception. Arguing that it is his duty to attempt to overcome a woman's honour, he blames Clarissa's "resistance" for inflaming his desire and "sharpen[ing] the darts of love". Stressing that women love to be addressed with spirit, he suggests that they deliberately "guard [their golden fruit] with so much care, to make possession hard".<sup>81</sup> For Richardson, Lovelace personified the "devil" who, with his base arts of temptation and vice, destroyed the honour and virtue of unwary women, and any hope that they had of attaining eternal reward. However, by extension, Lovelace also provided the means by which Clarissa could be esteemed the exemplary woman; for, through her, Richardson reasserted that all women, if they were to preserve their honour and reputation, must resist the base arts and designs of men.

Inherent in the description of Lovelace's character was Richardson's didactic instruction to young women not to prefer the "rake" over a more sober-minded man, a point he developed by contrasting Hickman with Lovelace. This issue had been raised, some years earlier, by Addison who, in *The Guardian*, had warned women to be careful in their choice of husbands. He had commented that:

After long experience in the world, and reflections upon mankind, I find one particular occasion of unhappy marriages, which, though very common, is not very much attended to. What I mean is this: Every man in the time of courtship, and in the first of marriage, puts on a behaviour like my correspondent's holiday suit, which is to last no longer than until he is settled in the possession of his mistress. He resigns his inclinations and understanding to her humour and opinion. He neither loves nor hates, nor talks, nor thinks, in contradiction to her. He is controlled by a nod, mortified by a frown, and transported by a smile. The poor young lady falls in love with this supple creature, and expects of him the same behaviour for life. In a little time she finds he has a will of his own, that he pretends to dislike what she approves, and that instead of treating her like a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Letter 191, p. 609.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Letter 191, p. 609.

goddess, he uses her like a woman. What still makes the misfortune worse, we find the most abject flatterers degenerate into the greatest tyrants.<sup>82</sup>

Richardson, sharing Addison's view, attempted to warn readers against the deceptions of men who, on the surface, "resign[ed their] inclinations and understanding" to humour the wishes of women. Clarissa warns readers, in her letter to Miss Howe, that:

[We] women are too often to blame on this head; since the most virtuous among us seldom make *virtue* the test of their approbation of the other: insomuch that a man may glory in his wickedness of this sort without being rejected on that account, even to the faces of women of unquestionable virtue. Hence it is, that a libertine seldom thinks himself concerned so much as to save appearances: and what is it not that our sex suffers in their opinions on this very score? . . .

May my story be a warning to all, how they prefer a libertine to a man of true honour; and how they permit themselves to be misled (where they mean the best) by the specious yet foolish hope of subduing riveted habits, and as I may say of altering natures! - The *more* foolish, as experience might convince us, that there is hardly one in ten of even tolerably happy marriages, in which the wife keeps the hold in the *husband's* affections which she had in the *lover's*. What influence then can she hope to have over the morals of an avowed libertine, who marries perhaps for conveniency, who despises the tie, and who, it is too probable, nothing but old age, or sickness, or disease (the consequence of ruinous riot) can reclaim?<sup>83</sup>

Richardson criticised the way in which women failed to use reason in their choice of husbands. Consequently, because of either their pride in hoping to transform the libertine's character or their passion for pleasure, they fell into unsuitable marriages, in which their husbands became tyrants. Lovelace symbolises the rake who, initially, bows to Clarissa's commands in the hope of seducing her. She notes that, although she dislikes his morals, Lovelace was prepared to endure the indignities and defiances "set forth" by her brother and "the menaces and hostile appearance of [her] uncles",<sup>84</sup> in order to succeed in his aims.

Richardson used Anna Howe to distinguish between the extreme characters of Lovelace, the rake, and Hickman, the sober-minded man. She admits that her ideal man, unattainable according to Richardson, would combine the manner and charm of a Lovelace with the morals of a Hickman. Miss Howe continues:

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<sup>82</sup> Addison, *The Guardian*, No. 113 (July 21, 1713), p. 170.

<sup>83</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 458, p. 1319.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 17, p. 99.



Hickman is a sort of fiddling, busy, yet . . . *un* -busy man: has a great deal to do and seems to me to dispatch nothing. . . . As to his dress, in general, he cannot, indeed, be called a sloven, but sometimes he is too gaudy, at other times too plain. And for his manners, he makes such a bustle with them, and about them, as would induce one to suspect that they are more strangers to him, than familiars. The man, however, is honest: is of family: has a clear and good estate: and may one day be a baronet, and please you. He is humane and benevolent, [and] tolerably generous. . . and deemed a *prudent* man. Then he is sober; modest; they say, virtuous; in short, has qualities that mothers should be fond of in a husband for their daughters; and for which, perhaps, their daughters would be the happier could they judge as well for themselves, as experience possibly may teach *them* to judge for their *future* daughters.

Nevertheless, to own the truth, I cannot say I love the man; nor ever shall, I believe.

Strange! that these sober fellows cannot have decent sprightliness, a modest assurance with them! Something debonair; which need not be separated from their awe and reverence when they address a woman, which should show the ardour of their passion, rather than the sheepishness of their nature; for who knows not that love delights in taming the wild-hearted? . . .

Hickman, a great over-grown, lank-haired, chubby boy, who would be hunched and punched by everybody; and go home with his finger in his eye, and tell his mother.

While Lovelace I have supposed a curl-pated villain, full of fire, fancy, and mischief; an orchard-robber, a wall-climber, a horse-rider without saddle or bridle, neck or nothing: a sturdy rogue, in short, who would kick and cuff, and do no right, and take no wrong of anybody <sup>85</sup>

In her letter to Clarissa, Anna points out that, although Hickman is a man of sound principles, this type of man is not attractive women. Even at the conclusion of *Clarissa*, Anna sees Hickman with his "virtuous, sober, sincere, [and] friendly"<sup>86</sup> nature more as a brother than as a lover or prospective husband. It is the pressure of her family and friends that makes her favour Hickman in the end. Miss Gibson takes up the debate over who makes the better husband, in *Remarks on Clarissa*. Prior to the interposition of Bellario, the narrator records the following conversation between Miss Gibson and a friend:

Miss *Gibson* agreed in censuring Miss *Howe* for those Liberties she takes with him [Hickman]: but at the same time said . . . What then is the Objection to Mr *Hickman*? Why truly, he has not *Lovelace's* fine Person! - *Lovelace's* fine Address! - *Lovelace's* impetuous Spirit; and yet, he has shown even *Lovelace*, that he wants not Courage. He is plain in his Dress! - His Gait shews him not to be so debonair in dancing a Minuit as *Lovelace*. - But, indeed, I am afraid whoever prefers a *Lovelace* to a *Hickman*, will wish all her life-time she could have sooner found out, that tho' *Lovelace* was the best Partner at a Ball; yet, when a Companion for Life was to be

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Letter 46, pp. 208-210.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Letter 523, p. 1456.

chose, that Mr *Hickman's* Goodness of Heart rendered him in all respects more essential to Happiness; much more eligible than all the gay, fluttering, and parading Spirit of a *Lovelace* could possibly have done.

The same Man cannot be every thing: A *Hickman* in Heart, to a *Lovelace* in Vivacity and Address, perhaps, is almost impossible to be met with; Time, Opportunities, and Inclinations are wanting.

Nay, Madam, says Mrs *Gibson*, I do not dispute Mr *Hickman's* being preferable for a Husband to Mr *Lovelace*; the Heart is certainly the first thing to be considered in a Man to whose Government a Woman resigns herself; but I should not choose either *Lovelace* or *Hickman*. I must confess I should desire Humour and Spirit in a Man. A married Life, tho' it cannot be said to be miserable with an honest Husband; yet it must be very dull, when a Man has not the Power of diversifying his Ideas enough to display trifling Incidents in various Lights; and 'tis impossible where this is wanting, but that a Man and his Wife must often depend on other Company to keep them from sinking into Insipidity. As for my part, I cannot paint to myself any thing more disagreeable, than to sit with a Husband and wish some-body would come in and relieve us from one another's Dulness. Trifles, Madam, become strong Entertainments to sprightly Minds! <sup>87</sup>

Although Miss Gibson suggests that she detests Lovelace more than any other man about whom she has read, she still admits that if the two contended for her favour, Lovelace "would have the best Chance of succeeding". Even a young girl of sixteen reveals that, although Hickman is "a good, and a gentle-hearted Man, . . . she should not like him for her Husband". During the debate between the women, the gentlemen, readers are told, "all sat silent; . . . [and] often smiled to see how very few Advocates Mr *Hickman* was likely to have amongst the Ladies". The narrator continues:

At last *Bellarion* said, If I had not thought so before, I should now be convinced by this Conversation, how judicious the Author of *Clarissa* was in setting forth so very strongly as he does, the Necessity of Sobriety and Goodness in a Husband, in order to render a married State happy. For you have shown clearly, Ladies, how difficult it is for a Man to be esteemed by you who has those Qualities; since I can see no one Objection to Mr *Hickman*, but that he has not that Gaiety of Disposition which from a vast Flow of animal Spirits, without Restraint or Curb from either Principles of Religion or Good-nature, shines forth in *Lovelace's* wild Fancies. And this Man you find such a Reluctance to speak of well; . . . And a *Clarissa* for ever acknowledges his Merit. - And, in one of the last Actions of her Life, praises him as he deserves to be praised. And earnestly recommends it to her best and dear Friend, to give both her Hand and her Heart to so worthy a Man. The steady Principles of Mr *Hickman* was a firm Basis to depend on, for Protection and good Usage.<sup>88</sup>

Although Miss Gibson censures Miss Howe, she still allows that Hickman possesses an insipid character when compared to that of Lovelace. The consolation for Miss Gibson,

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<sup>87</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

according to the other lady, is that she has been made aware of the villainies of the opposite sex through her reading of *Clarissa*; thus, like readers, her choice of a husband should be made easier because she has been instructed by Richardson. However, it is Bellario who, like Belford in *Clarissa*, provides the moral of the issue, when he comments that a man of sobriety and goodness makes a better husband than a libertine.

In addition to emphasising which man made the better husband, Richardson also tried to define the constituents of a happy marriage. The ideal marriage is presented in the union of Pamela and Mr. B. in *Pamela*; however, it is best described by John Gilbert Cooper, who commented that:

When two Minds are thus engaged by the Ties of reciprocal Sincerity, each alternately receives and communicates a Transport that is inconceivable to all but those that are in this Situation; from hence arises that heart-ennobling Solicitude for one another's Welfare, that tender Sympathy that alleviates Affliction, and that participated Pleasure that heightens Prosperity and Joy itself. This is a full Completion of the Blessings of Humanity! for if Reason and Society are the Characteristics which distinguish us from other Animals, an Excellence in these two great Privileges of Man, which centers in Wedlock, must raise in us Happiness above the rest of our Species. It is here that the noblest Passions of which the Human Soul is susceptible join together, virtuous Love and Friendship; the one supplying it with a constant Rapture, and the other regulating it by the Rules of Reason.<sup>89</sup>

Cooper's definition of the "ideal marriage" combined a dominant benevolent spirit with reason, in much the same way as Richardson had presented the ideal union, some years earlier, in *Pamela*. Because of the ungovernable nature of Lovelace's passions, there could never be a marriage between him and Clarissa. Miss Gibson, reflecting on *Clarissa*, accentuates Richardson's moral, when she informs Bellario that:

But as the Laws of God and Man have placed Woman totally in the Power of her Husband, I believe it is utterly impossible for any young Woman, who has any Reflection, not to form in her Mind some kind of Picture of the Sort of Man in whose Power she would chuse to place herself. That *Clarissa* did so, I think, plainly appears, from her steady Resolution to refuse any Man she could not obey with the utmost Chearfulness; and to whose Will she could not submit without Reluctance. She would have had her Husband a Man on whose principles she could entirely depend; one in whom she might have placed such a Confidence, that she might have spoke her very Thoughts aloud; one from whom she might have gained Instruction, and from whose Superiority of Understanding she would have

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<sup>89</sup> John Gilbert Cooper, "On Conjugal Love" in *Letters Concerning Taste, and Essays on Similar and Other Subjects*, Chapter VII, (London: Printed for R. & J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall, 1757), pp. 198-199.

been pleased to have taken the Rules of her own Actions . . . but, from her Infancy, having the Example daily before her of her Mother's being tyrannized over, notwithstanding her great Humility and Meekness, perhaps tyrannized over for that very Humility and Meekness. She thought a single Life, in all Probity, would be for her the happiest; cherishing in her Heart that Characteristic of a noble Mind, especially in a Woman, of wishing, as Miss *Howe* says she did, to pass through Life united.<sup>90</sup>

Far from presenting simply the conservative view of marriage, the one in which women were depicted as being dependent on men for their livelihood and moral instruction, Richardson advanced a more innovative and more equal relationship between the sexes. Although he still believed that women were placed in the power of their husbands and had to be obedient and faithful to them, Richardson advocated that women should have the right to refuse a man with whom they could never experience happiness. Thus, in the mind of the author, *Clarissa* was correct in refusing *Lovelace*, as she had *Solmes*, because she could expect neither happiness nor virtuous instruction from him.

In addition to the fact that marriage would not have served the purposes of Richardson's instruction, the possibility of a marriage between the two characters is doomed to failure on the basis of *Clarissa's* high aspirations in a husband, and the inability of *Lovelace* to reform his passionate nature. In spite of the attempts of *Belford*, *Tomlinson* and *Lord M.* to dissuade him from his vicious designs, *Lovelace* pursues his evil plan to conquer the virtue of *Clarissa*. *Belford*, for example, warns him about the possibility of retribution in the life hereafter, when he exclaims:

*Oh LOVELACE! LOVELACE! had I doubted it before, I should now be convinced that there must be a WORLD AFTER THIS, to do justice to injured merit, and to punish such a barbarous perfidy!*<sup>91</sup>

Richardson used this as the end of his instruction; he believed that good would be rewarded, and evil punished, in the next world. In this sense, Richardson defended the traditional philosophy of *John Locke* and *Joseph Butler*, and anticipated the philosophy of *William Paley* who, in 1785, wrote that:

there are prepared for us rewards and punishments, of all possible degrees, from the most exalted happiness down to extreme misery; so that "our labour is never in vain"; whatever advancements we make in virtue, we procure a

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<sup>90</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>91</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 258, p. 884.

proportionable accession of future happiness; as, on the other hand, every accumulation of vice, is the "treasuring up of so much wrath".<sup>92</sup>

Although Lovelace may pursue sensual gratification, which he erroneously equates with happiness, there will be happiness for him neither in this world nor in the next.

Realising that he "could never have seduced her while she had her senses",<sup>93</sup> the "*plotting villain*",<sup>94</sup> refusing to yield to reason, just as Arastes had done in *The Forced Virgin*. Only after the rape, and her admission that she has no more for which to live, is Lovelace overcome by remorse and guilt - the first step in his own demise. Drawing upon the Shakespearian image of sleep, Lovelace contrasts his newly tormented life with that of his victim. He comments:

See the difference in our cases, . . . She, the charming injured, can sweetly sleep, while the varlet injurer cannot close his eyes; and has been trying to no purpose, the whole night, to divert his melancholy, and to fly from himself!

As every vice generally brings on its own punishment, even in *this* life, if anything were to tempt me to doubt of *future* punishment, it would be that there can hardly be a greater than that which I at this instant experience in my own remorse.<sup>95</sup>

The moral, rather than the sincerity of Lovelace's tone, was what Richardson was stressing to his readers. In line with traditional religious philosophy, Richardson argued, through the example of Lovelace, that vice brought with it its own punishment. Lovelace observes far too late "*that it costs a man ten times more pains to be wicked, than it would cost him to be good*".<sup>96</sup> Richardson aimed to instruct readers that vicious actions, although they may go unpunished in terms of legal or social justice in this life, could still punish wrongdoers by inflicting upon them mental torment. Irrespective of all else, however, wrongdoers would be punished in the life hereafter.

Despite blaming women for bringing upon themselves their own pain and suffering, in terms of the traditional Christian doctrine which held that women were responsible for the Fall, Lovelace wrongly assumes "that but for this Transgression, all

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<sup>92</sup> Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book I, Chapter IX, p. 72.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 263, p. 899.

<sup>94</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 260, p. 888.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 264, p. 904.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 267, p. 912.

would have been Peace, Love, [and] Harmony".<sup>97</sup> Instead, Lovelace, who personifies, in its negative sense, Hume's idea of a person whose reasoning faculty is slave to his passions, is punished for his excessive passions. In trying to deprive Clarissa of her freedom, in Hobbesian terms, Lovelace loses his own; for, after Clarissa's death, his mind is dominated by thoughts of her. Quite appropriately, Lovelace dies in a duel at the hands of Clarissa's avenger, Colonel Morden. Later, De La Tour informs Belford that:

His few last words I must not omit, as they show an ultimate composure; which may administer some consolation to his honourable friends.

*Blessed* - said he, addressing himself to Heaven; for his dying eyes were lifted up - a strong convulsion prevented him for a few moments saying more - But recovering, he again with great fervour (lifting up his eyes, and his spread hands) pronounced the word *Blessed* - Then, in a seeming ejaculation, he spoke inwardly so as not to be understood: at last, he distinctly pronounced these three words,

LET THIS EXPIATE!

And then, his head sinking on his pillow, he expired.<sup>98</sup>

It is fitting that Lovelace's final moments reflect his passionate nature. Afflicted by convulsions, symbolic of the inner turmoil of the vicious man, there is little else that he can expect other than death, which, he hopes, will make amends for the suffering Clarissa endured at his hands. More importantly, however, Richardson informed readers about the consequences for those who allowed themselves to be consumed by self-interest.

The duel, a contest which Richardson so much despised, also offered a fitting end for the villain. Richardson supported Steele's attempt to strip duelling "of all its false pretences to credit and reputation amongst men". Richardson agreed that, too often, a duel arose from "some valiant coxcomb's" defending "some prevailing folly" or preserving "himself from the ingenuousness of owning a mistake".<sup>99</sup> Thus, it became the task of the author to educate readers against the contest which, devoid of reason and inspired by excessive passion, had become fashionable in eighteenth-century society. In the case of Lovelace, his life can be best summarised in his own words:

Man makes his Fate according to his mind.

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<sup>97</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (March 2, 1752), p. 202.

<sup>98</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 537, pp. 1487-1488.

<sup>99</sup> Steele, *The Tatler*, No. 25 (June 7, 1709), p. 59.

The weak, low spirit Fortune makes her slave.<sup>100</sup>

Correctly, Lovelace, echoing the thoughts of his author, claims that all individuals are responsible for their fate. Whereas uneducated individuals fall victims to their excessive passions, Richardson argued that it was necessary to educate all individuals to apply reason, or "conscience", to their passions, if they were to rise above the corrupt manners of the day. In his emphasis on the part that reason could play in improving the morals of contemporary society, Richardson advanced Steele's ideology that "until men are firmly convinced that conscience, honour, and credit, are all in one interest; and that, without the concurrence of the former, the latter are but impositions upon ourselves and others", there would never be any "tranquillity" in the world. Noting that the force of his words also applied to the "tyranny [of men] over the fair sex", Steele continued:

Were men so enlightened and studious of their own good, as to act by the dictates of their reason and reflection, and not the opinion of others, conscience would be the steady ruler of human life; and the words truth, law, reason, equity, and religion, would be but synonymous terms for that only guide which makes us pass our days in our own favour and approbation.<sup>101</sup>

In contrast to the passionate nature of Lovelace, Clarissa does display "conscience". Despite seeming naïve at times, Clarissa, by offering herself as model upon whom all women can base their lives, completes the requirements of the traditional approach to moral education. Her letters to her friend, and Anna's to her, provide Clarissa with the opportunity to reflect upon all things that take place during the course of the novel. Thus, being able to apply reason to her life, Clarissa has the prudence and strength to resist all obstacles to her virtue, and to assert her integrity as a person, in spite of her humiliation. Richardson documented the effect that Clarissa's character should have upon readers, in a letter to Lady Echlin, in 1754:

A good Character is a Gauntlet thrown out. As some apprehend, it reflects upon themselves, they perhaps think they have a Right to be affronted. The Character of a mere Mortal cannot, ought not, to be quite perfect. It is sufficient, if its Errors be not premeditated, wilful, and unrepented of. And I shall rejoice if there be numbers of those, who find fault with the more perfect Characters in the Piece, because of their Errors, and who would be themselves above being guilty of the like, in the same Situation. Many things are thrown out in the several Characters, on purpose to provoke

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<sup>100</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 530, p. 1473.

<sup>101</sup> Steele, *The Tatler*, No 48 (July 30, 1709), p. 112.

friendly Debate; and perhaps as Trials of the Readers Judgement, Manners, Taste, Capacity. I have often sat by in Company, and been silently pleased with the Opportunity given me, by different Arguers, of looking into the Hearts of some of them, through Windows that at other times have been close shut up. This is an Advantage that will always be given by familiar Writing, and by Characters drawn from Life.<sup>102</sup>

Through *Clarissa*, Richardson challenged all readers to pursue virtue and honour at all times, even when there were no signs of earthly reward. Excelling all her sex,<sup>103</sup> *Clarissa* becomes a model of virtue upon whom readers can base their own lives. However, although she serves as a model for female behaviour, Richardson informed readers that she, as a mortal, is still subject to making errors. He believed that his form of familiar writing, combined with characters drawn from real life, provided readers with the best means of moral instruction. Such a method allowed readers the opportunity to apply the morality propounded in the text, in order to improve their own manners.

Although some may argue that *Clarissa* is responsible for her own death, this is not so. The novel provides a series of trials, designed at testing the virtue of the young woman, whose function it is to show readers that true duty lies in the maintenance of virtue. Thus, far from being an act of disobedience, her refusal to marry Solmes, or even Lovelace, is a rejection of women's mechanical duty of being forced into an abhorrent marriage and a role of subservience, as indicated in Uncle Antony's letter:

But you must have a husband who can learn you something! - I wish you knew but your *duty* as well as you do your talents - That, niece, you have of late to learn; and Mr. Solmes will therefore find something to instruct you in. I won't show him this letter of yours, though you seem to desire it, lest it should provoke him to be too severe a schoolmaster, when you are his'n.<sup>104</sup>

Instead of being disobedient, she is always respectful and forgiving of her family, even to the point of rebuking some of the attacks made by her friend, Anna Howe, on members of her family.<sup>105</sup> Lovelace irreverently points out her error, of which she will never be cured, in a letter to Belford, when he states that:

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<sup>102</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (October 10, 1754), pp. 315-316.

<sup>103</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 1, p. 40.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 32.4, p. 155.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 28, p. 134. *Clarissa* says to Miss Howe, "you must allow me to say, low as I am in spirits, that I am very angry with you for your reflections on my relations, particularly on my father, and on the memory of my grandfather. Nor, my dear, does your own mamma always escape the keen edge of vivacity. One



. . . she takes the man she calls her father (her mother had been faultless, had she not been her father's wife); she takes the men she calls her uncles; the fellow she calls her brother; and the poor contemptible she calls her sister; to *be* her father, to *be* her uncles, her brother, her sister; and that as such, she owes to some of them reverence, to others respect, let them treat her ever so cruelly! - sordid ties! mere cradle - prejudices!<sup>106</sup>

Lovelace's criticism is that of a selfish person, governed by passions. Alternately, Clarissa knows that she has a responsibility to love and honour her parents, despite all else; it is this quality that endears her to the hearts of readers and makes her an exemplary character. By both maintaining control over her passions and refraining from revenge, she becomes "a sun in a family where there are none but faint twinklers".<sup>107</sup> Even at the end of her life, she refuses to hold any grudges against a family that has mistreated her; instead, she is ready, by means of her will, to bestow all that she has upon the family and friends whom she loves.

Other than one minor character flaw, "her spiritual pride",<sup>108</sup> or vanity, in trying to reform Lovelace, Clarissa is presented as almost faultless, a victim of her trust in the benevolence and virtue of humanity. At all times, she never allows flattery to make her proud or vain. In a letter to Miss Howe, she even questions the motives behind her own efforts of making others happy. She reflects:

But let me examine myself, is not vanity or secret love of praise a principal motive with me at bottom? - Ought I not to suspect my own heart? If I set up for myself, puffed up with everyone's good opinion, may I not be *left* to myself? - Everyone's eyes are upon the conduct, upon the visits, upon the visit-*ors* of a young creature of our sex made independent; . . . To act up to our best judgements at the time is all we can do. If I have erred, 'tis to worldly wisdom only that I have erred. If we suffer by an act of duty, or even by an act of generosity, is it not pleasurable on reflection that the fault is in others, rather than in ourselves? - I had rather, a vast deal, have reason to think others unkind, than that they should have any to think me undutiful.<sup>109</sup>

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cannot one's *self* forbear to write or speak freely of those we love and honour; that is to say, when grief wrings the heart. But it goes against one to hear anybody else take the same liberties".

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Letter 31, p. 145.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Letter 27, p. 129.

<sup>108</sup> Watt, op. cit., p. 242. Clarissa expresses that "I might be an humble means in the hands of Providence to reclaim a man who had, as I thought, good sense enough at bottom to be reclaimed". *Clarissa*, Letter 40, p. 183.

<sup>109</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 19, pp. 104-105.

In terms of Mandeville's theory, Clarissa analyses the motives behind her benevolence, lest her actions, in doing good, stem from the wrong motives. In this, she advocated the author's moral instruction, which was to be advanced by Fielding and Goldsmith, that individuals must always scrutinise their own motives in performing all deeds. She realises that reflection, or the application of reason, is needed to stop individuals from becoming too "puffed up" by pride. However, more importantly, as the embodiment of Butler's philosophy of benevolence and virtue, she stresses that she would prefer to suffer the unkindness of others than be considered guilty of any lack of duty. Realising that others may mis-interpret her conduct, Clarissa concludes by noting:

So, my dear, were we perfect, which no one can be, we could not be happy in this life, unless those with whom we have to deal (those, more especially, who have any control upon us) were governed by the same principles. What have we then to do but, as I have hinted above, to choose right, and pursue it steadily, and leave the issue to Providence.<sup>110</sup>

Richardson, through the persona of Clarissa, aimed at instructing readers, following the line of thought of Butler, that all individuals must pursue virtue, in spite of all else. In the end, Providence would judge the quality of life that individuals had lived.

Clarissa, accepting that she is guilty, at least in part, of an action of "rash and undutiful appearance", blames her pride for the punishment she has had to endure at the hands of Lovelace. She taunts herself with:

How art thou now humbled in the dust, thou proud Clarissa Harlowe! Thou that never steppedst out of thy father's house, but to be admired! Who wert wont to turn thine eye, sparkling with healthful life, and self-assurance, to different objects at once, as thou passedst, as if (for so thy penetrating sister used to say) to plume thyself upon the expected applauses of all that beheld thee! Thou that usedst to go to rest satisfied with the adulations paid thee in the past day, and couldst put off everything but thy vanity! <sup>111</sup>

For Richardson, Clarissa's words, far from being an admission of pride in the negative sense of the word, offered readers sound instruction on the need for all individuals to scrutinise their own consciences in order to determine the extent to which they had contributed to their own circumstances. From the point of view of both the author and readers, Clarissa punishes herself excessively for the villainies committed upon her. This

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Letter 19, p. 106.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., letter 261, p. 891.

notion, of examining one's own part in the course of events, indicated the strong influence of contemporary Puritan thought upon the minds of both Clarissa and Richardson, himself.

In her acceptance of what has happened, Clarissa personifies the victory of reason over the passions. After his proposal of marriage to Clarissa, Lovelace remarks to Belford that she is unlike any other woman. He proceeds:

I had prepared myself for high passions, raving, flying, tearing, execration: these transient violences, the workings of sudden grief and shame, and vengeance, would have set us upon a par with each other, and quitted scores. These have I been accustomed to; and, as nothing violent is lasting, with these I could have wished to encounter. But such a majestic composure - seeking me - whom yet, it is plain by her attempt to get away, she would have avoided seeing - No Lucretia-like vengeance upon herself in her thought - yet swallowed up, her whole mind swallowed up, as I may say, by a grief so heavy, as, in her own words, to be beyond the power of speech to express - and to be able, discomposed as she was to the very morning, to put such a home question to me, as if she had penetrated my future view - How could I avoid looking like a fool, and answering as before, in broken sentences, and confusion?<sup>112</sup>

Contrary to his expectations, Lovelace receives none of the ravings, execrations and vengeance to which he had been accustomed from women of lesser virtue. He realises that he has failed in his quest for total control over Clarissa when he acknowledges that, although he has conquered her body, he has been unable to conquer her soul.<sup>113</sup> Thus, by refusing to submit to marriage, a symbol of a woman's loss of autonomy, independence and "conscience", Clarissa teaches readers that individuals do have an alternative to compromising their virtue and honour. Richardson, in a letter to Frances Grainger, explained:

In Clarissa I have shewn, that she thought it her Duty to comply with every thing short of Marrying a man of odious Qualities, and who was the Object of her Detestation. While she thought she could not overcome her Aversion to him, it would have been dishonest to marry him.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Letter 263, p. 900.

<sup>113</sup> St Augustine had claimed, in *The City of God*, "that . . . the sanctity of the soul remains even when the body is violated". Trans. M. Dods (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1950), p.23.

<sup>114</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (December 21, 1749), p. 140.

Knowing this within her own conscience, Clarissa can only reply in the following way to Lovelace: "*That the man who has been the villain to me you have been, shall never make me his wife*".<sup>115</sup> The only real alternative for Clarissa, rather than live a life of deception and tragedy, is to accept death. Commenting on the effect of Lovelace's villainy on the protagonist, Belford observes that "the *grave* is more to be wished-for, by one of her serious and pious turn, than a *husband* incapable either of reflection or remorse".<sup>116</sup> Miss Howe provides Clarissa with the only possible consolation for the sufferings she has endured, when she comments that "we must look to a WORLD BEYOND THIS for the reward of your sufferings!"<sup>117</sup> At the conclusion of the text, readers are assured that the wish Clarissa communicates to her mother, that "HE, I presume to hope, has forgiven me; and [that] . . . I humbly trust I shall be rejoicing in the blessed fruits of His forgiveness",<sup>118</sup> has been fulfilled. Anna Howe summarises the reaction that readers of the text should have towards her friend's death when she notes that "the glory of her sex [has] fallen a victim to villainy".<sup>119</sup>

Richardson used Miss Howe for the didactic purpose of guiding the reaction of readers in relation to Clarissa's character. In her letter to Belford, after Clarissa's death, she describes her friend in words which correspond directly to the image entertained by readers. Realising that she is "incapable of doing justice to the character of [her] beloved friend, she continues:

She was a wonderful creature from her *infancy*. . .her shape was so fine, her proportion so exact, her features so regular, her complexion so lovely, and her whole person and manner was so distinguishedly charming, that she could not move without being admired and followed by the eyes of everyone . . . All human excellence is but comparative - there are persons who excel us, as much as we fancy we excel the meanest . . . Never was such an excellence! - So warm, yet so cool a friend! - So much what I wish to be, but never shall be! - for, alas, my stay, my adviser, my monitress, my directress, is gone! forever gone! . . .

In short, she was the nearest perfection of any creature I ever knew. She never preached to me lessons she practised not. She lived the life she

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<sup>115</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Letter 263, p. 901.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 419, p. 1223.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 316, p. 1014.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 489, p. 1372.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 502, p. 1403.

taught. All humility, meekness, self-accusing, others-acquitting, though the shadow of the fault hardly hers, the substance theirs whose only honour was their relation to her.

To lose such a friend, such a guide - if ever my violence was justifiable, it is upon this recollection! - for she only lived to make me sensible of my failings, but not long enough to enable me to conquer them; as I was resolved to endeavour to do.<sup>120</sup>

Rather than simply describe the exemplary character of Clarissa, Miss Howe emphasises the didactic role of Clarissa in relation to both herself and readers. Becoming Miss Howe's moral guide, Clarissa also assumes the same function for readers of the text. Thus, in the same way as Clarissa, through her exemplary character, makes Anna Howe "sensible of her failings", so should she also make readers aware of theirs. What remains for both Miss Howe and the readers of *Clarissa* is to apply the moral instruction of the tale to their own lives. By doing this, argued Richardson, individuals would become more virtuous. The function of Richardson's didactic method, and his use of the epistolary technique, is best summarised in Miss Gibson's words:

The Advantage the Author gains by writing in the present Tense, as he himself calls it, and in the first Person, [is] that his Strokes penetrate immediately to the Heart, and we feel all the Distresses he paints; we not only weep for, but with *Clarissa*, and accompany her, step by step, through all her Distresses.

I see her from the Beginning, in her happy State, beloved by all around her, studying to deserve that Love; obedient to her Parents, dependant [*sic*] on their Will by her own voluntary Act, when her Grandfather had put it in her Power to be otherwise; respectful and tender to her Brother and Sister; firm in her Friendship to Miss *Howe*; grateful to good Mrs. *Norton*, who had carefully watched over her Infant Years, and delighted to inform and instruct her Mind; kind to her Inferiors; beneficent to all the Poor, Miserable, and Indigent; and above all, cultivating and cherishing in her Heart the true Spirit of Christianity, Meekness, and Resignation; watchful over her own Conduct, and charitable to the Failings of others; unwilling to condemn, and rejoicing in every Opportunity to praise.<sup>121</sup>

At the conclusion of the novel, the view held by Miss Gibson of Clarissa, that the protagonist is the epitome of "perfection", should be synonymous with that shared by readers. Although Richardson did not allow readers the same measure of autonomy in their reading, as did either Fielding or Goldsmith, he did initiate the innovative technique

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Letter 529, pp. 1465-1472.

<sup>121</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, p. 51.

of "writing to the moment", a technique which allowed the assimilation of readers into the world of the text.

In his Postscript to *Clarissa*, Richardson stated that his aim in writing was not simply to entertain readers, but to inculcate "the great lessons of Christianity" back into the hearts of his readers. For this purpose, by moving away from the method of writers who indoctrinated their readers with maxims, Richardson used entertainment as the best means of complementing his didactic instruction. He propounded that his work was:

. . . designed to inculcate upon the human mind, under the guise of an amusement, the great lessons of Christianity, in an age *like the present*; which seems to expect from the poets and dramatic writers (that is to say, from the authors of works of invention) that they should make it one of their principal rules, to propagate another sort of dispensation, under the name of *poetical justice*, than that with which God by Revelation teaches us he has thought fit to exercise mankind; whom, placing here only in a state of *probation*, he hath so intermingled good and evil as to necessitate them to look forward for a more equal distribution of both.<sup>122</sup>

In contrast to the literary trend of the day, which obliged an "equal distribution of rewards and punishments" and the execution of "poetical justice" in which virtue and innocence were happily rewarded at the conclusion of the novel, Richardson opted for an approach based on reason and reality. Despite pleas from people such as Aaron Hill and Lady Bradshaigh that Clarissa be saved, Richardson refused to compromise, knowing that, in reality, virtue could bring either happiness or misery. In a story, designed to represent real life, there could be no other alternative for Clarissa than death. Richardson commented to Lady Bradshaigh, that:

A Writer who follows Nature and pretends to keep the Christian System in his Eye, cannot make a Heaven in this World for his Favourites; or represent this Life otherwise than as a State of Probation. Clarissa I once more averr [*sic*] could not be rewarded in this World. To have given her her Reward here, as in a happy Marriage, would have been as if a Poet had placed his Catastrophe in the Third Act of his Play, when the Audience were *obliged* to expect two more. What greater moral Proof can be given of a World after this, for the rewarding of suffering Virtue, and for the punishing of oppressive Vice, than the Inequalities in the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments here below?<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Richardson, *Clarissa*, Postscript, p. 1495.

<sup>123</sup> Richardson, *Selected Letters* (December 15, 1748), p. 108.

Even Miss Gibson argues that she "could not find a better Close to [Clarissa's] Misfortunes than a Triumphant Death. . . [and the] Hope of future Happiness" as a "Reward [for] her Christian Piety". She continues:

The Death of *Clarissa* is, I believe, the only Death of the kind in any Story; and in her Character, the Author has thrown into Action . . . the true Christian Philosophy, shewn its Force to ennoble the human Mind, till it can look with Serenity on all human Misfortunes, and take from Death itself its gloomy Horrors. . . . nor can I . . . refrain from crying out, "Farewell, my dear *Clarissa*! may every Friend I love in this World imitate you in their Lives, and thus joyfully quit all the Cares and Troubles that disturb this mortal Being!"<sup>124</sup>

Like Miss Gibson, readers were expected to respond with an exclamation of "farewell" and an affirmation that they would imitate the virtuous example of Clarissa, for Richardson had indeed written a story designed "to strengthen the tender Mind, and to enable the worthy Heart to bear up against the Calamities of Life".<sup>125</sup>

Richardson, submitting to public pressure, followed *Clarissa* with a novel, *Sir Charles Grandison*, which was aimed specifically at educating men. Among other things, it dealt with such topics as the character of the good man, relationships between parents and children and husbands and wives, and issues of learning, duelling, and the characters of rakes. In his aim to "enliven as well as instruct", Richardson suggested that he would "produce into public View the Character and Actions of a Man of TRUE HONOUR". He continued:

And now, therefore, [the author] presents to the Public, in Sir CHARLES GRANDISON, the Example of a Man acting uniformly well thro' a Variety of trying Scenes, because all his Actions are regulated by one steady Principle: A Man of Religion and Virtue; of Liveliness and Spirit; accomplished and agreeable; happy in himself, and a Blessing to others.<sup>126</sup>

In this novel, Richardson concerned himself with the conduct of the good man in a way similar to that dealt with in the conduct manual. Like Pamela and Clarissa, Richardson presented Sir Charles as a model of exemplary behaviour for readers. Contrary to the criticism of Donald Ball, who argues that *Sir Charles Grandison* "indicates no moral

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<sup>124</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 54-56.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>126</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison in a Series of Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 3.

purpose",<sup>127</sup> Richardson was, indeed, very clear in his moral purpose. Commenting, in his "Concluding Note by the Editor", he stressed that "SIR CHARLES GRANDISON was . . . in the general tenor of his principles and conduct . . . proposed for an Example". He continued, in words applicable to either *Pamela* or *Clarissa*, that:

"There is no manner of inconvenience in having a pattern propounded to us of so great perfection, as is above our reach to attain to; and there may be great advantages in it. The way to excel in any kind, is, *optima quæque exempla ad imitandum proponere*; to propose the brightest and most perfect Examples to our imitation. No man can write after too perfect and good a copy; and tho' he can never reach the perfection of it, yet he is like to learn more, than by one less perfect. He that aims at the heavens, which yet he is sure to come short of, is like to shoot higher than he that aims at a mark within his reach.

"Besides, that the excellency of the pattern, as it leaves room for continual improvement, so it kindles ambition, and makes men strain and contend to the utmost to do better. And, tho' he can never hope to equal the Examples before him, yet he will endeavour to come as near it as he can. So that a perfect pattern is no hindrance, but an advantage rather, to our improvement of any kind."<sup>128</sup>

Richardson aimed at proposing, for the imitation of his readers, the brightest and most perfect examples of moral values. Thus, readers should aspire to the example set by Sir Charles in their pursuit of benevolence, goodness, and virtue. However, Richardson qualified his aim by adding that readers could never hope to accomplish the examples set before them; instead, they should emulate the behaviour and manners of exemplary characters in order to improve their own morals by continually "aiming at the higher mark". Foster, in his *Miscellaneous Correspondence*, recorded that one of the highest praises in relation to Richardson's didactic instruction came from an imprisoned debtor who, attributing his conversion to Richardson, wrote :

May 2 , 1754.

"SIR, - Gratitude compels me to return you my most unfeigned thanks for effecting in a few hours by your *Sir Charles Grandison* what five years' imprisonment with all the want and indigence imaginable annexed to it could not. I've had my horrors and terrors in a great degree, and thoughts of future economy, when discharged by an insolvent act; but still with some shame confess I retained in great measure my old principles of libertinism, and often flattered myself with enjoying my old acquaintances' company once more in affluence; but happily met with your Sir Charles, where I saw virtue so charmingly delineated, so delightfully described, that it immediately affected me in the highest degree . . .

<sup>127</sup> Ball, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Part III, Volume VII, p. 466



"Yes, sir, I'm now determined during my stay in confinement and when in the world to make virtue and honour to be the standard and governor of all my actions; and, as real happiness must infallibly be the consequence, I shall always esteem you as the source of every good that may hereafter accrue to one who is with the greatest respect and sincerity, -  
Sir, Your much obliged humble servant,

"B.F." 129

It was Richardson's didactic aim that individuals, on the completion of their reading, should share the same thoughts as the debtor, and "strain and contend" to improve themselves by following the course of honour and virtue proposed by him.

Richardson had considerable influence on the development of the novel of moral instruction, both in England and on the Continent. In France, in particular, he was praised by Diderot, Rousseau and de Musset, who described *Clarissa* as "le premier roman du monde". Although Clara Thomson attributed his influence to the development of the novel of sentiment,<sup>130</sup> Richardson should be regarded rather as the initiator of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction. Many eighteenth-century critics compared Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* with *Clarissa*, a comparison which may have appealed to Richardson's vanity, but one against which he argued vehemently, for he believed that Rousseau's work, far from being instructive, "taught the passions to move at the command of vice".<sup>131</sup> Certainly, however, even if readers were to ignore the plot, there was considerable evidence to suggest that Rousseau's moral instruction was derived from Richardson. On the role of women, for example, he commented:

Since all the sentiments of nature are smothered by extreme inequality, it is from the inequitable despotism of fathers that the vices and unhappiness of children come; it is in forced or badly matched unions that young women, victims of the avarice or the vanity of their parents, efface the scandal of their earlier decency through a disorder that they glorify.<sup>132</sup>

The difference between the two writers lay in Rousseau's refusal to accept that perfect beings, such as Pamela and *Clarissa*, did exist in this world.<sup>133</sup> His *Julie*, for example,

<sup>129</sup> Forster M S., *Miscellaneous Correspondence*. Quoted in Thomson, *Samuel Richardson: A Biographical and Critical Study*, p. 56.

<sup>130</sup> Thomson, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>131</sup> Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, Volume IV, No. 18, p. 598.

<sup>132</sup> Jean Jaques Rousseau, *Julie*, Preface to the Second Edition, p. 24.

<sup>133</sup> Jean Jaques Rousseau, *Confessions* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1964), Book IX, p. 85. He comments that, "Perfect beings do not exist; the lessons which they give are too far remote from us".

despite being exemplary in her propensity for virtue, was an ordinary woman, particularly in her susceptibility to error. However, like Richardson, Rousseau also aimed at providing readers with moral instruction against the corrupt manners of contemporary society.

Richardson, although conservative in his ideology and method, promoted the idea that passions had to be regulated by reason if individuals were to attain virtue. Only in this way could individuals know where their true duties lay, and thus achieve happiness. He argued that the excessive indulgence of appetites led individuals into straying from the path of virtue, in quest of pleasures based on self-gratification. Given the degenerate nature of contemporary manners, Richardson aimed at re-educating individuals to pursue virtue by offering them examples of "perfection" upon which they could model their own lives. Following the argument of Joseph Butler, he advocated that true happiness was to be found in the principle of "reasonable self-love", a principle which emphasised, contrary to the arguments of philosophers such as Mandeville, that benevolence and self-love were not diametrically opposed. Reasonable self-love meant governing one's passions to conform with a hierarchy of principles which defined the notion of good and virtue. In order to re-educate individuals, Richardson recreated a realistic world in his novels, a world in which the corruption of manners had forced virtue into a position of total submission to the appetites. Within such a world, he placed models of exemplary behaviour, not in the expectation that individuals could attain perfection, but in the hope that they would see the benefits in maintaining virtue and aspire to such heights.

Such works, Richardson believed, could do more good than many volumes of sermons. By adopting the epistolary technique and by assimilating his readers into the world of narrative, Richardson believed that readers would apply his moral instruction to their own lives. Thus, like Samuel Johnson, Richardson argued that the function of literature was to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. In this, he conformed with Steele's idea of the writer's purpose, that "it [was] the duty of all who make philosophy the entertainment of their lives, to turn their thoughts to practical schemes for the good of society, and not pass away their time in fruitless searches which tend rather to the

ostentation of knowledge, than the service of life".<sup>134</sup> Comparing the moral instruction of Richardson with that of Henry Fielding, James Boswell recorded the following conversation that he had with Johnson and Erskine:

Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, "he was a blockhead;" and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said, "What I mean by his being a blockhead is that he was a barren rascal." BOSWELL. "Will you not allow, Sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all *Tom Jones*. I, indeed, never read *Joseph Andrews*." ERSKINE. "Surely, Sir, Richardson is very tedious." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, 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".<sup>135</sup>

Johnson was correct in his assertion that individuals had to read Richardson's novels primarily for the moral instruction. The entertainment served only to reinforce his instruction. Not only did Richardson's work conform to the traditional approach to moral education, but it also achieved what White suggested should be the function of all novels of moral instruction, the offering, for readers, of an education that will equip them differently for life.

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<sup>134</sup> Steele, *The Tatler*, No. 261 (December 9, 1710), p. 456.

<sup>135</sup> James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 480.



The Truth is, Nature doth really imprint sufficient Marks in the Countenance, to inform an accurate and discerning Eye; but, as such is the Property of few, the Generality of Mankind mistake the Affectation for the Reality: for as Affectation always over-acts her Part, it fares with her as with a Farcical Actor on the Stage, whose monstrous over-done Grimaces are sure to catch the Applause of an insensible Audience; while the truest and finest Strokes of Nature, represented by a judicious and just Actor, pass unobserved and disregarded.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it was Fielding's aim to educate his readers in the virtue of prudence, so that they could avoid mistaking "Affectation for . . . Reality". In his *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, he stressed that nothing in his works would be new to readers:

Neither will the Reader, I hope, be offended if he should here find no Observations entirely new to him. Nothing can be plainer, or more known, than the general Rules of Morality, and yet thousands of Men are thought well employed in reviving our Remembrance, and enforcing our Practice of them.<sup>3</sup>

Fielding believed that the "Rules of Morality" were well known by all individuals, and that the present state of corrupt manners meant that these rules had been disregarded in favour of a set of imperfect rules, based on a limited vision of "self-love". Accepting that it was his task to inculcate into the minds of his readers "the Principle of good Nature",<sup>4</sup> Fielding extended this didactic aim in the hope of instructing readers on the need to be wary of appearances and hypocrisy.

Fielding shared with Richardson a disgust at the damage done to morality and literature by the romances and other works based on "the wildest Imagination". Francis Coventry commented that:

Sometime before this new Species of Writing appear'd, the World had been pester'd with Volumes, commonly known by the Name of Romances, or Novels, Tales, &c. fill'd with any thing which the wildest Imagination could suggest. In all these Works, Probability was not required: The more extravagant the Thought, the more exquisite the Entertainment. Diamond Palaces, flying Horses, brazen Towers, &c. were here look'd upon as proper, and in Taste. In short, the most finish'd Piece of this kind, was nothing but Chaos and Incoherency. *France* first gave birth to this strange Monster, and *England* was proud to import it among the rest of her Neighbour's Follies. A Deluge of Impossibility overflow'd the Press.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Fielding, *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, in *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq*; ed. Henry Knight Miller (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972), Volume I, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Whichcote, *The Works of the Learned Benjamin Whichcote, D.D.*, Printed by J. Chalmers, for Alexander Thomson . . . in the Broadgate. Sermon VI, p. 218.

Nothing was receiv'd with any kind of Applause, that did not appear under the Title of a Romance, or Novel; and Common Sense was kick'd out of Doors to make Room for marvellous Dullness. The Stile in all these Performances was to be equal to the Subject - amazing: And may be call'd with great Propriety, 'Prose run mad.' . . . The Disease became epidemical, but there were no Hopes of a Cure, 'till Mr. *Fielding* endeavour'd to show the World, that pure Nature could furnish out as agreeable Entertainment, as those airy non-entical Forms they had long ador'd, and persuaded the Ladies to leave this Extravagance to their *Abigails* with their cast Cloaths.<sup>5</sup>

Such writing, argued Fielding, failed to address the moral issues which confronted individuals in their everyday existence. Partly because of this, Fielding censured Richardson's *Pamela*, for its presentation of affectation and hypocrisy. Although Richardson had attempted to assimilate readers into the world of the narrative, Fielding's "New Species of Writing" compelled readers to participate actively in their own moral development, by forcing them to judge the characters and events within each of his works. This method differed considerably from that employed by Richardson, whose aim it was to provide readers with exemplary characters worthy of emulation. However, although he forced readers to participate actively in decoding the meaning of the text, through exercising their own sagacity,<sup>6</sup> Fielding, the moral instructor, never deserted them. He was always to be found there, within the text, guiding his readers along the path to virtue.

Although Richardson tried to provide instruction through an entertaining narrative, his work still resembled the more traditional, indoctrinating style of the writers of sermons, who supplied all the answers to ethical and moral issues in the text. Readers, therefore, had far less to do in terms of decoding Richardson's moral instruction. Fielding, by contrast, forced the minds of his readers into direct action. He provided no explicit answers to moral issues to help lazy readers, but forced them to exercise their own sagacity. By "bestirring" themselves, and with a little help from the author himself, Fielding assumed that readers would be able to comprehend fully the moral instruction inherent in his works, and apply it to their own lives. Such a method extended the

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Coventry, *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding: With a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism* (London: Printed for W. Owen, near Temple-Bar, 1751), pp. 13-15.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (in Two Volumes), ed. Martin C. Battestin and Fredson Bowers (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), Volume II, Book XI, Ch. ix, p. 614.

traditional approach to moral education, because it meant that readers, rather than simply being indoctrinated with the author's values, as was the case in Richardson's works, had to complete their reading of the text with a complete understanding of the ramifications of the instruction. As a result, readers could readily apply the author's values to their own lives because they had been involved in proving the validity of those values. Wayne Booth summarises this process accurately when he notes that "the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement".<sup>7</sup> This was the didactic objective behind the writing of Henry Fielding, who aimed at engaging the sagacity of readers in decoding the moral meaning of the text.

As a moral instructor, Fielding refused to allow his readers to become mere receptors of moral instruction; rather, he forced them to experience the situations in which moral issues were debated so as to ascertain their validity. It was only by guaranteeing the autonomy of readers as they assimilated themselves into the world of the text, that authors could hope to achieve successfully the task of all writers of moral instruction - the persuasion of readers as to the validity of their moral arguments. Fielding believed that readers would only pursue more virtuous dispositions, if they had decoded the meaning of the text for themselves. Samuel Johnson suggested that:

Every man, who proposes to grow eminent by learning, should carry in his mind, at once, the difficulty of excellence, and the force of industry; and remember that fame is not conferred but as the recompense of labour, and that labour, vigorously continued, has not often failed of its reward.<sup>8</sup>

Johnson's comment, which implied the need for pupils to take an active role in their own moral education, could readily be applied to Fielding's reasons for assimilating readers into the text. Only by "enflaming the desire" of readers to pursue virtue, a task which required both labour and vigour, could individuals overcome ultimately their corrupt manners.

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<sup>7</sup> Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, No. 25 (June 12, 1750), ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1969), Volume I, p. 140.

Fielding also aimed at inculcating into the minds of his readers, the benevolent disposition of "good nature". Following the claims of Isaac Barrow, who argued that there had always been benevolent individuals who were "ready with their best endeavours to procure and promote" the public good,<sup>9</sup> Fielding defined "Good-nature" as "a delight in the happiness of mankind, and a concern at their misery, with a desire, as much as possible, to procure the former, and avert the latter; and this, with a constant regard for desert".<sup>10</sup> Despite including in his works characters such as Blifil, Fielding supported the doctrine, advocated by Shaftesbury, Butler, Hutcheson and the Latitudinarians, that defended the natural goodness of all individuals. He believed that good-natured individuals were "naturally" inclined towards benevolence and virtue. He continued, in *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, that:

Good-nature is that benevolent and amiable Temper of Mind, which disposes us to feel the Misfortunes, and enjoy the Happiness of others; and, consequently, pushes us on to promote the latter, and prevent the former; and that without any abstract Contemplation on the Beauty of Virtue, and without the Allurements or Terrors of Religion.<sup>11</sup>

Like Butler and Hutcheson, Fielding advocated that virtue brought with it its own reward. Criticising the way in which Richardson had rewarded Pamela's virtue in worldly terms,<sup>12</sup> Fielding argued that virtuous individuals would be rewarded, in a future state, for their endurance of vice, "for it [was] inconsistent with the Justice of a supremely wise and good Being, to suffer . . . honest and worthy Endeavours to go unrewarded".<sup>13</sup> Like Richardson, Fielding rejected the self-interested philosophies of Hobbes and Mandeville, and the Calvinist doctrine of the total depravity of humankind expounded by Whitefield;

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<sup>9</sup> Isaac Barrow, *The Works of the Learned Isaac Barrow* (London: 1741) Vol. II, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> Fielding *The Champion: Containing A Series of Papers, Humourous, Moral, Political, and Critical. To each of which is added, A Paper Index to the Times* (London: Printed for J. Huggonson, in Sword and Buckler Court, over-against the Crown-Tavern on Ludgate-Hill, 1741), Volume II (March 27, 1740), p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1988), No. 29 (April 11, 1752), p. 185. Fielding wrote that, "*In the Energy itself of Virtue . . . there is great Pleasure; and this was the Meaning of him [Aristotle] who first said, That Virtue was its own Reward*".

<sup>13</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (March 4, 1740), Volume I, p. 332.



however, he went a step further than his adversary in sharing with Shaftesbury the hope that, given the correct moral education, individuals could rise ultimately to universal benevolence.

Fielding began his articulation of a satisfactory ethical system for individuals in *The Champion: or British Mercury*, in 1739. Although a somewhat indoctrinating, didactic newspaper, resembling *The Spectator*, *The Champion* allowed him to develop his technique of ridicule and satire so as "to laugh mankind out of its [vices]". Despite some criticism to the contrary, Fielding moved away from the traditional form of a stinging, personal satire to a form of satire "founded in good nature, and directed by a right heart". Richardson distinguished between the two forms of satire when he commented that "Friendly Satire may be compared to a fine lancet, which greatly breathes a vein for health sake; the malevolent Satire to a broad sword which lets, into the gashes it makes, the air of public ridicule".<sup>14</sup> Fielding shared Richardson's dislike of that "malevolent Satire" which "gnaw[ed] and prey[ed] on our very vitals". He continued:

I am always apt, at such times, to pity the person who is thus turned into ridicule, and seldom or never join the laugh against him. Nay, it is not unusual with me to attack the turnspit himself, in which I have been often so successful, that I have turned the whole current of laughter that way. I cannot but observe, with great pleasure, the double delight of the company on these occasions; for nothing ever roasts so kindly as a turnspit.<sup>15</sup>

In *The Champion*, it became Fielding's aim to reform the present state of corrupt manners and morals by satirising vice and recommending good nature and virtue. Although he realised, with the French philosophers, that "the only Ways by which [individuals] can come at any Knowledge of what passes in the Minds of others, are their Words and Actions",<sup>16</sup> Fielding supported Shaftesbury's argument that individuals could only judge

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<sup>14</sup> Richardson, *A Collection of Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflexions Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* (London: 1755), pp. 200-201.

<sup>15</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (March 13, 1740), Volume I, p. 339. Fielding also attacked that form of raillery "which tend[ed] to make a man uneasy and dissatisfied with himself, or which expose[d] him to the scorn of others". *Essay on Conversation*, in *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.*, Volume I, p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (December 11, 1739), Volume I, p. 79.

the actions of others by investigating the motives which led to those actions. An inability to do so could too easily result in virtuous individuals being duped by the vicious.

In contrast to Hobbes' philosophy, Fielding supported Butler's emphasis on the complementary nature of benevolence and self-love. He believed that good-natured individuals should combine a reasonable regard for their own interests with that of their neighbours. However, he qualified his view by adding that the benevolent and good-natured spirit of individuals had to be moderated by prudence and sound judgement, lest it degenerate into foolishness.<sup>17</sup> In a comment which heralded the characters of Adams and Allworthy, Fielding noted:

That as good-nature requires a distinguishing faculty which is another word for judgement, and is perhaps the sole boundary between wisdom and folly, it is impossible for a fool, who hath no distinguishing faculty, to be good-natured.<sup>18</sup>

However, Fielding was well aware that virtuous individuals were too often duped by the base arts of the vicious. Supporting Steele's argument,<sup>19</sup> he commented that:

Honest and undesigning Men of very good Understanding would be always liable to the Attacks of cunning and artful Knaves, into whose Snares we are often seduc'd by the Openness and Goodness of the Heart, as by the Weakness of the Head. True Wisdom is often attended with a Simplicity of Manners, which betrays a worthy Man to a tricking Shuffler, of a much inferior Capacity.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, Fielding directed much of his moral instruction to the education of those essentially good-natured individuals who fell victims to the snares of the vicious, and who, because of an inferior education in the ways of the world, were unable to detect vice. In many cases, these same individuals contributed to their own abuse by neglecting moderation and prudence. Fielding argued that benevolence, or good nature, only

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<sup>17</sup> Fielding *An Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings*, ed. Malvin R. Zirker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), Section. viii, "Of the Difficulties which attend Prosecutions", pp. 155-156. Fielding comments that: "It becomes the good-natured and tender-hearted Man to be watchful over his own Temper; to restrain the Impetuosity of his Benevolence. . . For Want of this Wisdom, a benevolent and tender-hearted Temper very often betrays Men into Errors not only hurtful to themselves, but highly prejudicial to the Society".

<sup>18</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (March 27, 1740), Volume II, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 245 (December 11, 1711), pp. 449-454.

<sup>20</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (February 21, 1739-40), Volume I, p. 296.

became the pinnacle of virtue, and a sign of "real merit", when it was moderated by reason or sound judgement.<sup>21</sup> Only then could individuals be guaranteed happiness. Thus, virtue brought with it its own reward. Alternatively, by neglecting to apply reason to the passions, "many more vices and follies arrive[d] in the world".<sup>22</sup>

According to Fielding, individuals needed to follow the moral instructions of philosophers, such as Shaftesbury and Butler, if they were to attain virtue. In *The Champion*, he argued that individuals were deceived into corrupt manners and morals by writers who promoted excessive, worldly pleasures, and who painted pictures of virtue as offering no rewards of pleasure. Fielding took upon himself the task of convincing his readers of the merit of virtue. He stressed that:

. . . if we strip Virtue and Vice of all their outward Ornaments and Appearances, and view them both naked, and in their pure, native Simplicity, we shall . . . find Virtue to have in her every Thing that is truly valuable, to be a constant Mistress, a faithful Friend, and a pleasant Companion; while Vice will appear a taudry, painted Harlot, within, all foul and impure, enticing only at a Distance, the Possession of her certainly attended with Uneasiness, Pain, Disease, Poverty, and Dishonour.<sup>23</sup>

Fielding believed that vices, such as avarice, hypocrisy, slander and vanity not only corrupted, deceived and misled individuals, but lured them from pursuing virtue. These vices provided him with the foundation stone upon which he built his later fiction. In a portrait that anticipated Blifil in *Tom Jones*, for example, Fielding outlined the hypocrisy of a "good-for-nothing fellow" who had affected goodness in order to gain a reputation for himself in the eyes of the world.<sup>24</sup> Although "this fellow" could deceive the unwary, he, like the slanderer who reaped no benefit other than the possible satisfaction of ruining others, never achieved any happiness in life. In a like way, individuals who fell victims to the tyrant, "Avarice", or who became victims of their own vanity, also failed to achieve happiness because they were continuously accompanied by the fear of losing either their

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., (March 27, 1740) Volume II, p. 39ff.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., (March 15, 1740) Volume II, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., (January 24, 1739-40) Volume I, p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., (December 11, 1739) Volume I, pp. 79-82.

fortunes or their reputations.<sup>25</sup> The difference between virtue and vice was best distinguished, when the author commented that:

There is a Consciousness in true Merit, which renders a Man careless of the Reception it meets with. He disdains to fly to little Arts to inform the World of what it wants only Judgement to discover of itself. He is rather studious to deserve than acquire Praise. Whereas, the Man of a contrary Character is always forward to acquaint others with his Deserts. He is not desirous of Virtue itself, but only the Reputation of it; therefore is more solicitous to carry Virtue on his Countenance than in his Heart.<sup>26</sup>

Fielding stressed that virtue, in contrast to vice which was built upon false appearances and their maintenance, provided its own happiness and worth.

In order to defend true moral standards and unmask affectation and deceit, Fielding wrote *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, a work which, following the method and theory of *The Champion*, was designed to educate good-natured individuals in how to detect the true dispositions of those "who [made] no Scruple of satisfying their own Pride and Vanity, at the Expense of the most cruel Mortification of others".<sup>27</sup> He commented, in his Preface to the *Miscellanies*, that:

In my *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, I have endeavoured to expose a second great Evil, namely, Hypocrisy; the Bane of all Virtue, Morality, and Goodness; and to arm, as well as I can, the honest, undesigning, open-hearted Man, who is generally the Prey of this monster, against it. I believe a little Reflection will convince us, that most Mischiefs (especially those which fall on the worthiest Part of Mankind) owe their Original to this detestable Vice.<sup>28</sup>

Fielding's aim, from the outset, was an educative one; an aim designed at protecting good-natured individuals against the vicious ways of the world. He stated, at the beginning of his *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, that:

I have often thought it a melancholy Instance of the great Depravity of Human Nature, that whilst so many Men have employed their utmost Abilities to invent Systems, by which the artful and cunning Part of Mankind may be enabled to impose on the rest of the World; few or none should have stood up the Champions of the innocent and undesigning, and have endeavoured to arm them against Imposition. . . . this Essay may

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., (December 29, 1739) Volume I, pp 139-142; (April 15, 1740) Volume II, pp. 107-111.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., (March 4, 1739-40) Volume I, p. 330.

<sup>27</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on Conversation*, in *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.*, ed. Henry Knight Miller, Volume I, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> Fielding, *Miscellanies*, Volume I, Preface, p. 4.

perhaps be of some Use to the young and inexperienced, to the more open, honest and considering Part of Mankind, who, either from Ignorance or Inattention, are daily exposed to all the pernicious Designs of that detestable Fiend, Hypocrisy.<sup>29</sup>

Believing that the morals of individuals could either be improved by correct education or corrupted by an improper one, Fielding, like Defoe and Chesterfield, criticised the contemporary form of "moral" education, in which individuals were "taught rather to conceal Vices, than to cultivate Virtues".<sup>30</sup> Such a form of education was responsible for the prevailing, negative influence of "self-love", which had resulted in "every Individual [placing] his own particular and separate Advantage [over] the Interest of all others".<sup>31</sup> As a result, natural society had become shrouded in a web of deceit, which disadvantaged benevolent individuals. He commented:

Thus while the crafty and designing Part of mankind, consulting only their own separate Advantage, endeavour to maintain one constant Imposition on others, the whole World becomes a vast Masquerade, where the greatest Part appear disguised under false Vizors and Habits; a few only shewing their own Faces, who become, by doing so, the Astonishment and Ridicule of all the rest.<sup>32</sup>

Fielding blamed the "want of Skill in the Observer",<sup>33</sup> and ignorance on the part of good-natured individuals, for the continued triumph of hypocrisy and vanity over virtue.

Although virtuous individuals often failed to discern vice, Fielding claimed that vicious designs were always visible to the discerning eye. Observing that there were "two Causes of Mistakes" which led individuals "into forming very erroneous Judgements of Men", he continued:

The first of these is when we take their own Words against their Actions. This . . . is no less ridiculous, than it would be in a learned Professor of that Art [Physic], when he perceives his light-headed Patient is in utmost Danger, to take his Word that he is well. This Error is infinitely more common than its extream Absurdity would persuade us was possible. And many a credulous Person hath been ruined by trusting to the Assertions of another, who must have preserved himself, had he placed a wiser Confidence in his Actions.

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<sup>29</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, in *Miscellanies*, Volume I, pp. 153, 156.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

The Second is an Error still more general. This is when we take the Colour of a Man's Actions not from their own visible Tendency, but from his public Character: when we believe what others say of him, in Opposition to what we see him do? How often do we suffer ourselves to be deceived, out of the Credit of a Fact, or out of a just Opinion of its Heinousness, by the reputed Dignity or Honesty of the Person who did it? How common are such Ejaculations as these? 'O 'tis impossible HE should be guilty of any such Thing! HE must have done it by Mistake; HE could not design it. I will never believe any Ill of HIM. So good a Man, &c.!' when in Reality, the Mistake lies only in his Character. Nor is there any more simple, unjust, and insufficient Method of judging Mankind, than by public Estimation, which is oftner acquired by Deceit, Partiality, Prejudice, and such like, than by real Desert. I will venture to affirm, that I have known some of *the best sort of Men in the World* . . . who would not have scrupled cutting a Friend's Throat; and *a Fellow whom no Man should be seen to speak to*, capable of the highest Acts of Friendship and Benevolence.<sup>34</sup>

Fielding blamed good nature itself for luring unwary, benevolent individuals into believing that all people, like themselves, had the good of others at heart. As a result, virtuous individuals would accept the words of others without scrutinising their motives. Instead, individuals needed to investigate whether any discrepancy existed between the actions and words of others. Ironically, Fielding noted, in a sentence which echoed the moral instruction of both *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, that he had known men, who would not "scruple" in committing the most heinous of crimes against mankind, proclaimed "good men". Above all, argued Fielding, drawing on the moral instruction of the apostle, Matthew, virtuous individuals had to "beware of that sanctified Appearance, *that whited Sepulchre, which looks beautiful outward, and is within full of all Uncleaness*".<sup>35</sup> Although he believed that many good-natured individuals were duped because of their own lack of prudence, Fielding claimed that there were occasions when even the most wary could fall victim to affectation or hypocrisy, "*against which NO VIRTUE IS A DEFENCE, NO INNOCENCE A SECURITY*".<sup>36</sup>

In spite of the corrupt standard of manners in contemporary society, Fielding, like Shaftesbury and Butler, still recommended the optimistic philosophy of "*do unto all Men as ye would they should do unto you*".<sup>37</sup> He concluded his *Essay on the Knowledge of*

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-163.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

*the Characters of Men* with a plea to his readers that they adopt prudence in judging the characters of other individuals. Arguing that "none but the weakest of Men would rashly and madly place a Confidence which may very materially affect him in any one, on a slight or no Acquaintance", Fielding stressed that all individuals should "carefully observe the Actions of Men with others . . . especially with those to whom they [were] allied in Blood, Marriage, Friendship, Profession, Neighbourhood, or any other Connection".

He continued:

Trace the man proposed to your Trust, into his private Family and nearest Intimacies. See whether he hath acted the Part of a good Son, Brother, Husband, Father, Friend, Master, Servant, &c. if he hath discharged these Duties well, your Confidence will have a good Foundation; but if he hath behaved himself in these Offices with Tyranny, with Cruelty, with Infidelity, with Inconstancy, you may be assured he will take the first Opportunity his Interest points out to him, of exercising the same ill Talents at your Expence.

I have often thought that Mankind would be little liable to Deceit (at least much less than they are) if they would believe their own Eyes, and judge of Men by what they actually see them perform towards those with whom they are most closely connected: Whereas how common is it to persuade ourselves, that the undutiful, ungrateful Son, the unkind, or barbarous Brother; or the Man who is void of all Tenderness, Honour, or even Humanity, to his Wife or Children, shall nevertheless become a sincere and faithful Friend! . . . For . . . a Man's good Behaviour to those with whom he hath the nearest and closest Connection is the best Assurance to which a Stranger can trust for his honest Conduct in any Engagement he shall enter into with him.<sup>38</sup>

It was Fielding's opinion that honest individuals could never be too much on their guard against the designs of the vicious. Henry Knight Miller correctly describes the writer's moral aim in the following manner:

Fielding's conviction that the hypocrite flourished because the average citizen did not trouble to make adequate moral distinctions - or even properly judge his own interests and happiness - was made more bitter by his belief that good men, in particular, were the hypocrite's natural victims. Like Parson Adams, as they had never any intention to deceive, so they never suspected such a design in others. However, in the faith that 'Simplicity, when set on its Guard, is often a Match for Cunning', Fielding sought to provide some cues to the disguises worn by the crafty and designing Part of Mankind.<sup>39</sup>

Fielding argued that all individuals should analyse their relationships with others, so as to avoid being deceived. On occasions, however, he acknowledged that even this could

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 175-176.

<sup>39</sup> Henry Knight Miller, Introduction to the *Miscellanies*, p. xxxvi.

prove inadequate against "a *Weapon forged in Hell , and formed by that prime Artificer and Engineer, the Devil*".<sup>40</sup>

In *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*,<sup>41</sup> Fielding continued his education of unwary and virtuous individuals against deception and the base designs of the vicious. Although not published until 1743, in Fielding's *Miscellanies*, the style of this work would suggest that it predated *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, And his Friend Mr Abraham Adams*. Rather than correcting the foibles and follies of society through the use of humour, as was the case in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding, in *Jonathan Wild* seemed, at least at first sight, to present a much bleaker picture of vice in society. However, unlike the preceding essays which tended to indoctrinate readers with the author's moral views, this work grounded its instruction firmly in the narrative. Although the work offered a huge indictment of political power and the greatness associated with it,<sup>42</sup> it was primarily a satire on human nature and society, which aimed at exposing vice by stripping it of its falsity and showing it "in its native Deformity".<sup>43</sup> Although Fielding stated, in his Preface to the *Miscellanies*, that he would not contradict "the Veracity and Impartiality of that History" published by the "excellent Historian", Daniel Defoe, on the life of Jonathan Wild,<sup>44</sup> he had intended using the history to enlighten all individuals to the "Villainies" of the vicious part of humankind. He commented:

But without considering *Newgate* as no other than Human Nature with its Mask off, which some very shameless Writers have done, . . . I think we may be excused for suspecting, that the splendid Palaces of the Great are often no other than *Newgate* with the Mask on. Nor do I know any thing which can raise an honest Man's Indignation higher than that the same Morals should be in one Place attended with all imaginable Misery and Infamy, and in the other, with the highest Luxury and Honour. Let any impartial Man in his Senses be asked, for which of these two Places a Composition of Cruelty, Lust, Avarice, Rapine, Insolence, Hypocrisy,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>41</sup> Henry Fielding, *Miscellanies. The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great*. Volume III (London: Printed for the Author; and sold by A. Millar, opposite to *Catharine-street* in the *Strand*, 1743). Future references to the text will be cited as *Jonathan Wild*, and page references will refer to the Penguin edition of the text (1982).

<sup>42</sup> R. W. Harris, *Reason and Nature in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Blandford Press, 1968), p. 274.

<sup>43</sup> Fielding, *Miscellanies*, Volume I, Preface, p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 8.



Fraud and Treachery, was best fitted, surely his Answer must be certain and immediate; and yet I am afraid all these Ingredients glossed over with Wealth and a Title, have been treated with the highest Respect and Veneration in the one, while one or two of them have been condemned to the Gallows in the other. . . .

Nothing seems to me more preposterous than that, while the Way to true Honour lies so open and plain, Men should seek false by such perverse and rugged Paths: that while it is so easy and safe, and truly honourable, to be good, Men should wade through Difficulty and Danger, and real Infamy, to be *Great*, or, to use a synonymous Word, *Villains*.

Nor hath Goodness less Advantage in the Article of Pleasure, than of Honour over this kind of Greatness. The same righteous Judge always annexes a bitter Anxiety to the Purchases of Guilt, whilst it adds a double Sweetness to the Enjoyments of Innocence and Virtue: for Fear, which all the Wise agree is the most wretched of human Evils, is, in some Degree, always attending on the former, and never can in any manner molest the Happiness of the latter.

This is the Doctrine which I have endeavoured to inculcate in this History, confining myself at the same Time within the Rules of Probability. . . . And though perhaps it sometimes happens, contrary to the Instances I have given, that the Villain succeeds in his Pursuit, and acquires some transitory imperfect Honour or Pleasure to himself for his Iniquity; yet I believe he oftner shares the Fate of my Hero, and suffers the Punishment, without obtaining the Reward.<sup>45</sup>

Fielding believed that, although the vicious may succeed in satisfying their appetites, there was no lasting happiness to be gained from a life of vice. Suggesting that fear always attended the vicious and the great, he continued:

This Bombast Greatness then is the Character I intend to expose; and the more this prevails in and deceives the World, taking to itself not only Riches and Power, but often Honour, or at least the Shadow of it, the more necessary is it to strip the Monster of these false Colours, and shew it in its native Deformity: for by suffering Vice to possess the Reward of Virtue, we do a double Injury to society, by encouraging the former, and taking away the chief Incentive to the latter.<sup>46</sup>

Beneath the almost Hobbesian portrayal of the viciousness of Wild and his gang, particularly in relation to their attempts at achieving greatness, lay the optimistic doctrine of Shaftesbury with its emphasis upon the fact that, ultimately, all benevolent individuals would be rewarded.

From the outset of *Jonathan Wild*, Fielding not only attacked Richardson's affected idea of providing exemplary, or "saint-like", characters, but emphasised that no individuals were ever truly virtuous. He defined his task in the following way:

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

We would not therefore be understood to affect giving the reader a perfect or consummate pattern of human excellence; but rather, by faithfully recording some little imperfections which shadowed over the lustre of those great qualities which we shall here record, to teach the lesson we have above mentioned, to induce our reader with us to lament the frailty of human nature and to convince him that no mortal, after a thorough scrutiny, can be a proper object of our adoration.<sup>47</sup>

Fielding argued that all individuals, even the good-natured, in addition to being taught how to apply moderation and prudence to their lives, needed to be educated in the pursuit of virtue. His description of the education of the young Jonathan Wild provided a satiric comment on the process of education for gentlemen, expounded by writers from Locke to Chesterfield. The narrator informs readers that Wild's father, "from a foolish prejudice to our universities, and out of a false as well as excessive regard to his morals, brought Wild to town", where he took "all imaginable care . . . to inculcate principles of honour and gentility into his son".<sup>48</sup> Ironically, Wild's education is based on the passionate and selfish principles of his father, who, withdrawing his son from the innocence and simplicity of country life, exposes him to the corruptions of town life. Following the ambitious nature of his father, Wild affects the character of a gentleman and makes "a considerable figure" with "women of quality [who treat] him with great familiarity".<sup>49</sup> However, dissatisfied with this, Wild turns to more vicious designs which result in his father sending him to America in order to preserve his morals. Ironically, in a satiric comment on Chesterfield's warning that sons be sent abroad either accompanied by a tutor when young, or after they have developed their morals, Wild is sent abroad, unaccompanied, where he is exposed to "a continued scene of whoring, drinking, and removing from one place to another".<sup>50</sup> Far from receiving a virtuous education, Wild returns from abroad educated in deceit, hypocrisy and vice. Ironically, the narrator describes the young man's character in the following way:

In our hero there was nothing not truly great: he could, without the least abashment, drink a bottle with a man who knew he had the moment before picked his pocket; and, when he had stripped him of everything he had,

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<sup>47</sup> Fielding, *Jonathan Wild* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982), Book I, Ch. I, p. 40.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. III, p. 47.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. VI, p. 57.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. VII, p. 59.

never desired to do him any farther mischief; for he carried good-nature to that wonderful and uncommon height that he never did a single injury to man or woman by which he himself did not expect to reap some advantage.<sup>51</sup>

Despite Wild's vicious designs, readers are forced to laugh at those blind and ridiculous figures who fail to see through Wild's base arts. By laughing at those individuals who allow themselves to be deceived by Wild, readers are educated in how to recognise vice.

Fielding developed, in narrative form, the theme, begun in *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, on the need to educate good-natured individuals against their vicious counterparts, when Wild meets an old schoolfellow, Heartfree, a man of "honest and open disposition" whom the narrator satirises in the following way:

These persons are of that pitiful order of mortals who are in contempt called good-natured; being indeed sent into the world by nature with the same design with which men put little fish into a pike-pond, in order to be devoured by that voracious water-hero. . . . He was of that sort of men whom experience only, and not their own natures, must inform that there are such things as deceit and hypocrisy in the world . . . . He was possessed of several great weaknesses of mind, being good-natured, friendly, and generous to excess. . . . He was withal so silly a fellow that he never took the least advantage of the ignorance of his customers, and contented himself with very moderate gains on his goods; which he was better enabled to do, notwithstanding his generosity, because his life was extremely temperate, his expenses being solely confined to the cheerful entertainment of his friends at home, and now and then a moderate glass of wine in which he indulged himself in the company of his wife. . . .<sup>52</sup>

Fielding satirised the imprudent character of Heartfree who, with all his "goodness, friendship, and generosity", appeared a foolish figure opposite the deceitful Wild. Similarly, Mrs. Heartfree, possessing "a benevolence which is an emanation from the heart"<sup>53</sup> and sharing her husband's unsuspecting nature, also falls easy prey to the hypocritical Wild. Although readers may sympathise with the couple, imposed upon by Wild, their sympathy is considerably diminished by the Heartfree's own imprudence. The narrator summarises Heartfree's character adequately, when he comments that his "faults were rather in his heart than in his head".<sup>54</sup> F. Homes Dudden errs slightly in his suggestion that, in contrasting the two men, "Fielding forgets his ironic pose and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XI, p. 67.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. I, pp. 83-84.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. I, p. 85.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. II, p. 89.

discloses his real sympathy with the good man and his detestation of the villain".<sup>55</sup> Certainly, Fielding did detest villainy and sympathise with the good man; however, the myopic view of the Heartfrees denies the reality of the world, a world in which the virtuous too often fell victims to the wicked designs of the vicious. Consequently, readers should, as did Fielding, censure Heartfree for his excessive innocence and his inability to judge the characters of other individuals, especially that of Jonathan Wild. Thus, it was against this lack of prudence that Fielding attempted to educate his readers.

There is further evidence of Heartfree's inability to judge the sincerity of the motives of others, when he is swindled by La Ruse. The narrator notes ironically that:

His house, his equipage, his appearance, but, above all, a certain plausibility in his voice and behaviour would have deceived any, but one whose great and wise heart had dictated to him something within, which would have secured him from any danger of imposition from without. Heartfree, therefore, did not in the least scruple giving him credit.<sup>56</sup>

Given his inability to scrutinise the motives of the vicious, readers should not be surprised to find that Heartfree, after falling into debt, has been arrested and sent to Newgate. Ironically, in contrast to Heartfree's genuine benevolence, his neighbours, like Wild, although they "affect a great concern for [their] friend's misfortune",<sup>57</sup> offer no assistance. Even when the distracted and passionate Mrs. Heartfree approaches the "honest Quaker", in order "to secure bail" for her husband, readers are informed that "she succeeded no better with him, for unluckily he had made an affirmation the day before that he would never be bail for any man".<sup>58</sup> It was Fielding's aim to satirise the character of the Quaker, a member of the "Society of Friends" founded by George Fox in the middle of the seventeenth century, for his refusal to help a fellow human being, especially one, whom he acknowledges, had done him great service in the past. The situation, which highlighted one of Fielding's earliest uses of satire in the novel, followed the idea of Shaftesbury that ridicule should be directed against excessive enthusiasm.

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<sup>55</sup> F. Homes Dudden, *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times*, in Two Volumes (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966), Volume I, p. 474.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Ch. III, p. 90.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Ch. V, p. 101.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, Ch. VII, p. 105.

Emphasising the essential goodness of humankind and the idea that God was in everyone, Quakers had proclaimed that it was their aim to raise up the good in the world and put down evil, by promoting the interests of "Friends" who displayed "Good" in their lives. In this case, when the time comes to act in a reciprocal manner to his "Friend", the Quaker neglects his duty. Fielding ridiculed his character further by contrasting it against those of his servants, "who durst not tell a lie". In spite of his proclamations of honesty, he presumably lies to Mrs. Heartfree over his recent affirmation made just "the day before".

Heartfree's benevolence is not only exploited by the Quaker, but by all others to whom he had extended his generosity. Even his debtors, among whom is Peter Pounce, abuse his good-nature by replying indifferently to requests that they repay their debts. In the first of two replies, Cath. Rubbers informs Heartfree that her husband had given her the money to repay her debt, but she "had the ill luck to lose at play". Ironically, she assures the man that she will discharge her debt at "the first opportunity". The irony, however, is even greater in the second letter. when Cha. Easy replies:

SIR, - I am sincerely sorry it is not at present possible for me to comply with your request, especially after so many obligations received on my side, of which I shall always entertain the most grateful memory. I am very greatly concerned at your misfortunes, and would have waited upon you in person, but am not at present very well, and besides, am obliged to go this evening to Vauxhall. I am, sir, your most obliged humble servant.

CHA. EASY.

P.S. - I hope good Mrs Heartfree and the dear little ones are well.<sup>59</sup>

Such replies indicate that the good-natured man has been exploited, even by those whom he has saved from prison. Fielding satirised the hypocritical "good-nature" of individuals who, like Cha. Easy, affected benevolence, while harbouring, within their breasts, motives of utmost selfishness. Unsurprisingly, these replies are "most grating to the poor man", who had always acted with utmost benevolence to all his neighbours.

At all times, however, underlying the deceit, dishonesty and hypocrisy of the Heartfree's friends and neighbours, there is the continual reminder by the narrator that the two characters, through their inability to examine the motives of those to whom they offer benevolence, are to blame, at least in part, for their own situation. Even after offering

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VII, pp. 106-107.

Heartfree his pledge of assistance and support, Wild attempts to seduce Mrs. Heartfree, who, unsuspectingly, is deceived by his professions of concern for her husband.

Emphasising Wild's vicious nature, the narrator continues:

They [readers] are to know then that at the first interview with Mrs Heartfree Mr Wild had conceived that passion, or affection, or friendship, or desire, for that handsome creature, which the gentlemen of this our age agreed to call LOVE, and which is indeed no other than that kind of affection which, after the exercise of the dominical day is over, a lusty divine is apt to conceive for the well-drest sirloin or handsome buttock which the well-edified squire in gratitude sets before him, and which, so violent is his love, he devours in imagination the moment he sees it.<sup>60</sup>

Wild's love, based as it is on excessive passion, resembles that of Richardson's Lovelace, whose "hungry passion" devoured everything in its path. Innocently, Mrs. Heartfree believes that she has been commanded by her husband to flee the country, with Wild, for Holland. Only at sea, does she become aware of Wild's base designs. Readers are informed that:

Mrs Heartfree, the moment she understood his meaning, which, in her present temper of mind, and in the opinion she held of him, she did not immediately, rejected him with all the repulses which indignation and horror could animate: but when he attempted violence she filled the cabin with her shrieks, which were so vehement that they reached the ears of the captain, the storm at this time luckily abating. This man, who was a brute rather from his education and the element he inhabited than from nature, ran hastily down to her assistance, and, finding her struggling on the ground with our hero, he presently rescued her from her intended ravisher, who was soon obliged to quit the woman, in order to engage with her lusty champion, who spared neither pains nor blows in the assistance of his fair passenger.<sup>61</sup>

Again, any sympathy that readers may have for the unsuspecting and virtuous woman is undercut by her "foolishness" in trusting a person about whom she knows so little, and in her failure to scrutinise the motives of the vicious man.

Even after her rescue from the clutches of Wild, who has been cast into the sea, Mrs. Heartfree's simple and "good-natured" character, in believing that she has "fallen into the hands of a man of honour and justice",<sup>62</sup> is further satirised. It is not long before

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VIII, pp. 109-110.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XI, pp. 113-114.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, p. 183.

Mrs. Heartfree realises that her saviour, the French captain, has the same vicious designs upon her virtue as had Wild. On her return, she recounts:

I must, however, do him the justice to say my fears carried my suspicions farther than I afterwards found I had any reason to carry them: he did indeed very soon acquaint me with his passion, and used all those gentle methods which frequently succeed with our sex to prevail with me to gratify it; but never once threatened, nor had the least recourse to force. He did not even once insinuate to me that I was totally in his power, which I myself sufficiently saw, and whence I drew the most dreadful apprehensions . . . but I was happily the captive of a better man. My conqueror was one of those over whom vice hath a limited jurisdiction; and, though he was too easily prevailed on to sin, he was proof against any temptation to villainy.<sup>63</sup>

The narrator treats Mrs. Heartfree's ability to perceive clearly the nature of the situation with ridicule. In reality, the Frenchman's motives are no better than Wild's; for he too aims at seducing the woman. The only difference between him and Wild is that, although the same "sin" is still present, his method of overcoming the woman's virtue seems less villainous. Her problems are compounded when she is taken aboard an English man-of-war, captained by a man of no breeding. She continues:

He used me with scarce common civility, as indeed he shewed very little to any other person, treating his officers little better than a man of no great good-breeding would exert to his meanest servant, and that too on some very irritating provocation. As for me, he addressed me with the insolence of a bashaw to a Circassian slave; he talked to me with the loose licence in which the most profligate libertines converse with harlots, and which women abandoned only in a moderate degree detest and abhor. He often kissed me with very rude familiarity, and one day attempted further brutality.<sup>64</sup>

Although his initial attempt is thwarted by the intervention of a "Christian", who is later punished, the Captain renews the attack on the woman's virtue in his cabin, despite her rebukes. Ironically, thinking in terms of the theory of benevolence, she believes that her rebuke should terminate the advances of the "gentleman"; instead, it only serves to "enflame" his desire. Once more, it was Fielding's aim to highlight to his readers that the virtue of the innocent offered no protection against the assaults of the vicious. She recounts, that she was "obliged to suffer his nauseous kisses, and some rudenesses

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, p. 184.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, p. 186.

which [she] had great difficulty to restrain within moderate bounds".<sup>65</sup> Ironically, Mrs. Heartfree is saved from being ravished by vice itself, in the form of the excessive drinking of the captain. Foolishly, she attributes the Captain's illness to relief from Heaven.

In addition to criticising those who failed to control their appetites with reason, Fielding also satirised those individuals who failed to regulate their lives with prudence. Educated readers should perceive, after reading of her distresses after leaving England, that Mrs. Heartfree is not the virtuous person they had believed her to be. In fact, she too suffers from a moderate degree of affectation and vanity. Her story is told not with the expected disgust and indignation that such experiences should bring, but with a certain touch of pride in the fact that all these "ravishers" sought her virtue, and paid her vanity large compliments. Even when her husband turns pale, she presses on with her account, reassuring him, only occasionally, that "Heaven preserved her chastity".<sup>66</sup> In this way, Fielding stressed that all individuals, even the good-natured, were subject to human defects and passions. No character, argued Fielding, could be described, in all truthfulness, as exemplary or "saintlike".

Fielding satirised the imprudence, naïveté and vanity of such virtuous women as Mrs. Heartfree. Like Steele,<sup>67</sup> he too was very critical of the corrupt manners of women. In his poem, "To a Friend on the Choice of a Wife", Fielding counselled his friend against the base designs of women who attempted to ensnare men. While men chose a "Partner" for their "future Days", women, he argued, put aside all virtues, and "wed to lay the Fiends of Avarice or Lust" and for other "baser Passions".<sup>68</sup> He continued his warning in the following way:

Of Beauty's subtle Poison well beware;  
Our Hearts are taken e'er they dread the Snare:  
Our Eyes soon dazzled by that Glare, grow blind,  
And see no Imperfections in the Mind.  
Of this appriz'd, the Sex, with nicest Art,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, pp. 187-188.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Book VI, Ch. VII, p. 187.

<sup>67</sup> Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 268 (January 7, 1712), pp. 544-548.

<sup>68</sup> Fielding, *Miscellanies*, Volume I, p. 43.



Insidiously adorn the outward Part.  
 But Beauty, to a Mind deprav'd and ill,  
 Is a thin Gilding to a nauseous Pill;  
 A cheating Promise of a short-liv'd Joy,  
 Time must this Idol, Chance may soon destroy.<sup>69</sup>

Considering marriage as "the primary bond of union in society", Fielding considered that it was imperative that he offer men some instruction on the choice of a wife. In words reminiscent of Richardson's instructive conclusion to *Pamela II*, Fielding stressed:

Two Sorts of Women never should be woo'd,  
 The wild Coquette, and the censorious Prude:  
 From Love both chiefly seek to feed their Pride,  
 Those to affect it strive, and these to hide.  
 Each gay Coquette would be admir'd alone  
 By all, each Prude be thought to value none. . . .

Women by Nature form'd too prone to Ill,  
 By Education are made proner still,  
 To cheat, deceive, conceal each genuine Thought,  
 By Mothers, and by Mistresses are taught.  
 The Face and Shape are first the Mother's Care;  
 The Dancing-Master next improves the Air.  
 To these Perfections add a Voice most sweet;  
 The skill'd Musician makes the Nymph compleat.<sup>70</sup>

Fielding believed that affected and corrupt women seduced men in order to furnish the needs of their passions and vanity; consequently, they destroyed the love upon which a true marriage should be based. Furthermore, complained the author, there were too many women, who "Merit only see in an Estate". He concluded his poem in the hope that his friend, and more importantly male readers, would heed his lesson in their choice of a wife, and search for a virtuous woman. He continued:

May she then prove, who shall thy Lot befall,  
 Beauteous to thee, agreeable to all.  
 Nor Wit, nor Learning proudly may she boast;  
 No low-bred Girl, nor gay fantastic Toast:  
 Her tender Soul, Good-nature must adorn,  
 And Vice and Meanness be alone her Scorn.  
 Fond of thy Person, may her Bosom glow  
 With Passions thou hast taught her first to know.  
 A warm Partaker of the genial Bed,  
 Thither by Fondness, not by Lewdness led.  
 Superior Judgement may she own thy Lot;  
 Humbly advise, but contradict thee not.  
 Thine to all other Company prefer;  
 May all thy Troubles find Relief from her.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., ll. 56-65, p. 44.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., ll. 193-198, p. 48; ll. 229-236, p. 49.

If Fortune gives thee such a Wife to meet,  
Earth cannot make thy Blessing more complete.<sup>71</sup>

Such a woman, though not a paragon of virtue in Richardsonian terms, was the type of woman that both the poet's friend and his readers should seek. However, such a woman was almost impossible to find; even Mrs. Heartfree, the good-natured woman, falls victim to her own passions, despite her love of her husband.

Throughout *Jonathan Wild*, Fielding satirised the affectation and vanity of "women of quality" who, seeking glory and wealth, "spread their charms" in order to seduce Wild.<sup>72</sup> However, Fielding went beyond the level of mere generalization by taking his readers into the Snap household, where more direct evidence of feminine folly and vice is portrayed, particularly in the character of Lætitia Snap. Like Richardson, Fielding blamed the romances for the great degree of affectation and vanity among women, a point evidenced by the fact that the two daughters of Mr Snap are described as being "like damsels in romance".<sup>73</sup> In the character of Miss Lætitia Snap, Fielding presented all the vices about which he had warned his friend in the poem, "To a Friend on the Choice of a Wife". The narrator comments:

Miss Tishy Snap [was] a woman of great merit and of as great generosity; yet Mr. Wild found a present was ever most welcome to her, as being a token of respect in her lover. He therefore . . . purchased a genteel snuff-box, with which he waited upon the mistress, whom he found in the most beautiful undress. Her lovely hair hung wantonly over her forehead, being neither white with, nor yet free from, powder; . . . some remains of that art with which ladies improve nature shone on her cheeks; her body was loosely attired, without stays or jumps, so that her breasts had uncontrolled liberty to display their beauteous orbs, which they did as low as her girdle; a thin covering of a rumpled muslin handkerchief almost hid them from the eyes, save in a few parts, where a good-natured hole gave opportunity to the naked breast to appear.<sup>74</sup>

Far from being meritorious, "the woman of great merit" exhibits all the vices of which the male must be wary: she expects gifts to secure her attention and love; her demeanor is "wantonly"; her vanity necessitates her use of powder to improve her "nature"; she displays the "beauteous orbs" of her breasts to lure members of the opposite sex, even to

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., ll. 252-267, p. 50.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. VI, p. 57.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. IV, p. 49.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. IX, p. 63.

the point of showing off "the naked breast"; and, instead of ordinary cotton materials for under garments, she dresses in satin. Put simply, being past the years of youth, she seeks vainly to entice males to her by trying to affect beauty. The affectation of her external appearance matches that of her inner character. The narrator continues:

Such was the lovely creature whom Mr Wild attended. She received him at first with some of that coldness which women of strict virtue, by a commendable though sometimes painful restraint, enjoy themselves to their lovers. The snuff-box, being produced, was at first civilly, and indeed gently, refused; but on a second application accepted.<sup>75</sup>

By "proceeding to talk of her virtue", Miss Snap inflames Wild's desire. However, her pretended virtue is undermined by the author when she sets free Tom Smirk, "the greatest beau and the greatest favourite of the ladies at the end of the town where he lived", from her closet on Wild's departure. Like many affected woman within society, "the chaste Lætitia" is attracted to the affected and effeminate beau with his "breeches of red plush" and "waistcoat . . . richly embroidered with yellow silk".<sup>76</sup> In words which parody the virtues of the ideal wife, Lætitia promises Smirk care, companionship, love, and "constant friendship, prior to making him "as happy as Wild desired to be".<sup>77</sup>

It was Fielding's aim to educate readers about the way in which affected and hypocritical woman, like Lætitia Snap, preserved their false reputations, despite being more promiscuous than most other women. Ironically, being able to deceive others into accepting her "impregnable chastity",<sup>78</sup> she is able to form relationships not only with Wild and Smirk, but also with Bagshot and Fireblood. Fielding emphasised the hypocritical nature of such woman, when he had her sister, Theodosia, fall pregnant. The narrator comments, in almost hyperbolic terms, that:

At this time an accident happened, which, though it did not immediately affect our hero, we cannot avoid relating, as it occasioned great confusion in his family, as well as in the family of Snap. It is indeed a calamity highly to be lamented, when it stains untainted blood, and happens to an honourable house - an injury never to be repaired - a blot never to be wiped out - a sore never to be healed. To detain my reader no longer Miss Theodosia Snap

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. IX, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XI, p. 65.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XI, p. 66.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VII, p. 142.

was now safely delivered of a male infant, the product of an amour which that beautiful (O that I could say virtuous!) creature had with the count.<sup>79</sup>

Ironically, in terms of virtue, the male child is far less a blot upon the character of the family than any of the vicious traits harboured within the heart of the other daughter. Whereas Wild simply asks Theodosia about the identity of the father, "*the chaste*" Lætitia, roused to "fury", "reviles her sister in the bitterest terms", and laments over the dishonour done to both herself and her family. After rebuking her husband for the "light treatment which he gave this fatal incident", and adding that "he was unworthy of the honour he enjoyed of marrying into a chaste family", she continues:

That she looked on it as an affront to her virtue. That if he had married one of the naughty hussies of the town he could have behaved to her in no other manner. She concluded with desiring her father to make an example of the slut, and to turn her out of doors; for that she would not otherwise enter into his house, being resolved never to set her foot within the same threshold with the trollop, whom she detested so much more because . . . she was her own sister.

So violent, and indeed so outrageous, was this chaste lady's love of virtue, that she could not forgive a single slip (indeed the only one Theodosia had ever made) in her own sister, a sister who loved her, and to whom she owed a thousand obligations.<sup>80</sup>

In his use of irony, Fielding ridiculed the affected virtue of the sham chaste woman. Readers should feel sympathy for Theodosia, not because of her foolish association with the Count, but for the way in which she is reviled by a sister who hypocritically proclaims virtue yet who, in reality, is the real "slut" and "trollop". More importantly, Fielding stressed that such women, who affected "honour", were of an unforgiving nature. In the deceitful and hypocritical Snap family, there is no true honour; instead, there is only an affected honour, based upon an anti-benevolent disposition and aimed at maintaining reputation at all costs.

Fielding maintained his didactic aim by arguing, with Richardson, that those individuals who were "unnatural", in terms of benevolence and virtue, achieved no true happiness in their lives. In contrast to Lætitia, Miss Theodosia Snap, after having erred and been transported to America, is "pretty well married, reformed, and made a good

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., Book III, Ch. XIII, p. 158.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., Book III, Ch. XIII, p. 159.

wife".<sup>81</sup> Lætitia, conversely, marries Wild in a mockery of, and a satirical comment upon, the sacred institution of marriage. Prior to the marriage, Wild writes the following letter to Lætitia:

MOST DEIVINE and ADWHORABLE CRETURE, - I doubt not but those IIs, briter than the son, which have kindled such a flam in my hart, have likewise the faculty of seeing it. It would be the hiest preassumption to imagin you eggnorant of my loav. No, madam, I sollemly purtest that of all the butys in the unaversal glob, there is none kapable of hateracting my IIs like you. Corts and pallaces would be to me deserts without your kumpany, and with it a wilderness would have more charms than haven itself. For I hope you will believe me when I sware every place in the univarse is a haven with you. I am konvinced you must be sinsibel of my violent passion for you, or the son, to hid your buty's. I assure you I have not slept a wink since I had the hapness of seeing you last; therefore hop you will, out of Kumpassion, let me have the honour of seeing you this afternune; for I am, with greatest adwhoration,

Most deivine creature,  
Iour most peSSIONate amirer,  
Adwhorer, and slave,  
JOHANATAN WYLD.<sup>82</sup>

The letter parodies the form of letter that a man, prior to marriage, should write to his beloved. Ironically, however, Wild's letter, with its multitudinous errors in spelling, highlights the farcical nature of the relationship between the two characters. Indeed, the words, which confuse "adorer" with "adwhorer" and "heaven" with "haven", offer readers a far more truthful description of the characters than what they are meant to suggest in the context of the letter.

By having the narrator inform readers, following the pre-arranged marriage, that the couple quarrelled bitterly, Fielding warned readers of the consequences for individuals whose marriages were based on excessive passion. Despite accusations of the mischief and villainy of the other, educated readers should realise that both characters are compatible. The narrator recounts their conversation:

*Jonathan:* Why, then, since we are come to a right understanding, as we are to live together, suppose we agreed, instead of quarrelling and abusing, to be civil to each other.

*Lætitia:* With all my heart.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. XV, p. 218.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VI, p. 140.

*Lætitia*: Let us shake hands then, and henceforwards never live like man and wife; that is, never be loving nor ever quarrel.<sup>83</sup>

The conversation between the two characters, a result of a pre-arranged marriage to suit the social climbing of both families, satirises the whole concept of love, described by Forbes as "a Concurrence of Ardor, Respect, and Tenderness".<sup>84</sup> Forbes continued:

"Tis evident now, that wherever Love enters, the Delight is from the Object, not from the Self: the Person is delighted, or pleased, but the Pleasure is not from himself; since he receives it from somewhat else. If they say he still loves the Object from Self-Interest, or his Interest is the Cause of his Love, this is contrary to Nature." Cicero is . . . express and full upon it. He shews excellently, "That Love is the Principle and Motive which engages us in Friendship: that Interest or Profit may be made even by a Friendship which is but acted; but in true Friendship all is for the sake of the Friend, all is free, genuine, and real. Therefore (adds he) Love appears to be founded on Nature, and not on our Necessities and Occasions; on a certain Relish and Bent of the Soul (*applicazione Animi*) rather than any Thoughts of reaping Profit. . . . That, in short, as we love ourselves without a View to any Reward at our own hands, we ought to love our Friend after the same manner: for to love one is to cherish him for his own sake, without any Regard to our own Indigence or Interest."<sup>85</sup>

Like Forbes, Fielding had used Cicero as a source for his own philosophy, especially that concerning "good-nature" and love. Love in marriage had to be free from the negative self-interest described by La Rochefoucauld; it had to be based upon a benevolent disposition and virtue. Like Forbes, Fielding argued that love, based on care and respect for one's partner, had been too often neglected for a more corrupt concern for reputation and status. Consequently, Fielding shared Forbes' belief that "most People ch[ose] their Friends, as they [did] their Cattle, to make a Gain of them"; thus, they failed to love others on the basis of their worth.<sup>86</sup> It was against a "love" based upon selfishness, evidenced in the union of Miss Snap and Wild, that Fielding instructed his readers.

Despite Lætitia's outburst against her sister, it is Theodosia who ultimately gains happiness in her life. Fortunately for her, despite succumbing to folly, she has, in contrast to her sister, remained honest, a trait for which she is rewarded. She, along with

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VIII, p. 146.

<sup>84</sup> Forbes, "Essay on Self-Love", in *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects* (1734), Section vii, p. 269.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Section vii, pp. 270-271.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Section vii, p. 271.

the Heartfrees, embodies Pliny's maxim: "*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*",<sup>87</sup> a maxim that had considerable influence upon Fielding's thought in both *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. Furthermore, Fielding distinguished the affected love of the Wilds with the true love displayed by the Heartfrees, when he juxtaposed Mr. Heartfree's concern for the loss of his wife with that of Mrs. Wild. Heartfree comments:

'O Friendly! . . . it is my concern for that best of women, whom I hate myself for having ever censured in my opinion. O Friendly! thou didst know her goodness; yet, sure, her perfect character none but myself was ever acquainted with. She had every perfection, both of mind and body, which Heaven hath indulged to her whole sex, and possessed all in a higher excellence than nature ever indulged to another in any single virtue.'<sup>88</sup>

In contrast, when Lætitia attends Wild in his confinement, the tears that she sheds are not on account of her love for her husband, as Wild anticipates; rather, they are based entirely on her selfish realisation that, after Wild has been hanged, she will be "scandalized for [his] fault". The narrator relates the conversation between the two, prior to Lætitia's being caught in the arms of Fireblood:

'All the comfort I shall have when you are *nubbed* is, that I gave you good advice. If you had always gone out by yourself, as I would have had you, you might have robbed on to the end of the chapter; but you was wiser than all the world, or rather lazier, and see what your laziness has come to - to the *cheat*, for thither you will go now, that's infallible. And a just judgement on you for following your own headstrong will; I am the only person to be pitied; poor I, who shall be scandalized for your fault. *There goes she whose husband was hanged*: methinks I hear them crying so already.' At which words she burst into tears. He could not them forbear chiding her for this unnecessary concern on his account, and begged her not to trouble him any more. She answered with some spirit: 'On your account, and be d - d to you! No, if the old cull of a justice had not sent me hither, I believe it would have been long enough before I should have come hither to see after you; d - n me, I am committed for the *filing-lay*, man, and we shall both be *nubbed* together. I' faith, my dear, it almost makes me amends for being *nubbed* myself, to have the pleasure of seeing thee *nubbed* too.' 'Indeed, my dear,' answered Wild, 'it is what I have long wished for thee; but I do not desire to bear thee company, and I have still hopes to have the pleasure of seeing you go without me; at least I will have the pleasure to be rid of you now.' And so saying, he seized her by the waist, and with strong arm flung her out of the room; but not before she had with her nails left a bloody memorial on his cheek: and thus this fond couple parted.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*, Book III, Ch. XI, p. 155. Translation: "No mortal is wise all the time".

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. I, p. 166.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. II, pp. 170-171.

Ironically, Wild, believing her tears to be a sign of her concern and love for him, decides not to chide his wife for this sign of affection; however, in contrast, she chides him for the distress and suffering he has caused her. In a theme which paralleled the unhappiness that accompanied the "Great", Fielding, like Richardson, argued that marriages negotiated between families and based upon vicious motives only brought misery. This, along with the idea that true love brought its own reward even despite earthly affliction, provided readers with the didactic aim behind Fielding's inclusion of the Wild-Snap marriage. He hoped that readers, by rising above their own selfishness, would adopt the principles of "good-nature" in order to correct the follies of the day.

According to Fielding, there was far more to be lamented in the title of "Great", than in its opposite. Drawing upon the words of Matthew in the New Testament, the Ordinary warns Wild that "*Those who do evil shall go into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*". Hoping to procure Wild's repentance, he comments:

I do it in order to bring you to a true sense of your manifold sins, and, by that means, to induce you to repentance. Indeed, had I the eloquence of Cicero, or of Tully, it would not be sufficient to describe the pains of hell or the joys of heaven. The utmost that we are taught is, *that ear hath not heard, nor can heart conceive*. Who then would, for the pitiful consideration of the riches and pleasures of this world, forfeit such inestimable happiness! such joys! such pleasures! such delights? Or who would run the venture of such misery, which, but to think on, shocks the human understanding? Who, in his senses, then, would prefer the latter to the former?<sup>90</sup>

The words of the Ordinary form an integral part of Fielding's didactic purpose in *Jonathan Wild*. Described by Dr. Johnson as "an established judge of ecclesiastical causes",<sup>91</sup> the Ordinary represented Henry Fielding, performing for readers the role of social moralist, judge of moral causes and, more importantly, moral educator. The hint that this was the author himself instructing his readers is nowhere better expressed than in the Ordinary's wish that he had the eloquence of either a Cicero or Tully, a hope to which Fielding himself aspired. In addition, the legal concept of the Ordinary as "judge" can be readily applied to the position that the author was himself to hold. Readers, the author

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. XII, p. 206.

<sup>91</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Johnson's Dictionary*, ed. E. L. McAdam and George Milne (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 274.



believed, had to be educated in the pursuit of virtue if they were to avoid vice and eternal damnation. For Wild, it is too late for change, for his misery is assured; with his judgement having been delivered, all that can be hoped for is that he repents of his evil ways. However, readers, less vicious Wilds themselves, still had the opportunity of avoiding vice, and pursuing virtue in order to attain the happiness and associated joys of everlasting life. This was the didactic instruction in a work, which satirised all notions of "greatness". Appropriately, Fielding concluded with the rhetorical question, "Who, [after reading the text] in his senses, would prefer the latter to the former?"

The final chapter of *Jonathan Wild* completed Fielding's didactic aim. Wild is dead, after one "hearty curse", and after having achieved no happiness in this world and no prospect of any future reward. All his vices, and also those of his vicious associates, bring only misery and death. Ironically, the narrator observes, prior to outlining the maxims necessary in attaining greatness, that:

He was entirely free from those low vices of modesty and good-nature, which, as he said, implied a total negation of human greatness, and were the only qualities which absolutely rendered a man incapable of making a considerable figure in the world.<sup>92</sup>

The comment is ironical, for in Fielding's work, virtue has been rewarded, not in the material sense of Richardson's *Pamela*, but in a higher, more moral sense - that virtue brings with it its own internal reward. In his work, Fielding propounded the doctrine of virtue emphasised by Shaftesbury who, in *The Moralists*, commented that:

. . . we ought all of us to aspire, so as to endeavour "that the excellence of the object, not the reward or punishment, should be our motive; . . . For if virtue be to itself no small reward, and vice in a great measure its own punishment, we have a solid ground to go upon . . . But as many as are the difficulties which Virtue has to encounter in this world, her force is yet superior. Exposed as she is here, she is not however abandoned or left miserable. She has enough to raise her above pity, though not above our wishes, and as happy as we see her here, we have room for further hopes in her behalf. Her present portion is sufficient to show Providence already engaged on her side."<sup>93</sup>

Like Shaftesbury, Fielding, after exposing virtue to the test of ridicule, also argued that true virtue could never be made to appear ridiculous. For this reason, as Wild goes to his

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. XV, p. 215.

<sup>93</sup> Shaftesbury, *The Moralists*, Part II, Section iii, pp. 56-58.

death, Heartfree is restored, through the agency of a "good magistrate", to his former position. Far from being objects of "mirth and derision",<sup>94</sup> virtue and good nature are the qualities that all readers should emulate. Although Fielding often criticised excessively "good-natured" characters, such as the Heartfrees, for their lack of prudence, a warning that he directed to all readers, the author still advocated "THAT PROVIDENCE [WOULD] SOONER OR LATER PROCURE THE FELICITY OF THE VIRTUOUS AND INNOCENT".<sup>95</sup> Far from being a negative portrayal of evil, as some critics have labelled the work, Fielding's didactic instruction was, indeed, an optimistic one.

Although a good deal of Fielding's early writing took the form of direct moral instruction, he, like Richardson, realised the important part that the novel could play in educating readers to pursue virtue. It was in response to the need of procuring an adequate weapon against vice that Fielding, following Shaftesbury's idea, developed ridicule as a means of laughing individuals out of their foibles and follies. He stated his didactic aim, in his *Essay on Conversation*, as being "to ridicule out of Society, one of the most pernicious Evils which attends it, viz. pampering the gross Appetites of Selfishness and Ill-nature".<sup>96</sup> Unlike Locke, who stressed that individuals were best educated by being shamed out of their vices, Fielding claimed that, through the use of humorous raillery, writers could educate their readers to abandon folly. Like Hutcheson, he was well aware that individuals who failed to restrain their passions became figures of ridicule. Hutcheson commented :

Again, the more violent passions, as fear, anger, sorrow, compassion, are generally looked upon as something great and solemn; the beholding of these passions are artfully or accidentally raised upon a small or a fictitious occasion, they move the laughter of those who imagine the occasions to be small and contemptible or who are conscious of the fraud. . . . A truly wise man, who places the dignity of human nature in good affections and suitable actions, may be apt to laugh at those who employ

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<sup>94</sup> Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*, Book IV, Ch. XII, p. 203.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. XI, p. 203.

<sup>96</sup> Fielding, Preface to the *Miscellanies*, p. 3.

their most solemn and strong affections about what to the wise man appears perhaps very useless or mean.<sup>97</sup>

Accepting Hutcheson's comments, Fielding, like Shaftesbury, used ridicule to counter enthusiasm, and to highlight the incongruities in the behaviour and manners of individuals. He commented:

The End of Conversation being the Happiness of Mankind, and the chief Means to procure their Delight and Pleasure; it follows, I think, that nothing can conduce to this End, which tends to make a Man uneasy and dissatisfied with himself, or which exposes him to the Scorn and Contempt of others. . . . The Raillery which is consistent with Good-Breeding, is a gentle Animadversion on some Foible; which while it raises a Laugh in the rest of the Company, does not put the Person rallied out of Countenance, or expose him to Shame and Contempt. On the contrary, the Jest should be so delicate, that the Object of it should be capable of joining in the Mirth it occasions.

All great Vices therefore, Misfortunes, and notorious Blemishes of Mind or Body, are improper Subjects of Raillery.<sup>98</sup>

In his *Essay on Conversation*, Fielding dissociated his raillery from those improper subjects of raillery. He based his didactic method upon a form of raillery which attacked everyday affectation and hypocrisy. By exposing these to contempt and scorn, he believed that he could educate readers to abandon vice and pursue virtue. In this, he supported the argument of James Arbuckle who claimed, in his *Collection of Letters and Essays on several subjects*, that "Men have been laughed out of Faults which a Sermon could not reform".<sup>99</sup> It was this aim which allowed him to conclude his *Essay on Conversation* with the claim that raillery, other than being an instructional tool, "afford[ed] a very diverting, as well as inoffensive Entertainment".<sup>100</sup> Fielding's use of ridicule and satire always promoted good sense and virtue among his readers. It was, indeed, a "New Species of Writing", one aimed specifically at educating readers in issues of morality.

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<sup>97</sup> Francis Hutcheson, "Reflections Upon Laughter", in *The Dublin Journal*, No. 11 (June 12, 1725). Reprinted in *Eighteenth Century Critical Essays*, Volume I, ed. Scott Elledge (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 385.

<sup>98</sup> Fielding, *Essay on Conversation*, in *Miscellanies*, Volume I, pp. 149-150.

<sup>99</sup> Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays on several subjects, lately published in the Dublin Journal in Two Volumes*, No. 12 (June 19, 1725), Volume I, p. 105.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

**Chapter IX     Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: The Exposure of Affectation  
and the Inculcation of Good Nature**

In *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, And of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, Fielding deviated dramatically from the more indoctrinating method of Richardson's novel of instruction, in which entertainment and the use of exemplary characters played a significant part, to a "New Species of Writing" which emphasised the part that humour could play in correcting the foibles and follies of society. Despite the comments of those critics who erroneously underrated the moral seriousness of his work, Fielding was a didactic writer. He wrote, in *The Covent-Garden Journal*, that:

when no Moral, no Lesson, no Instruction, is conveyed to the Reader, where the whole Design of the Composition is not more than to make us laugh, the Writer comes very near to the Character of a Buffoon.<sup>1</sup>

The most significant factor about Fielding's moral instruction, which made it conform to the requirements of the traditional approach to moral education, was the way in which he preserved the autonomy of his readers in decoding the moral instruction inherent in the text. Consequently, readers, accompanied by the author as moral guide, had to apply their cognitive skills, in an active manner, in order to decode the meaning of the text. Following Richardson, Fielding, anticipating the words of Samuel Johnson, argued that all writers of "works of fiction" had a moral duty, not only to "exhibit life in its true state", but to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. Johnson wrote:

The task of our present writers is very different; it requires, together with that learning which is to be gained from books, that experience which

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<sup>1</sup> Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, No. 10 (February 4, 1752), p. 73.

can never be attained by solitary diligence but must arise from general converse and accurate observation of the living . . . These books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct and introductions into life. They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas and therefore easily susceptible of impressions, not fixed by principles and therefore easily following the current of fancy, not informed by experience and . . . open to every false suggestion and partial account.

In the romances formerly written, every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men that the reader was in very little danger of making any applications to himself. . . . The purpose of these writings is surely not only to show mankind, but . . . to teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence . . . to give the power of counteracting fraud, without the temptation to practice it; to initiate youth by mock encounters in the art of necessary defense; and to increase prudence without impairing virtue.<sup>2</sup>

Fielding stressed that, while obscuring the identity of particular individuals, "every thing [was] copied from the Book of Nature, and scarce a Character or Action produced which [he had] not taken from [his] own Observations and Experience".<sup>3</sup> By providing readers with accurate observations on the world, Fielding was convinced that novels could instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue, by supplying them with the "Glass" by which they could examine their own lives.

Like Richardson, Fielding also attacked the way in which romances had presented readers with a corrupt standard of morality. Such works persuaded individuals into accepting affectation and vanity as natural, rather than seeing them as "the true Source[s] of Ridicule".<sup>4</sup> In his Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding noted that :

The only Source of the true Ridiculous . . . is Affectation . . . [which] proceeds from one of these two Causes, Vanity, or Hypocrisy: for as vanity puts us on affecting false Characters, in order to purchase Applause; so Hypocrisy sets us on an Endeavour to avoid Censure by concealing our Vices under an Appearance of their opposite Virtues.<sup>5</sup>

By assimilating readers into the text, Fielding confronted them with the truth about the ridiculous nature of the hypocrisy and vanity. Raymond Stephanson summarises correctly the didactic purpose of *Joseph Andrews*, when he comments that:

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, No. 4 (March 31, 1750), pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), Preface, p. 10. Further references will be from this edition.

<sup>4</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (15 April, 1740), Volume II, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Fielding, op. cit., Preface, pp. 7-8.

Fielding's satire . . . is in one important respect directed at the reader in an effort to educate him. By pointing out the reader's shortcomings *as reader*, Fielding gives us the opportunity to contemplate our own deformities and by suffering private mortification perhaps avoid public shame.<sup>6</sup>

Although he compared his method of correction to that of Shaftesbury and Hogarth, there is considerable evidence that Fielding adopted La Bruyère's method of exposing affectation, artifice and vanity, through a study of manners. In this way, he hoped to instruct his readers, by admonishing individuals as a whole rather than on a personal basis, to abandon corrupt manners and pursue virtue. Despite limiting the majority of his discussion to a criticism of affectation in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding argued, in his "Epistle to Mrs Clive", that "vice [could] never be too great to be lashed, nor virtue too obscure to be commended". Like Hogarth, Fielding believed that the "subjects of most consequence [were] those that most entertain[ed] and improve[d] the mind and [were] of public utility".<sup>7</sup> Complimenting "the ingenious Mr. *Hogarth*", Fielding compared his role as writer to the task of the "Painter", in the following way:

In his [Hogarth's] excellent Works you see the delusive Scene exposed with all the Force of Humour, and, on casting your Eyes on another Picture, you behold the dreadful and fatal Consequence. I almost dare affirm that those two Works of his, which he calls the *Rake's* and the *Harlot's Progress*, are calculated more to serve the Cause of Virtue, and for the Preservation of Mankind, than all the *Folio's* of Morality which have ever been written; and a sober Family should no more be without them, than without *The Whole Duty of Man* in their House.<sup>8</sup>

Fielding imitated Hogarth's method of presenting Nature in its fullest display, painting each of his characters with all their affectations, so that they could be judged by his readers. William Hazlitt praised Fielding for this, when he commented that:

As a painter of real life, he was equal to Hogarth; as a mere observer of human nature, he was little inferior to Shakespeare . . . he has brought together a greater variety of characters in common life, marked with more distinct particularities, and without an atom of caricature, than any other novel writers whatever.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Raymond Stephanson, "The Education of the Reader in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*", in *Philological Quarterly* (University of Iowa: Summer 1982), Volume 61, No. 3, p. 244.

<sup>7</sup> William Hogarth, *Autobiographical Notes*, in Burke, *The Analysis of Beauty*, p. 215.

<sup>8</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (10 June, 1740), Volume II, pp. 317-318.

<sup>9</sup> William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (London: J. M. Dent, 1963), p. 113.

Fielding believed that, in educating readers, writers had to take examples of affectation and hypocrisy from real life and expose them before the eyes of his readers. After seeing how ridiculous these vices were, he assumed that readers could be encouraged to pursue virtue.

In the year prior to writing *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding was attributed with writing a parody of Richardson's novel, *Pamela*, titled *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*.<sup>10</sup> Commenting upon the aim of this work, Dyson notes that it made "two main ironic points: firstly, that servant girls may not always be as pure as middle-class moralists like to think; and secondly, that Richardson's book offers a larger measure of vicarious sexuality than its author could possibly have known".<sup>11</sup> However, in terms of the moral education of readers, Fielding's criticism of *Pamela* went beyond Dyson's statement, for he condemned Richardson's presentation of exemplary characters. In *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, for example, Fielding, while not "attempting to declaim against Sanctity of Morals", cautioned his "open-hearted Reader" against the "Saint [whose] Sanctity . . . flows from the Lips, and shines in the Countenance".<sup>12</sup> Believing Pamela's virtue to be affected, Fielding warned readers to "Beware of all Ostentation of Virtue, Goodness, [and] Piety",<sup>13</sup> which, like "Bombast Greatness[,] . . . prevail[ed] in and deceive[d] the World".<sup>14</sup> Censuring *Pamela* for its incompatibility with genuine virtue, he stated the purpose of *Shamela* on the title page:

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<sup>10</sup> Several references, other than secondary source material, nominate Fielding as the author, in spite of his never having claimed the work as his own. Mrs. Barbauld offered the most direct comment when she noted that Samuel Richardson, in a letter to Mrs. Belfour in 1749, suggested that Fielding had "abused" *Pamela* in his *Shamela Andrews*: "The *Pamela*, which he abused in his *Shamela*, taught him how to write to please, tho' his manners are so different". Laetitia Barbauld, *The Correspondences of Samuel Richardson*, IV, p. 286. The same point is also noted by F. Homes Dudden, in *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times*, (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966), Volume I, p. 319.

<sup>11</sup> A. E. Dyson, *The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1965), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, in *Miscellanies*, Volume I, p. 167.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>14</sup> Fielding, *Miscellanies*, Preface, p. 13.

*In which the many notorious Falsehoods and Misinterpretations of a Book called Pamela are exposed and refuted; and all the matchless Arts of that young Politician set in a true and just Light. Together with a full Account of all that passed between her and Parson Arthur Williams; whose Character is represented in a manner something different from what he bears in Pamela. The whole being exact Copies of authentic Papers delivered to the Editor. Necessary to be had in all Families.*<sup>15</sup>

The parody, which begins with the Londoner, Parson Tickletext, sending a copy of the novel to Parson Oliver in the country, attacks the resounding praise that *Pamela* has achieved throughout London. Ironically, Tickletext, who describes the work as "the soul of religion, good breeding, discretion, good nature, wit, fancy, fine thought, and morality", recommends that the country parson, after reading it "five or six times", pass it on to his daughter and female servants, as "being the only education [they] intend henceforth to give [their] daughters".<sup>16</sup> In a statement indicative of the response of Fielding, Parson Oliver declares that the work is "a perversion of truth", immodest and "improper" as a means of educating youth. He continues by acquainting his London colleague with the true story of Pamela, whose real name is Shamela.

Fielding's instruction in *Shamela* was based upon the doctrine of Parson Williams, who commented that "those People who talk of Vartue and Morality, are the wickedest of all Persons". Offering an account of Shamela's inner nature, which contrasts directly with that of Richardson's protagonist, Parson Oliver informs readers that the girl's prayers, "psalms and other good things" are learned by rote, and have little effect upon her character. In addition, Fielding also criticised Richardson for indoctrinating his readers. By providing them with all the answers, Fielding argued that readers, like Shamela, could "affect" virtuous dispositions in order to hide their true natures. In contrast, Fielding forced his readers to engage their own sagacity so as to appreciate fully the principles of good nature and virtue.

Parson Oliver admits that in her affair with Parson Williams, a man versed in the hypocritical teachings of Whitefield, Shamela became proficient at enflaming and exciting the passions of men. Aiming at controlling her relationship with her master, Shamela, on

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<sup>15</sup>Fielding, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (Lawrence: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1926), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.



realising his infatuation, abandons her initial decision to offer herself for "a settled settlement",<sup>17</sup> in favour of promoting her ambition. Deceitfully commenting that she "would not be mistress to the greatest king . . . nor lord in the universe" and that she values her "virtue" far more than anything her master can offer her,<sup>18</sup> Shamela advises her mother that she intends using her "virtue" to make a great fortune.<sup>19</sup> Following the moral theories of both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Shamela, by affecting "virtue" in order to climb the social ladder, personifies the corrupt designs of vicious individuals, who go to any lengths to fulfil their ambitions. Fielding, for example, used the following scene to censure and parody *Pamela*:

As soon as I had breakfasted, a coach and six came to the door, and who should be in it but my master. I immediately run up to my room, and stripped, and washed, and dressed myself as well as I could, and put on my prettiest round-eared caps and pulled down my stays to show as much as I could of my bosom (for Parson Williams says, that is the most beautiful part of a woman), and then I practised over all my airs before the glass, and then I sat down and read a chapter in the *Whole Duty of Man*. Then Mrs. Jewkes came to me and told me, my master wanted me below, and says she, "Don't behave like a fool." No, think I to myself, I believe I shall find wit enough for my master and you too.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Pamela, who became distraught by her master's attending her in her room and his threats to undress her, Shamela is eager to show off as much of her "bosom" as she can in order to entice him to view more. At the same time, she affects good manners by reading the correct books, just as she affects Christianity by reciting prayers. Despite the immoral conclusion which has Shamela caught in bed with Parson Williams, she is still rewarded with marriage; however, she is rewarded for her continuous hypocrisy rather than for her maintenance of virtue. Thus, Shamela is portrayed as a cunning, conniving and vicious young woman. According to Fielding, any education, based upon the principles of affectation, deceit and hypocrisy, which he believed were the basis of Richardson's *Pamela*, would corrupt the manners of young readers.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding combined his attack on affectation and hypocrisy with his aim to educate readers in "Good-nature". The didactic aim of the work was best expressed in the words that begin *A Journey from this World to the Next*. He wrote:

The greatest and truest happiness which this world affords, is to be found only in the possession of goodness and virtue; a doctrine which, as it is undoubtedly true, so hath it so noble and practical a tendency, that it can never be too often or too strongly inculcated on the minds of men.<sup>21</sup>

Emphasising that virtue brought with it its own internal rewards and happiness, a point exemplified in the characters of Adams, Joseph and Fanny, Fielding believed that writers of fiction should always aim at inculcating, in the minds of readers, goodness and virtue. Rather than intrude into the text in order to indoctrinate readers, Fielding's intrusions were aimed at alerting readers to the need of reading with great sagacity. On one occasion, for example, the narrator claims that:

. . . however swift his [the reader's] Capacity may be, I would not advise him to travel through these Pages too fast: for if he doth, he may probably miss the seeing some curious Productions of Nature which will be observed by the slower and more accurate Reader.<sup>22</sup>

It was Fielding's intention that readers should use their cognitive skills in decoding the real meaning of the text. Only then could they apply the moral instruction to their own lives. He stated that it was his aim:

To hold the Glass to thousands in their Closets, that they may contemplate their Deformity, and endeavour to reduce it, and thus by suffering private Mortification may avoid public Shame.<sup>23</sup>

Ideally, the reading experience should expose the affectations of readers to ridicule, so that they could be corrected by the conclusion of the novel.

Fielding began *Joseph Andrews* with a description of his method which, he claimed, was based upon true observations from life. Although he aimed at providing some examples upon which readers could model their own behaviour, Fielding avoided the use of such "saint-like" characters as Pamela. He commented that:

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<sup>21</sup> Henry Fielding, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, ed. C. Rawson (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1973), p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book II, Ch. I, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Book III, Ch. I, p. 189.

It is a trite but true Observation, that Examples work more forcibly on the Mind than Precepts: And if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praise-worthy. Here Emulation most effectually operates upon us, and inspires our Imitation in an irresistible manner. A good Man therefore is a standing Lesson to all his Acquaintance, and of far greater use in that narrow Circle than a good Book.

But as it often happens that the best Men are but little known, and consequently cannot extend the Usefulness of their Examples in a great way; the Writer may be called in aid to spread their History farther, and to present the amiable Pictures to those who have not the Happiness of knowing the Originals; and so, by communicating such valuable Patterns to the World, he may perhaps do a more extensive Service to Mankind than the Person whose Life originally afforded the Pattern.<sup>24</sup>

Fielding presented readers with this picture of the good man in the characters of Joseph Andrews and Parson Adams, both of whom still required some further education in the ways of the world. For example, Fielding described the latter in the following way:

MR. *Abraham Adams* was an excellent Scholar. . . a perfect Master of the *Greek* and *Latin* Languages . . . [he had a] Knowledge in the Oriental Tongues, and could read and translate *French*, *Italian* and *Spanish*. He had applied many Years to the most severe Study, and had treasured up a Fund of Learning rarely to be met with in a University. He was besides a Man of good Sense, good Parts, and good Nature; but was . . . entirely ignorant of the Ways of this World, as an Infant just entered into it could possibly be. As he had never any Intention to deceive, so he never suspected such a Design in others. He was generous, friendly and brave to an Excess; but Simplicity was his Characteristic: he did...[not] apprehend any such Passions as Malice and Envy to exist in Mankind. . . .

His Virtue and his other Qualifications . . . made him an agreeable and valuable Companion, and had so much endeared and well recommended him to a Bishop, that at the Age of Fifty, he was provided with a handsome Income of twenty-three Pounds a Year; which however, he could not make any great Figure with: because he lived in a dear Country, and was a little incumbered with a Wife and six Children.<sup>25</sup>

Adams personifies Shaftesbury's notion of the good man; however, although he is to be admired for his benevolent disposition, he should be censured for his inability to apply, what Butler described as, either prudence or moderation to his good nature. As a result, he often becomes a foolish figure in the eyes of a corrupt world, a point implied by Adams' belief that books can supply answers to all situations in life.

Fielding began the novel by exposing the nature of vicious passions, and offering some commentary upon the inability of innocence to deal with them. Lady Booby, in her quest to seduce the innocent Joseph, is so overcome by excessive lust that she

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch I, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. III, pp. 22-23.

misinterprets all his responses to her questions about love. The narrator records the conversation between the two characters in the following passage:

'As young as you are,' reply'd the Lady, 'I am convinced you are no Stranger to that Passion; Come *Joey*, . . . tell me truly, who is the happy Girl whose Eyes have made a Conquest of you?' *Joseph* returned, 'that all Women he had ever seen were equally indifferent to him.' 'O then,' said the Lady, 'you are a general Lover. Indeed you handsome Fellows, like handsome Women, are very long and difficult in fixing: but you shall never persuade me that your Heart is so insusceptible of Affection; I rather impute what you say to your Secrecy . . . . Nothing can be more unworthy in a young Man than to betray any Intimacies with the Ladies.' *Ladies! Madam*, said *Joseph*, *I am sure I never had the Impudence to think of any that deserve that Name*. 'Don't pretend to too much Modesty,' said she, 'for that sometimes may be impertinent: but pray, answer me this Question, Suppose a Lady should happen to like you, suppose she should prefer you to all your Sex, and admit you to the same Familiarities as you might have hoped for, if you had been born her equal, are you certain that no Vanity could tempt you to discover her? Answer me honestly, *Joseph*, Have you so much more Sense and so much more Virtue than you handsome young Fellows generally have, who make no scruple of sacrificing our dear Reputation to your Pride, without considering the great Obligation that we lay on you, by our Condescension and Confidence? Can you keep a Secret, my *Joey*?' 'Madam,' says he, 'I hope your Ladyship can't tax me with ever betraying the Secrets of the Family, and I hope, if you was to turn me away, I might have that Character of you.' 'I don't intend to turn you away, *Joey*,' said she, and sighed, 'I am afraid it is not in my power.' She then raised herself a little in her Bed, and discovered one of the whitest Necks that ever was seen; at which *Joseph* blushed. 'La!' says she, in an affected Surprise, 'what am I doing? I have trusted myself with a Man alone, naked in Bed; suppose you should have any wicked Intentions upon my Honour, how should I defend myself?' *Joseph* protested that he never had the least evil Design against her. 'No,' says she, 'perhaps you may not call your Designs wicked, and perhaps they are not so.' - he swore they were not. 'You misunderstand me,' says she, 'I mean if they were against my Honour, they may not be wicked, but the World calls them so. But then, say you, the World will never know any thing of the Matter. . . Must not my Reputation be then in your power? Would you not then be my Master?' *Joseph* begged her Ladyship to be comforted, for that he would never imagine the least wicked thing against her, and that he had rather die a thousand Deaths than give her any Reason to suspect him.<sup>26</sup>

In an exchange in which the excessive lust of Lady Booby is ridiculed, Fielding parodied the work of Richardson by placing a young man in a situation normally occupied by a woman. Underlying her questions, Lady Booby assumes that, like herself, Joseph, being a man, is overcome by excessive passion. Misinterpreting his reply that he is "equally indifferent" to women, she assumes that he sees a number of women regularly, yet refuses to "betray any Intimacies with the Ladies". As well as parodying *Pamela*,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. V, pp. 29-30.

Joseph's reply censures all women, who succumbing to the foibles and follies the day, fail to exercise control over their passions. Such women, he believes, do not deserve the title, "*Ladies*".

In having Joseph accused of affecting "Modesty", Fielding turned to a discussion centred on the issue of moral affectation, an issue which had stemmed from his criticism of *Pamela*. With her attempted seduction of the young man's virtue and her emphasis upon the expected behaviour of men in such situations, Lady Booby, in addition to presenting herself as a figure of ridicule, is living testimony to the truth of La Rochefoucauld's belief that:

Quelque soin que l'on prenne do couvrir ses passions par des apparences de piété et d'honneur, elles paraissent toujours au travers de ces voiles.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, Joseph's innocence and his admission that he would rather die than be suspected of any indecencies towards the woman heighten the level of ridicule inherent in the scene. However, what is important about Fielding's didactic method was that, in presenting the situation, he preserved the autonomy of readers, leaving them to make their own judgements about the motives of the characters from the evidence provided. In this way, readers were instructed not only to be wary of the dangers of excessively passionate individuals, but to scrutinise the verbal responses of all individuals, especially those who maintained "saintlike" dispositions. Spurned by the young man, readers should not be surprised to find that Lady Booby, with her affected virtue and modesty, accuses Joseph of "pretended Innocence".<sup>28</sup>

Ironically, after writing to his sister, Joseph encounters the same degree of passionate lust from Mrs Slipslop, a character who is described by Fielding in almost Hogarthian detail. The scene, which provides a lower class re-enactment of that with Lady Booby, supports La Rochefoucauld's maxim that "la passion . . . rend souvent les

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<sup>27</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Les Maximes*, Maxim 12, p. 6. Translation: "No matter how hard one tries to cover one's passions by appearances of piety and honour, they can always be seen through these disguises".

<sup>28</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. V, p. 30.

[individuals] plus sots habiles".<sup>29</sup> Unlike younger women who fear their indiscretions will be exposed by becoming pregnant, Mrs Slipslop believes that her age allows her the freedom to "indulge in any Liberties with a Man". Readers are told that:

In a word, she resolved to give loose to her amorous Inclinations, and pay off the Debt of Pleasure which she found she owed herself, as fast as possible.<sup>30</sup>

Being unable either to choose the correct words in which to convey her thoughts or to pronounce words correctly, Mrs. Slipslop becomes a figure of the ridicule. One such example occurs after Joseph comically associates her with the figure of his mother. Overcome by passion, she rails upon the "Barbarous Monster", commenting:

'Your own Mother! Do you *assinuate* that I am old enough to be your Mother. I don't know what a Stripling may think: but I believe a Man would *refer* me to any Green-Sickness silly Girl *whatsomdever*: but I ought to despise you rather than be angry with you, for *referring* the Conversation of Girls to that of a Woman of Sense . . . I am *convicted* you must see the Value I have for you. Yes, *Joseph*, my Eyes whether I would or no, must have declared a Passion I cannot conquer. - Oh! *Joseph!* -<sup>31</sup>

Fielding included the incident in order to warn readers about the effects that excessive passion, especially lust, had upon individuals who subordinated reason to its control. In order to guide the reaction of readers to the intensity of the woman's excessive passion, Fielding had the narrator continue:

As when a hungry Tygress, who long had traversed the Woods in fruitless search, sees within the Reach of her Claws a Lamb, she prepares to leap on her Prey; or as a voracious Pike, of immense Size, surveys through the liquid Element a Roach or Gudgeon which cannot escape her Jaws, opens them wide to swallow the little Fish: so did Mrs *Slipslop* prepare to lay her violent amorous Hands on the poor *Joseph*, when luckily her Mistress's Bell rung, and delivered the intended Martyr from her clutches.<sup>32</sup>

By comparing Mrs. Slipslop's vicious advances to those of a tigress, Fielding not only satirised the behaviour of the woman, but also alerted readers to the relationship that often existed between virtue and vice. He argued that where virtue was not accompanied by prudence, then virtuous individuals could suffer the same fate as "the little Fish".

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<sup>29</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Les Maximes*, Maxim 6, p. 4. Translation: "Passion often makes [individuals] appear most ridiculous".

<sup>30</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. VI, p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. VI, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. VI, pp. 33-34.

With their love rebuked and their passion intensified, both Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop, in order to sustain their hypocritical honour and vanity, plot Joseph's demise, accusing him of being "wild . . . and wicked ", a "Rascal", a "Slut", and a person who [not only] "games, drinks, swears and fights eternally . . . [but who is] horribly *indicted* to Wenching".<sup>33</sup> Ironically, Fielding, echoing La Rochefoucauld's claims<sup>34</sup> and following his own argument in *Jonathan Wild*, admitted that, often, it was virtue which brought upon individuals the scourge of persecution. With Lady Booby's ironical comment that true love, rather than lust, is responsible for deceiving women, Fielding stressed that all individuals should examine the values upon which their own natures were based. In order to test the sagacity of readers, the narrator intervenes, commenting:

But as it becomes us to preserve the Character of this Lady, who is the Heroine of our Tale; and as we have naturally a wonderful Tenderness for that beautiful Part of the human Species, called the Fair Sex; before we discover too much of her Frailty to our Reader, it will be proper to give him a lively Idea of that vast Temptation, which overcame all the Efforts of a modest and virtuous Mind; and then we humbly hope his Good-nature will rather pity than condemn the Imperfection of human Virtue.

Nay, the Ladies themselves will, we hope, be induced, by considering the uncommon Variety of Charms, which united in this young Man's Person, to bridle their rampant Passion for Chastity, and be at least, as mild as their violent Modesty and Virtue will permit them, in censuring the Conduct of a Woman, who, perhaps, was in her own Disposition as chaste as those pure and sanctified Virgins, who, after a Life innocently spent in the Gaieties of the Town, begin about Fifty to attend twice *per diem*, at the polite Churches and Chapels, to return Thanks for the Grace which preserved them formerly amongst Beaus from Temptations, perhaps less powerful than what now attacked the Lady *Booby*.<sup>35</sup>

The narrator's ironical request that readers exercise good-nature and pity towards Lady Booby, whom he proposes is "as chaste as those pure and sanctified Virgins", guides the reaction of readers to the author's didactic instruction. Fielding stressed that all individuals, who allowed the passions to usurp control over reason, became figures of ridicule. Thus, by undermining the narrator's plea for pity, Fielding carefully guided the moral education of his readers.

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<sup>33</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. VII, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *op. cit.*, Maxim 29, p. 12. La Rochefoucauld noted that "Le mal que nous faisons ne nous attire pas tant de persécution et de haine que nos bonnes qualités". Translated, this means: "The evil that we do brings does not bring upon us so much persecution and hate as our good qualities".

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. VIII, p. 38.

Despite the narrator's ironic observation that "Passions operate differently on the human Mind", educated readers should be aware that, for Lady Booby with her "gentle and cultivated Mind" and Mrs. Slipslop with her "less polished and coarser Disposition",<sup>36</sup> excessive passions have a similar effect on all minds, irrespective of class. Pretending to "have a Compassion for [Joseph's] Youth, Lady Booby replies, to Joseph's claims of innocence at never having "offered more than Kissing", with the words:

'Kissing! . . . Kissing, *Joseph*, is as a Prologue to a Play. Can I believe that a young Fellow of your Age and Complexion will be content with Kissing? No, *Joseph*, there is no Woman who grants that but will grant more, and I am deceived greatly in you, if you would not put her closely to it. What would you think, *Joseph*, if I permitted you to kiss me?'<sup>37</sup>

In satirising Lady Booby, Fielding satirised all individuals who subordinated virtue to base designs or the passions. Her lust forces her to "prostitute" herself verbally to the young man, such as when she states that any woman who allows a young man to kiss her will also "grant more". Her excessive lust is emphasised further by her comparing the first "Kiss" a woman allows a man to the prologue of a play, which introduces what is to follow. The situation, which ironically concludes with Joseph's reply that "he would sooner die than have any such Thought", forces female readers to scrutinise their own values; for, if they censure Lady Booby, then they must not be found guilty of the same. Alternatively, if they accept her behaviour, they too may require moral correction. The test of "Good-nature", for Fielding, was to judge all individuals in a like manner. Thus, in judging Lady Booby, readers are forced to judge themselves.

In addition to parodying Richardson's *Pamela*, Fielding also presented Joseph, in contrast to the vicious characters of both women, as a model of apparent good-nature and virtue. His hope, that he should maintain virtue in the midst of vice, provides a clear indication of Fielding's didactic instruction. Joseph replies to Lady Booby that:

'I can't see why her having no Virtue should be Reason against my having any. Or why, because I am a Man, or because I am poor, my Virtue must be subservient to her Pleasures.'<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. VII, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. VIII, pp. 39-40.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. VIII, p. 41.



Although the reply parodies *Pamela*, there is an underlying suggestion that virtue, irrespective of class or status within society, should not be abandoned. Although Joseph suffers the inconvenience of expulsion, his mistress suffers a twofold punishment: firstly, "her dear Reputation was in the power of her Servants, who are aware of her advances and lust; and secondly, there is the mental torment associated with her dismissing Joseph, prior to conquering her passion. The narrator continues:

But what hurt her most was, that in reality she had not so entirely conquered her Passion; the little God lay lurking in her Heart, tho' Anger and Disdain so hoodwinked her, that she could not see him. She was a thousand times on the very Brink of revoking the Sentence she had passed against the poor Youth. Love became his Advocate, and whispered many things in his favour. Honour likewise endeavoured to vindicate his Crime, and Pity to mitigate his Punishment; on the other side, Pride and Revenge spoke as loudly against him: and thus the poor Lady was tortured with Perplexity; opposite Passions distracting and tearing her Mind in different ways.<sup>39</sup>

Rather than endure the neglect of Joseph or the ruin of her reputation, Lady Booby dismisses him, an act which reinforces the beliefs of both La Rochefoucauld and Fielding that selfishness played a large part in love.<sup>40</sup>

Fielding presented readers with further examples of affectation and hypocrisy, after Joseph sets out to see "his beloved Fanny". In the events that follow, Fielding tested the sagacity of his readers by requiring them to distinguish "Good-nature" from selfishness. When Joseph is attacked by two "ruffians", who demand both his clothes and money, virtue and vice directly confront each other. After Joseph asks if the robbers would be so generous as to leave him "a few Shillings, to defray his Charges on his way home", the narrator continues:

One of the Ruffians answered with an Oath, *Yes, we'll give you something presently: but first strip and be d - n'd to you. - Strip, cry'd the other, or I'll blow your Brains to the Devil. Joseph, remembering that he had borrowed his Coat and Breeches of a Friend; and that he should be ashamed of making any Excuse for not returning them, reply'd, he hoped they would not insist on his Clothes, which were not worth much; but consider the Coldness of the Night. You are cold, are you, you Rascal*

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. IX, p. 44-45.

<sup>40</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Les Maximes*, Maxim 262, p. 86, commented cynically that: "Il n'y a point où l'amour de soi-même règne si puissamment que dans l'amour; et on est toujours plus disposé à sacrifier le repos de ce qu'on aime, qu'à perdre le sien".

says one of the Robbers, *I'll warm you with a Vengeance*; and damning his Eyes, snapt a Pistol to his Head: which he had no sooner done, than the other levelled a Blow at him with his Stick, which *Joseph*, who was expert at Cudgel-playing, caught with his, and returned the Favour so successfully on his Adversary, that he laid him sprawling at his Feet, and at the same Instant received a Blow from behind, with the Butt-end of a Pistol from the other Villain, which felled him to the Ground. . . Then they stript him entirely naked, threw him into a Ditch, and departed with their Booty.<sup>41</sup>

In the ridiculous confrontation, Fielding not only emphasised that innocence was an inappropriate weapon against vice, but that, although individuals should always adhere to "Good-nature", it also became foolish when carried to extremes. In addition, Fielding used the incident to test the sympathy of readers, who should always be "dispose[d] . . . to feel the misfortunes" of others.<sup>42</sup> However, to prevent any excessive sympathy, the narrator informs readers that Joseph, acting from the principle of excessive good-nature in asking the two villains not to take his clothes which he had borrowed from a friend, is at least partly responsible for his ill-treatment. In normal circumstances, such a request would demonstrate his benevolence; however, in a situation where the life of the protagonist is threatened, the request becomes ridiculous.

It was also Fielding's aim to instruct readers against the inhumanity of those individuals who affected "Good-nature". Without pre-judging the characters, Fielding offered his readers a lesson in "good-nature", when he satirised the hypocrisy and the selfishness of the passengers on board the stage-coach. Despite the directions of the coachman to proceed, the postillion, on hearing the groans of the dying man, "stopt his Horses" and alighted to find Joseph naked and "sitting upright" in a ditch. The narrator documents the reaction of each passenger, to Joseph's condition, in the following words:

'O *J - sus*,' cry'd the Lady, 'A naked Man! Dear Coachman, drive on and leave him.' Upon this the Gentleman got out of the Coach; and *Joseph* begged them, 'to have Mercy upon him: For that he had been robbed, and almost beaten to death.' 'Robbed,' cries an old Gentleman; 'Let us make all haste imaginable, or we shall be robbed too.' A young Man who belonged to the Law answered, 'he wished they had passed by without taking any Notice: But that now they might be proved to have been *last in his Company*; if he should die, they might be called to some account for his Murther. He therefore thought it advisable to save the poor Creature's Life, for their own sakes, if possible; at least, if he died, to

<sup>41</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. XII, pp. 51-52.

<sup>42</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, in *Miscellanies*, Volume I, p. 158.

prevent the Jury's finding *that they fled for it*. He was therefore of *Opinion*, to take the Man into the Coach, and carry him to the next Inn.' The Lady insisted, 'that he should not come into the Coach. That if they lifted him in, she would herself alight: for she had rather stay in that Place to all Eternity, than ride with a naked Man.' The Coachman objected, 'that he could not suffer him to be taken in, unless some body would pay a Shilling for his Carriage the four Miles.' Which the two Gentlemen refused to do; but the Lawyer, who was afraid of some Mischief happening to himself if the Wretch was left behind in that Condition, saying, 'no Man could be too cautious in these Matters, and that he remembered very extraordinary Cases in the Books,' threatened the Coachman, and bid him to deny taking him up at his Peril; 'for that if he died, he should be indicted for his Murther, and if he lived, and brought an Action against him, he would willingly take a Brief in it.' These Words had a sensible Effect on the Coachman, who was well acquainted with the Person who spoke them; and the old Gentleman abovementioned, thinking the naked Man would afford him frequent Opportunities of shewing his Wit to the Lady, offered to join with the Company in giving a Mug of Beer for his Fare; till partly alarmed by the Threats of the one, and partly by the Promises of the other, and being perhaps *a little* moved with Compassion at the poor Creature's Condition, who stood bleeding and shivering with the Cold, he at length agreed; and *Joseph* was now advancing to the Coach, where seeing the Lady, who held the Sticks of her Fan before her Eyes, he absolutely refused, miserable as he was, to enter, unless he was furnished with sufficient Covering, to prevent giving the least Offence to Decency. So perfectly modest was this young Man; such mighty Effects had the spotless Example of the amiable *Pamela*, and the excellent Sermons of Mr. *Adams* wrought upon him.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to displaying what Shaftesbury described as "natural affection", the natures of the passengers are dominated by selfishness. The love of doing good, which should come naturally to all individuals, according to the theories of Shaftesbury and Butler, has been overcome by "irrational impulses". Thus, by allowing readers some insight into the natures of the characters, Fielding enabled his readers to judge their motives sagaciously.

Like Shaftesbury, Fielding believed that all individuals should act from a natural love of doing good. However, he added that individuals had to scrutinise the motives behind the actions and words of others, in order to determine the level of good or evil within them. In an attempt to educate readers in the constituents of "Good-nature", the author exposed them to the "naked" dispositions of each of the characters in the coach. Only the postillion displays a genuine love for his fellow being. The other travellers, uninjured themselves, are concerned only about their own modesty, safety, or welfare. Even the recommendation of the lawyer, who argues that they take the "poor creature" to

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<sup>43</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. XII, pp. 52-53.

the next inn, is based solely on the fear that they may be held responsible for the man's death, if they ignore his predicament. According to contemporary law, it was an offence for individuals to flee the scene of a crime, the penalty for which was the forfeiture of all goods.<sup>44</sup> Ironically, the narrator informs readers that the travellers, "*a little* moved with Compassion at the poor Creature's Condition", offer Joseph some meagre assistance. However, Fielding censured severely the affected decency of the Lady who, being outraged by the presence of a naked man, not only peers through "the Sticks of her Fan", but uses blasphemy in her conversation and carries "a little silver Bottle . . . of the best Nantes",<sup>45</sup> in spite of her denial about ever consuming alcohol. In contrast to this affected decency, the narrator highlights Joseph's refusal to enter the coach unless "furnished with sufficient Covering, to prevent giving the least Offence to Decency".

Fielding's attack on the inhumanity of the travellers was further emphasised in their refusal to provide the dying man with some form of covering to protect him from the cold. Ironically, the narrator notes that Joseph would have perished had it not been for the benevolence of the postillion who, although he is later "transported for robbing a Hen-roost", "voluntarily stript off a great Coat, his only Garment", and offered it to the dying man, adding "that he would rather ride in his Shirt all his Life, than suffer a Fellow-Creature to lie in so miserable a Condition".<sup>46</sup> Fielding juxtaposed the genuine "good-nature" and benevolence of the postillion against the inhumanity and selfishness of those individuals who, within the carriage, affected "Good-nature" yet refused, even though they had adequate means, to help the dying man. For Fielding, each traveller personified the inherent moral corruption within contemporary society, a corruption based upon affectation, dishonesty, hypocrisy and pretence. On a symbolic level, the reactions of the postillion and the passengers personify the conflict that exists between Shaftesbury's conception of "Good-nature" and the conception of "*Amour-propre*", or selfishness, propounded by La Rochefoucauld and Mandeville. Readers should overlook the

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<sup>44</sup> Giles Jacob, *New Law-Dictionary*, 4th edition (1739); appended as a note to Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, p. 52.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. XII, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book I, Ch. XII, p. 53.

postillion's use of a "great Oath", for which he is rebuked by the other travellers, because it is a reaction against the inhumanity of the other travellers. In fact, they should feel sympathy for the postillion who, although he later commits a physical wrong, is a far worthier and more virtuous creature than any of those affected individuals within the coach. For readers, the postillion promotes Fielding's moral instruction. His character not only provides readers with an example of genuine benevolence, which is worthy of emulation, but also shows how genuine virtue is abused in the world. At the same time, Fielding, by contrasting the reaction of the postillion with those of the travellers, advanced his didactic method of allowing his readers the autonomy necessary in decoding the moral instruction. Only then could readers best appreciate the true meaning of "Good-nature" and virtue.

Fielding continued his exposure of the affectation and follies of contemporary society by examining the hypocrisy of surgeons who, abandoning the requirements of the Hippocratic Oath, refused to attend any individuals who could not offer them some form of monetary reward. Readers are informed that, when he is told that the dying man is "a poor foot Passenger who had been stripped of all he had and almost murdered", the surgeon chid the "Wench" who had awoken him "and very quietly returned to bed and to sleep".<sup>47</sup> Anticipating little or no monetary gain, the surgeon refrains from visiting Joseph until late the following day, and then only to pronounce "that it would be impossible to save him". Fielding satirised the selfishness of the surgeon when, in reply to Adams' comment that "it was the duty of Men of all Professions, to apply their Skill *gratis* for the Relief of the Poor and Necessitous",<sup>48</sup> he affects an air of superiority in order "to expose the Gentleman" as a man of little sense. The affected superiority of the surgeon is emphasised even further when, in giving "his Opinion of his Patient's Case", he informs Adams that:

The Contusion on his Head has *perforated* the *internal Membrane* of the *Occiput*, and *divellicated* that *radical* small *minute* invisible *Nerve*, which *coheres* to the *Pericranium*; and this was attended with a Fever at first

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XII, p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIV, p. 62.

*symptomattick*, then *pneumatick*, and he is at length *grown deliriuus*, or delirious, as the Vulgar express it.<sup>49</sup>

For ideal readers of the text, it is not Adams' ignorance, but the affected knowledge of the surgeon which is ridiculous. Ironically, in describing the language of lay persons as "vulgar", the surgeon lays himself open to the censure of readers who, like Adams, only wish to know, without any pretentious use of words, the extent of the protagonist's injuries. Thus, by assimilating readers into the text, Fielding again allowed them to judge the surgeon, for themselves.

In addition to the surgeon, Fielding exposed the hypocrisy of inn-keepers. Like Hogarth, Fielding emphasised that the moral depravity of vicious characters was often paralleled by some physical deformity. The narrator, for example, describes Mrs. Towwouse in these terms:

Her Person was short, thin, and crooked. Her Forehead projected in the middle, and thence descended in a Declivity to the Top of her Nose, which was sharp and red, and would have hung over her Lips, had not Nature turned up the end of it. Her Lips were two Bits of Skin, which, whenever she spoke, she drew together in a Purse. Her Chin was peeked, and at the upper end of that Skin, which composed her Cheeks, stood two Bones, that almost hid a Pair of small red Eyes. Add to this, a Voice most wonderfully adapted to the Sentiments it was to convey, being both loud and hoarse.<sup>50</sup>

It is this unnatural voice, a symbol of her unnatural set of morals, that readers first hear when she rounds malevolently on the chamber-maid, Betty, who is getting one of her master's shirts for the naked Joseph. The narrator continues the conversation:

'Touch one, if you dare, you Slut,' said Mrs. *Towwouse*, 'your Master is a pretty sort of Man to take in naked Vagabonds, and clothe them with his own Clothes. . . If you offer to touch any thing, I will throw the Chamber-Pot at your Head. Go, send your Master to me.' . . . As soon as he came in, she thus began: 'What the Devil do you mean by this, Mr. *Towwouse*? Am I to buy Shirts to lend to a sett of scabby Rascals?' 'My Dear,' said Mr. *Towwouse*, 'this is a poor Wretch.' 'Yes,' says she, 'I know it is a poor Wretch, but what the Devil have we to do with poor Wretches? The Law makes us provide for too many already. . . . 'My Dear,' cries *Towwouse*, 'this Man hath been robbed of all he hath.' 'Well then,' says she, 'where's his Money to pay his Reckoning? Why doth not such a Fellow go to an Ale-house? I shall send him packing as soon as I am up, I assure you.' 'My Dear,' said he, 'common Charity won't suffer you to do that.' 'Common Charity, a F - t!' says she, 'Common Charity teaches us to provide for ourselves, and our Families; and I and mine won't be

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIV, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIV, pp. 61-62.

ruined by your Charity, I assure you.' 'Well,' says he, 'my Dear, do as you will when you are up, you know I never contradict you.' 'No,' says she, 'if the Devil was to contradict me, I would make the House too hot to hold him.'<sup>51</sup>

In the argument between Mr. and Mrs. Tow-ouse, Fielding distinguished between the philosophy of good-nature and benevolence, advocated by Shaftesbury, Butler, Hutcheson and the Latitudinarians, and that of malevolence and selfishness, advanced by Hobbes, Mandeville and Whitefield. Whereas Mr. Tow-ouse shows, at least initially, some concern for the welfare of a fellow creature, Mrs. Tow-ouse is preoccupied with fulfilling her own selfish appetites. Thus, any "good" deeds that she performs are based either on selfishness or the fact that she is legally bound to do them.

In the character of Mrs. Tow-ouse, Fielding also examined the theory relating to the incompatibility of self-love and benevolence. Following the theories expounded by Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, Mrs. Tow-ouse is motivated less by a desire to do evil, than a mistaken view of self-love. She is controlled by the passion of self-interest, believing that her own happiness takes precedence over the needs of others. Unable to equate her happiness with that of her fellow creatures, she subordinates charity to her own desires. Fielding also satirised Mr. Tow-ouse for his inability to maintain his benevolent principles when attacked by his wife. By the very fact that he submits virtue to the will of his wife, readers can sense that his benevolent impulses lack sincerity. However, the lady appears most ridiculous when, overcome by excessive vanity, she asserts proudly that she would even make the "house too hot" for the Devil, if he were to contradict her.

Fielding, in fact, never abandoned his moral condemnation of inn-keepers. By having Betty inform Mrs. Tow-ouse that Joseph may be "a greater Man than they took him for",<sup>52</sup> Fielding provided readers with a detailed inspection into the corrupt nature of vicious individuals. The narrator, after noting her changed countenance, continues:

She said, 'God forbid she should not discharge the duty of a Christian, since the poor Gentleman was brought to her House. She had a natural antipathy to Vagabonds: but could pity the Misfortunes of a Christian as

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XII, p. 56.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XV, p. 67.

soon as another.' *Tow-wouse* said, 'If the Traveller be a Gentleman, tho' he hath no Money about him now, we shall most likely be paid hereafter. . .'. Mrs. *Tow-wouse* answered, 'Hold your simple Tongue, and don't instruct me in my Business. I am sure I am sorry for the Gentleman's Misfortune with all my heart, and I hope the Villain who hath used him so barbariously will be hanged. *Betty*, go, see what he wants. G - forbid he should want any thing in my House.'<sup>53</sup>

By affecting a Christian disposition and blaming her earlier behaviour on her "natural antipathy to vagabonds", the hypocrisy of Mrs. *Tow-wouse* is emphasised even further. Underlying the satire is the Fielding's didactic instruction that individuals should be naturally benevolent to all fellow creatures, irrespective of religion, class and wealth. In the situation above, the affected benevolence of Mrs. *Tow-wouse* and her husband is undermined the expectation that they will "be paid hereafter". Knowing that benevolence brings its own internal happiness and heavenly reward, readers should censure the behaviour of the inn-keeper and his wife. Thus, the affected benevolence of the couple can only be perceived by readers to be as vicious as their earlier display of inhumanity to Joseph.

With the apprehension of one of the highwaymen, Fielding presented another figure of affectation and hypocrisy in the form of the local parson, Mr. Barnabas, who, like the surgeon, refuses to aid the dying youth. With the surgeon, Barnabas attends the inn, without payment, to see the "thief conveyed before the justice". Because the district has no lawyers, he and the surgeon involve themselves in the trial, not in the interests of justice, but so as "to display their Parts therefore before the Justice and the Parish".<sup>54</sup> Following the example of the two men who affect justice in order to gain public recognition, Fielding intruded deliberately into the text to instruct his readers against vanity. In a passage using rhetorical questions, he commented:

O Vanity! How little is thy Force acknowledged, or thy Operations discerned? How wantonly dost thou deceive Mankind under different Disguises? Sometimes thou dost wear the Face of Pity, sometimes of Generosity: nay, thou hast the Assurance even to put on those glorious Ornaments which belong only to heroic Virtue. Thou odious, deformed Monster! whom Priests have railed at, Philosophers despised, and Poets ridiculed: Is there a Wretch so abandoned as to own thee for an Acquaintance in publick? yet, how few will refuse to enjoy thee in private?

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. XV, p. 66.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, Ch. XV, p. 69.



nay, thou art the Pursuit of most Men through their Lives. The greatest Villainies are daily practised to please thee: nor is the meanest Thief below, or the greatest Hero above thy notice. Thy embraces are often the sole Aim and sole Reward of the private Robbery, and the plundered Province. It is, to pamper thee, thou Harlot, that we attempt to withdraw from others what we do not want, or to with-hold from them what they do. All our Passions are thy Slaves. Avarice itself is often no more than thy Hand-maid, and even Lust thy Pimp. The Bully Fear like a Coward, flies before thee, and Joy and Grief hide their Heads in thy Presence.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, in a direct statement to his readers, Fielding warned them of the power that vanity, the master to all other passions, could have upon individuals. The paragraph, therefore, summarised, in theoretical terms, what readers had evidenced, in practical terms, in the characters of Mrs. Tow-wouse, Barnabas and the surgeon. Fielding knew that, although they would never admit to any vanity, these individuals practised the "greatest Villainies" everyday. By stressing the lack of success of philosophers and poets in attacking vanity, Fielding was promoting his own art form as the correct didactic medium, by which readers could be instructed in their pursuit of virtue. Ideally, once readers had been shown the effects of vanity on characters, they would accept the author's moral instruction to abandon vice and pursue virtue.

In contrast to Richardson's didactic technique of using exemplary characters, Fielding argued that even "good-natured" individuals, such as Parson Adams, had their vanities. After the escape of the thief, for example, Adams asks Tow-wouse for a loan of three guineas. As collateral, the narrator informs readers that Adams, in a "Voice full of Solemnity", offers his "nine Volumes of Manuscript Sermons", which, he argues, are "well worth a hundred Pound as a Shilling was worth twelve".<sup>56</sup> Ironically, Adams' vain belief in the value of his sermons carries little weight for a man, preoccupied with monetary satisfaction. Although the refusal of Tow-wouse to lend Adams the money stresses the inhumanity of a man who is pre-occupied with his own self-interest and greed, the scene also highlights the vanity of Adams who believes that his sermons are valuable to all his fellow-creatures. It was Fielding's aim, in contrasting the good nature and innocence of Adams with the affected benevolence of the inn-keeper, to teach readers

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XV, pp. 69-70.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVI, p. 73.

to scrutinise, and judge, the motives and values of all individuals. Given the corrupt nature of Tow-ouse's character and his refusal to accept the sermons, items symbolic of moral and spiritual improvement, as collateral illustrates the inability and unwillingness of vicious individuals to recognise, and overcome, their appetites and vanity. In reality, the sermons should be worth much more to Tow-ouse than any watch or ring.

Adams' vain belief in the value of his sermons is undercut by Barnabas, who asserts that the present age has become so wicked that nobody reads sermons. Fielding, like Richardson, believed that sermons provided an inadequate means of educating individuals in the pursuit of virtue because, by subjecting readers to a process of indoctrination, they assumed control over the autonomy of readers in decoding the moral instruction inherent in the text. Commenting that contemporary sermons had neither monetary nor spiritual value, Barnabas informs the horrified Adams that he must falsely advertise his sermons under such a title as "*the Manuscript Sermons of a Clergyman lately deceased, all warranted Originals, and never printed*", if he wishes to sell them. Underlying his advice, however, Barnabas hides his true motive, the acquisition from Adams of "a Funeral Sermon", for which he will receive "a double Price".<sup>57</sup> Fielding exposed the hypocrisy of Barnabas who, being more concerned with money, is willing to prostitute his position as a spiritual leader by "introduc[ing] something handsome" about a man of vicious character. Fielding further satirised the character of Mr. Barnabas, "who loved Sermons no better than a Grocer doth Figs",<sup>58</sup> when he objects to Adams' reading "two or three Discourses" to the bookseller in order to have his work published. His objection alerts readers to the fact that the man's concern with sermons, like many of Fielding's contemporaries, is solely based on the hope of monetary gain, rather than any responsibility for the moral welfare of his parishioners

With the bookseller's comment that "Sermons are mere Drugs", with which "the Trade is so vastly stocked",<sup>59</sup> Fielding took the opportunity of assessing the part that

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVI, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, p. 80.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, pp. 80-81.

sermons played in contemporary morality. Fielding censured those booksellers who promoted corrupt manners by selling only those works published by enthusiasts, such as Wesley or Whitefield, or writers of certain political doctrines. Both types of sermon, according to Fielding, emphasised the level of degeneracy to which the Church had stooped. Those "mere Drugs", criticised by the author, were the many contemporary sermons which recommended affectation and hypocrisy over virtue. The image of "Drugs" aptly described, for Fielding, the ineffectiveness of contemporary sermons in inculcating moral values into the minds of either listeners or readers. Sermons which indoctrinated readers only provided a panacea for the ills of society, enabling individuals, when the "drug" wore off, to resume their corrupt behaviour and manners. For readers, the moral instruction becomes clearer when Adams, naïvely comments that "an honest Mind [would] rather lose Money by the one, than gain it by the other". In reply, the bookseller retorts, in a statement which advances the continuation of corrupt morals, that "the Copy that sells the best, will always be the best Copy".<sup>60</sup>

Ironically, Barnabas attacks any doctrine which, like Whitefield's, is aimed at "reduc[ing members of the Clergy] to the Example of the Primitive Ages . . . [in which] a Clergyman ought to be always preaching and praying".<sup>61</sup> In short, he believes that the clergy should be able to take advantage, in a material sense, of the power of their position. Although Adams does not accept the doctrine of Whitefield in its totality, he does suggest, much to the horror of Mr. Barnabas, that:

I am myself as great an Enemy to the Luxury and Splendour of the Clergy as he can be. I do not, more than he, by the flourishing Estate of the Church, understand the Palaces, Equipages, Dress, Furniture, rich Dainties, and vast Fortunes of her Ministers. Surely those things, which savour so strongly of this World, become not the Servants of one who professed his Kingdom was not of it: but when he began to call Nonsense and Enthusiasm to his Aid, and to set up the detestable Doctrine of Faith against good Works, I was his Friend no longer; for surely, that Doctrine was coined in Hell, and one would think none but the Devil himself could have the Confidence to preach it. For can any thing be more derogatory to the Honour of God, than for Men to imagine that the All-wise Being will hereafter say to the Good and Virtuous, *Notwithstanding the Purity of thy Life, notwithstanding that constant Rule of Virtue and Goodness in which*

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, pp. 80-81.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, p. 81.

*you walked upon Earth, still as thou did'st not believe every thing in the true Orthodox manner, thy want of Faith shall condemn thee? Or on the other side, can any Doctrine have a more pernicious Influence on Society than a Persuasion, that it will be a good Plea for the Villain at the last Day; Lord, it is true I never obeyed one of thy Commandments, yet punish me not, for I believe them all? "*<sup>62</sup>

Fielding believed that the clergy, by allowing vanity to overcome both their duty to their fellow creatures and their reason, had abandoned their spiritual instruction in favour of earthly rewards. Unlike Whitefield, however, Fielding shared Shaftesbury's belief that the virtuous would be rewarded by God, and that those doctrines that were based on enthusiasm, such as Whitefield's, should be ridiculed so as to expose their falsity and foolishness. Fielding found it inconceivable that individuals, who had lived a life of virtue, could be condemned for a lack of faith while others, who broke all the Commandments yet "believed all", would be saved. Adams puts forward the view of his author, when asked by the bookseller if his sermons differ from others:

'Ay, Sir, . . . the contrary, I think Heaven, is inculcated in almost every Page, or I should belye my own Opinion, which hath always been, that a virtuous and good *Turk*, or Heathen, are more acceptable in the sight of their Creator, than a wicked and vicious Christian, tho' his Faith was as perfectly Orthodox as St. *Paul's* himself.'<sup>63</sup>

Adams' reply is consonant with the author's idea about the didactic nature of the novel, which stressed that virtue should be inculcated and vice exposed in every page of a work. Understandably, then, the naïve Adams is surprised that the bookseller rejects his work, which is "calculated to restore the true Use of Christianity".<sup>64</sup>

Fielding supported the philosophy of Shaftesbury, who argued that virtuous individuals, irrespective of their religious beliefs, were far more preferable to vicious ones, who stressed their allegiance to religion. The author, for example, contrasted the hypocrisy of Barnabas with the innocence Joseph Andrews. Although he applied rules of Christian doctrine to his "flock", Barnabas lived according to the dictates of his own desires. While Joseph lies dying, Barnabas, proclaiming that Grace is attained only "By Prayer and Faith . . . [and] Forgiveness", declares that the young man must "divest

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, p. 82.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, p. 82.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, p. 83.

himself of all human Passion, and fix his Heart above".<sup>65</sup> In reply to Barnabas' insistence that he suppress his feelings for Fanny and forgive his robbers, Joseph admits that forgiveness "was more than he could do. . . [and that] nothing would give him more Pleasure than to hear they were taken". The conversation is continued:

'That,' cries *Barnabas*, 'is for the sake of Justice.' 'Yes,' said *Joseph*, 'but if I was to meet them again, I am afraid I should attack them, and kill them too, if I could.' 'Doubtless,' answered *Barnabas*, 'it is lawful to kill a Thief: but can you say, you forgive them as a Christian ought?' *Joseph* desired to know what that Forgiveness was. 'That is,' answered *Barnabas*, 'to forgive them as - as - it is to forgive them as - in short, it is to forgive them as a Christian.' *Joseph* reply'd, 'he forgave them as much as he could.' 'Well, well,' said *Barnabas*, 'that will do.'<sup>66</sup>

Fielding undermined Barnabas' conception of the doctrine of forgiveness. Like Joseph, Fielding also found considerable difficulty in forgiving those who had deliberately committed vicious acts against him. The inability of Barnabas to explain clearly, to Joseph, the meaning of forgiveness emphasises that such a doctrine is based on "Enthusiasm" and hypocrisy, where the words of individuals may conceal their true motives. In contrast to Barnabas, the honest Joseph cannot compromise his principles.

Fielding put the concept of forgiveness to the test when he had Mrs. Tow-wouse find her husband in bed with Betty. Ironically, the voice of the woman, clearly distinguishable from those of the other characters "like a Bass Viol in a Concert", is heard not only cursing the two lovers, but emphasising the virtuous nature of her own character. The narrator continues the dialogue in the following way:

This the Reward of my Virtue? Is this the manner in which you behave to one who brought you a Fortune, and preferred you to so many Matches, all your Betters? To abuse my Bed, my own Bed, with my own Servant: but I'll maul the Slut, I'll tear her nasty Eyes out; was ever such a pitiful Dog, to take up with such a mean Trollop? If she had been a Gentlewoman like my self, it had been some excuse, but a beggarly saucy dirty Servant-Maid. Get you out of my House, you Whore.' To which, she added another Name, which we do not care to stain our Paper with. - It was a monosyllable, beginning with a B - , and indeed was the same, as if she had pronounced the Words, *She-Dog*. Which Term, we shall, to avoid Offence, use on this Occasion, tho' indeed both the Mistress and Maid uttered the above-mentioned B - , a Word extremely disgustful to Females of the lower sort. *Betty* had borne all hitherto with Patience, and had uttered only Lamentations: but the last Appellation stung her to the Quick,

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIII, p. 59.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIII, p. 60.

'I am a Woman as well as yourself,' she roared out, 'and no She-Dog, and if I have been a little naughty, I am not the first; if I have been no better than I should be,' cries she sobbing, 'that's no Reason you should call me out of my Name; my Be - Betters are wo - worse than me.' 'Huzzy, huzzy,' says Mrs. *Tow-wouse*, 'have you the Impudence to answer me? Did I not catch you, you saucy - ' and then again repeated the terrible word so odious to Female Ears. 'I can't bear that Name,' answered *Betty*, 'if I have been wicked, I am to answer for it myself in the other World, but I have done nothing that's unnatural, and I will go out of your House this Moment: for I will never be called a *She-Dog*, by any Mistress. . . .'<sup>67</sup>

By emphasising the gulf that existed between the woman's words and the reality of her nature, Fielding demonstrated to readers the absurdity of affectation and hypocrisy. Rather than forgive the two, as Barnabas suggests is required of all Christians, Mrs. *Tow-wouse* has to be restrained, with "herculean Strength", in her attempts to "maul the Slut". Furthermore, the whole notion of a "Gentlewoman" is satirised, by her use of language which falls far below that of the "beggarly saucy dirty Servant-Maid". To satirise the affected lady even further, the narrator intrudes into the scene to remind readers that the word "Bitch", offensive to all woman, cannot be written for fear of giving offence to readers. Ironically, *Betty's* admission, that she has been a "little naughty", goes almost unnoticed, when contrasted against the uncontrollable passion of Mrs. *Tow-wouse*.

*Betty's* subsequent expulsion from the inn, supports Adams' doctrine that virtuous individuals will receive heavenly reward, despite having to endure earthly suffering. In the case above, *Betty* symbolises Adams' idea of the "virtuous and good Turk", while Mrs. *Tow-wouse* represents the "vicious and wicked Christian". Although the narrator admits that *Betty*, despite some "warm Ingredients" in her constitution, is a person of "Good-nature, Generosity and Compassion",<sup>68</sup> she falls far short of the exemplary character of Pamela. Readers are informed, for example, that *Betty*, conceiving "an extraordinary Liking" for Joseph, allows her passion to usurp control over both her reason and virtue, which results in her "embracing [Joseph] with great Eagerness" and swearing that "he was the handsomest Creature she had ever seen".<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVII, pp. 84-85.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVIII, p. 86.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVIII, p. 87.

Even with her shortcomings, which are attributable to a deficiency in her moral education, Betty is presented to readers as a far more virtuous character than Mrs. Tow-wouse. Furthermore, for Fielding, Betty offered readers a more attainable and realistic representation of human nature than Richardson's paragon of virtue. Ironically, she is punished for her associations with Mr. Tow-wouse, even though he was responsible for casting "the languishing Eyes of Affection on [the] young Maiden" and taking "every Opportunity" of informing her of "the Violence of his Passion". In order to emphasise the virtue of the girl, the narrator continues that:

As soon as she saw him, she attempted to retire: but he called her back, and taking her by the hand, squeezed her so tenderly, at the same time whispering so many soft things into her Ears, and, then pressed her so closely with his Kisses, that the vanquished Fair-One, whose Passions were already raised . . . quietly submitted, I say, to her Master's Will.<sup>70</sup>

Fielding believed that the good nature and honesty of the realistically-presented Betty, like the postillion, compensated for her defects.

In the first chapter of the second Book, Fielding elaborated upon his didactic method, when he wrote that:

[The] little Spaces between our Chapters may be looked upon as an Inn or Resting-Place, where he may stop and take a Glass, or any other Refreshment, as it pleases him. Nay, our fine Readers will, perhaps, be scarce able to travel farther than through one of them in a Day. As to those vacant Pages which are placed between our Books, they are to be regarded as those Stages, where, in long Journeys, the Traveller stays some time to repose himself, and consider of what he hath seen in the Parts he hath already past through; a Consideration which I take the Liberty to recommend a little to the Reader: for however swift his Capacity may be, I would not advise him to travel through these Pages too fast: for if he doth, he may probably miss the seeing some curious Productions of Nature which will be observed by the slower and more accurate Reader.<sup>71</sup>

Fielding's metaphor was particularly relevant to his role as moral educator. Following the traditional approach to moral education, which required that learners be given sufficient time in order to digest the instruction, Fielding described his work as a road, with numerous inns or resting-places, along which readers could stop and revise the instruction, prior to continuing their journey on the path to virtue. Like all true moral

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Book I, Ch. XVIII, p. 88.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. I, pp. 90-91.

educators, Fielding emphasised that "rest", which allowed readers time to appreciate and apply the doctrine to their own lives, was a necessary concomitant to learning, especially moral instruction. Correctly, he warned readers not to cover too much, lest they should miss the moral instruction. The passage emphasises that Fielding's primary concern was with moral instruction; conversely, entertainment only provided the medium by which he communicated that instruction to his readers.

Fielding used the cautionary tale of Leonora to advance his attack upon the corrupting influence of affectation and vanity, in relation to both the education of young girls and the inculcation of virtue into the minds of readers. Fielding hinted at the didactic purpose of the tale when he described Leonora, a girl "with a Sprightliness in her Countenance" and a "Good-Humour which [was] . . . often mistaken for Good-Nature", as "an extreme Lover of Gaiety, [who] very rarely missed a Ball or any other publick Assembly; where she had frequent Opportunities of satisfying a greedy Appetite of Vanity with the Preference which was given her by the Men to almost every other Woman present".<sup>72</sup> It was Fielding's aim to teach readers that appearances were not always what they seemed. Although Leonora accepts a proposal of marriage to Horatio, "a young Gentleman of a good Family", she cannot fail to pander to her vanity by attending, in his absence, a dance, where she meets Bellarmine, a "genteeler and . . . finer Man". Despite having promised not to dance with anyone in the absence of her beloved, her vanity overcomes her "Good-nature". The narrator continues:

Leonora saw herself admired by the fine Stranger, and envied by every Woman present. Her little Heart began to flutter within her, and her Head was agitated with a convulsive Motion; . . . She had never tasted any thing like this Happiness. She had before known what it was to torment a single Woman; but to be hated and cursed by a whole Assembly, was a Joy reserved for this blessed Moment. As this vast Profusion of Ecstasy had confounded her Understanding, so there was nothing so foolish as her Behaviour; she played a thousand childish Tricks, distorted her Person into several Shapes, and her Face into several Laughs, without any Reason. In a word, her Carriage was as absurd as her Desires . . . .

Thus, what *Horatio* had by Sighs and Tears, Love and Tenderness, been so long obtaining, the *French-English Bellarmine* with Gaiety and Gallantry possessed himself of in an instant. In other Words what Modesty

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. IV, pp. 102-103.



had employed a full Year in raising, Impudence demolished in twenty-four Hours.<sup>73</sup>

Leonora provides an example of the romantic heroine, who jilts her honest lover for the man of affected dress and manners. Consequently, her vanity blinds her to Bellarmine's motives. The vicious influence of uncontrolled passion is evident in her confused reflections over whom she loves. She muses:

But did not I no longer ago than yesterday love *Horatio* more than all the World? aye, but yesterday I had not seen *Bellarmino*. . . . Yes, but I promised *Horatio* first; but that was poor *Bellarmino's* Misfortune, if I had seen him first, I should certainly have preferred him. . . . Can he give me an Equipage or any of those Things which *Bellarmino* will make me his Mistress of? How vast is the Difference between being the Wife of a poor Counsellor, and the Wife of one of *Bellarmino's* Fortune! If I marry *Horatio*, I shall triumph over no more than one Rival: but by marrying *Bellarmino*, I shall be the Envy of all my Acquaintance. What Happiness!<sup>74</sup>

Leonora realises the hopes of the unsuccessful pair, Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop, in women's idealistic conquest over men. Although engaged to Horatio, her affectation and vanity compel her to seek the wealth and prestige that an association with a beau will bring. Ideal readers, however, should censure the woman, who is more concerned with winning superiority over her friends than maintaining virtue. Fielding guided the moral education of his readers by having Adams interpose the story with several deep groans at the woman's folly. These groans, which frighten the ladies seated alongside him, are designed for the didactic purpose of awakening readers, particularly women, from the role of passive listeners of an entertaining story, in which the moral instruction could go unheeded, to the role of active participants in judging the character of Leonora.

Leonora's aunt, a character similar in affectation to Lucinda in Mandeville's *The Virgin Unmask'd*, fosters the deficient education of her ward. Instead of promoting Fielding's view, that happiness in marriage is resultant upon true love, she supports Leonora's quest for social status, by suggesting that the young girl should "thank Heaven . . . [that she has the] power to break" engagements, especially as they may well decide "whether she shall ride in a Coach or walk on Foot all the Days of her Life?"<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IV, pp. 109-110.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IV, pp. 110-111.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IV, p. 111.

Hypocritically, after Bellarmine is wounded, the Aunt advises her niece "to think of regaining the Affections of *Horatio*".<sup>76</sup> She interposes, for example, when Leonora intends to visit Bellarmine in his confinement, warning her that, "should any Accident intervene to prevent [her] intended Match, too forward a Behaviour with this Lover [could] injure [her] in the Eyes of others". She concludes, in a display of affected morality, that "every Woman 'till she is married ought to consider of and provide against the Possibility of the Affair's being broken off".<sup>77</sup> Her advice offered readers an insight into what Fielding acknowledged as the negative side of an education based on prudence. In response, however, the behaviour of Leonora, who ignores "the Bounds which Custom and Modesty impose on her Sex", warns readers about the powerful influence that excessive passion can have over reason. Instead of following the "prudent Advice of her Aunt", Leonora decides to reside "almost entirely . . . in her wounded Lover's Apartment".<sup>78</sup> Leonora's behaviour is documented by Fielding so as to instruct readers about the effects of excessive passion. Ironically, after he has recovered, Bellarmine's selfishness becomes evident when, seeing little hope of monetary reward, he jilts Leonora and returns to France. Quite rightly, from the point of view of readers, Leonora, whose vanity had reigned uncontrollably, becomes "the Subject of Ridicule". Although Fielding ironically suggested that readers should feel some pity for Leonora, he considered that such behaviour was a product of the "Levity in the Education of [the] Sex". In contrast to this portrait of affectation and vanity, the author personified the meaning of "good-nature" in Horatio who, although having reason to censure Leonora, never "uttered one Syllable to charge her with ill Conduct towards him".<sup>79</sup>

Much of the education of readers in the novel occurs through the author's use of Adams. Through him, readers are educated in the pursuit of virtue. However, Adams is not altogether an exemplary character. Fielding stressed that the parson was not without his own affectation and vanity. Readers, therefore, had to be alerted to this, if he was to

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IV, p. 116.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IV, p. 117.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VI, p. 125.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VI, p. 129.

provide the basis of their moral education. There are several occasions when Adams is ridiculed for both his physical and intellectual narrow-mindedness, such as when, after leaving the inn, he becomes so engrossed in his reading of Aeschylus that he not only forgets about Joseph, who has been detained at the inn, but is unable to see his way round a large pool of water in his path. Readers are told that:

He therefore resolved to proceed slowly forwards, not doubting but that he should be shortly overtaken, and soon came to a large Water, which filling the whole Road, he saw no Method of passing unless by wading through, which he accordingly did up to his Middle; but was no sooner got to the other Side, than he perceived, if he had looked over the Hedge, he would have found a Foot-Path capable of conducting him without wetting his Shoes.<sup>80</sup>

Fielding argued that the physical characteristics of individuals often had a direct bearing on their cognitive or emotional characteristics. Thus, on several occasions, Adams' myopic vision reflects his imprudent thoughts. This became one of the ways in which Fielding, by forcing readers to scrutinise the parson's responses to any given situation, tested the sagacity of his readers. Ironically, in his discussion with the hunter on the topic of courage, Adams admits that he has "not much travelled in the History of modern Times, that is to say, these last thousand Years".<sup>81</sup> From the evidence presented by the narrator, readers should be able to see quite readily that Adams' understanding about the manners of contemporary society has been formulated in the distant past. At the same time, there were occasions when the author presented Adams in a foolish light, such as when he attempts to outrun the stage-coach after altercating with his host at the inn. The narrator continues:

Mrs. *Slipslop* desired the Coachman to overtake him, which he attempted, but in vain: for the faster he drove, the faster ran the Parson, often crying out, *Aye, aye, catch me if you can*: 'till at length the Coachman swore he would soon attempt to drive after a Greyhound.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. II, p. 96.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IX, p. 136.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VII, p. 130.

Although it was Fielding's didactic intention to instruct readers in "good-nature" and virtue, he realised that this moral education had to be tempered with prudence and some appreciation of the workings of contemporary society.

The encounter with the hunter stressed the lesson, similar to that promoted in *Jonathan Wild*, that all individuals should investigate thoroughly the motives behind the actions and words of other individuals. In addition to sharing Mrs. Tow-ouse's view that the large Standing Army, kept at home at public expense by Walpole, was unnecessary, the hunter discredits the army for its loss against the Spanish at Carthagena, on the basis of having employed inexperienced troops. Ironically, the narrator notes that the hunter continues, in words spoken "with so violent a Gesture, so loud a Voice, so strong an Accent, and so fierce a Countenance", that he would have gladly sacrificed his life "when his Country demanded it".<sup>83</sup> Despite his protestations about his love of his country, readers should realise that the man has never substantiated his words with any appropriate actions. In much the same way as he pretends a love of his country, the man also pretends courage. He informs Adams, for example, that he has "disinherited a Nephew who, refusing "to exchange his Commission [in the army], and go to the *West-Indies*", is both a "Rascal [and] a Coward".<sup>84</sup> Adams, sharing the view of readers, suggests that such a sanction is "too severe", and adds, much to the anger of the hunter, that any "Man might be a Coward at one time, and brave at another". Fielding provided readers with an insight into the sincerity of the hunter's courage when he exposed both men to "the most violent Shrieks imaginable in a female Voice". The narrator recounts that:

*Adams* offered to snatch the Gun out of his Companion's Hand. 'What are you doing?' said he. 'Doing!' says *Adams*, 'I am hastening to the Assistance of the poor Creature whom some Villains are murdering.' 'You are not mad enough, I hope,' says the Gentleman, trembling: . . . This is no Business of ours; let us make as much haste as possible out of the way, or we may fall into their Hands ourselves.' The Shrieks now encreasing, *Adams* made no Answer, but snapt his Fingers, and brandishing his Crabstick, made directly to the Place whence the Voice issued; and the Man of Courage made as much Expedition towards his own Home, whither he

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. VIII, pp. 131-132.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IX, p. 135.

escaped in a very short time without once looking behind him . . . [Adams] did not therefore want the Entreaties of the poor Wretch to assist her, but lifting up his Crabstick, he immediately levelled a Blow at that Part of the Ravisher's Head, where, according to the Opinion of the Ancients, the Brains of some Persons are deposited.<sup>85</sup>

When action is required to substantiate words, the hypocrisy of the "man of Courage" is exposed to ridicule. Ironically, it is Adams, the man who had advocated pity for the coward, who, promoting Butler's philosophy of benevolence, goes immediately to the aid of his fellow-creature, without any consideration for his own safety. Following the doctrine of Shaftesbury, Fielding maintained that all individuals should examine the actions and motives of others, and not rely merely upon words alone.

After Adams had saved Fanny, Fielding drew the attention of readers to the way in which the virtuous were subjected to abuse by the vicious. Ironically, Adams and "the wicked Whore" are detained by "bird-baiters", who are unwilling to distinguish truth from falsehood.<sup>86</sup> The situation allowed Fielding, a magistrate himself, the opportunity of satirising the hypocrisy and ignorance inherent in the legal system, especially when it was related to the innocent and the poor. The author began by exposing the Justice who, refusing to allow the two any defence, promises that they will be "made Examples of at the ensuing Assizes".<sup>87</sup> Anxious to decide the case, the Justice has to be persuaded by the clerk to take depositions. In describing what Adams has to endure at the hands of the magistrate's associates, Fielding attacked the inhumanity and corruption of the legal system. The narrator continues:

They were proceeding thus with the poor Girl, when somebody smocking the Cassock, peeping forth from under the Great Coat of *Adams*, cried out, 'What have we here, a Parson?' 'How, Sirrah,' says the Justice, 'do you go a robbing in the Dress of a Clergyman? let me tell you, your Habit will not entitle you to the *Benefit of the Clergy*.' 'Yes,' said the witty Fellow, 'he will have one Benefit of the Clergy, he will be exalted above the Heads of the People,' at which there was a second Laugh.<sup>88</sup>

In comparison to the "natural" benevolence shown by Adams in rescuing Fanny, the Justice and his associates display an inhumanity to their fellows, similar to that depicted in

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. IX, p. 137.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. X, pp. 141-142.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XI, p. 145.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XI, p. 146.

the writing of Mandeville. The scene, which culminates in Adams' asking whether it is no crime for the innocent to lie in goal some months prior to a case, is aimed directly at censuring the legal system. The narrator continues:

*Adams* then said, 'he hoped he should not be condemned unheard.' 'No, no,' cries the Justice, 'you will be asked what you have to say for your self, when you come on your Trial, we are not trying you now; I shall only commit you to Gaol: if you can prove your Innocence at *Size*, you will be found *Ignoramus*, and so no harm done.' 'Is it no Punishment, Sir, for an innocent Man to lie several Months in Gaol?' cries *Adams*: 'I beg you would at least hear me before you sign the *Mittimus*.' 'What signifies all you can say?' says the Justice, 'is it not here in black and white against you? I must tell you, you are a very impertinent Fellow, to take up so much of my time. . . .'

The Clerk now acquainted the Justice, that among other suspicious things, as a Penknife, &c. found in *Adams's* Pocket, they had discovered a Book written, as he apprehended, in Ciphers: for no one could read a Word in it. 'Ay,' says the Justice, 'this Fellow may be more than a common Robber, he may be in a Plot against the Government. - Produce the Book.' Upon which the poor Manuscript of *Æschylus*, which *Adams* had transcribed with his own Hand, was brought forth.<sup>89</sup>

Against accusations of treason, readers should sympathise with the parson, who becomes a victim of the inhumanity against which he is an example. At the same time, Fielding was condemning a legal system which, theoretically, proclaimed justice for all before the law, but which, in practice, offered "justice" only to the wealthy, a point evidenced when Squire Booby intervenes in proceedings.

In the final Book, Fielding renewed his attack upon the injustices of the legal system, by focusing upon the figures of Scout and Justice Frolick. Mr. Scout represents human law at its most perverse, a man who, knowing little law, is parasitic on the rich. Lady Booby, for example, hoping to have the "dirty slut", Fanny, condemned to prison "to prevent the Increase of Beggars", sends for Scout to prevent Adams from proclaiming the banns for the marriage of Joseph and Fanny. With the highest degree of contempt for benevolence, compassion and justice, Scout replies that, although "the Law is a little deficient in giving us any Power of Prevention, . . . the Justice will stretch it as far as he is able, to oblige your Ladyship". Praising the inhumanity of the Justice, he adds:

But it would do a Man good to see his Worship our Justice commit a Fellow to *Bridewell*: he takes so much pleasure in it: and when once we ha' un

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., Book II, Ch. XI, pp. 147-148.

there, we seldom hear any more o' un. He's either starved or eat up by Vermin in a Month's time.<sup>90</sup>

In return for money, Scout endeavours to corrupt the legal system, even to the point of having parishes neglect their duty to support the poor. In order to guide the response of readers toward Scout, the narrator describes him in the following way:

This *Scout* was one of those Fellows, who without any Knowledge of the Law, or being bred to it, take upon them, in defiance of an Act of Parliament, to act as Lawyers in the Country, and are called so. They are the Pests of Society, and a Scandal to a Profession, to which indeed they do not belong; and which owes to such kind of Rascallions the Ill-will which weak Persons bear towards it.<sup>91</sup>

Rather than Fanny, Fielding argued that persons such as Scout, who made a profit by consciously disobeying the law, should be committed to Bridewell.<sup>92</sup> Whereas Fielding believed that the poor were honest in their poverty, he claimed that pettifoggers were dishonest in affecting status or quibbling about such trivial issues as the breaking of a twig from a tree. Fielding also satirised those laws which were directed against the poor, as much as the legal process itself; a point evidenced in the absurd sentence construction and spelling of the deposition.<sup>93</sup> Justice Frolick's sanction, which commits the pair to Bridewell for a month, ironically reminds readers of Scout's earlier admission that prisoners do not live that long before falling victims to disease. Fortunately, virtue is saved by the intervention of Squire Booby, who asks that Frolick release the two into his custody. Although readers should be pleased that the innocent have been saved, they should be disturbed at the unpleasant reality that wealth or status dictates the law and its punishments.

In the interview between Adams and Parson Trulliber, Fielding moved his didactic and satirical focus to the greed, hypocrisy and ignorance inherent in the upper echelons of the Church. Commenting ironically that Trulliber is "a Parson on *Sundays*, but all the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. III, p. 286.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. III, p. 286.

<sup>92</sup> Scout deliberately contravenes the law assented to by George II, in 1729, *An Act for the Better Regulation of Attorneys and Solicitors*. According to this Act, Pettifoggers, such as Scout, were liable to a fine of £50 (Battestin, Note 2, p. 286).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. V, pp. 289-290.

other six might more properly be called a Farmer",<sup>94</sup> the narrator draws the attention of readers to the fact that many clergy had ignored the law, which forbade them to farm, without suffering prosecution.<sup>95</sup> Trulliber is representative of those clergy whose chief concern was farming, rather than the spiritual welfare of their parishoners. When Adams attends his property, Trulliber, believing that he is a prospective buyer, hastens "with the utmost expedition to attend his Guest", upon whom "he laid violent Hands. . . insisting that he should handle [the hogs], before he would talk one word with him". After Adams is thrown "in the Mire", the narrator informs readers that Trulliber, rather than coming to the aid of the man, ridicules him and treats him with contempt, before realising his mistake in relation to the man's identity.<sup>96</sup> Rather than accept the blame for his mistake, the hypocritical Trulliber admonishes his wife for the error. However, readers should be aware that there is no excuse for Trulliber's vicious amusement at Adams' unfortunate predicament. Trulliber's ironic apology, that he is "Sorry for the Mistake", exposes the character's hypocrisy even further. The episode, coming as it does after Adams' rushing to aid the distressed Fanny, provides readers with the opportunity of contrasting the genuine "Good-nature" of Adams with the meaningless words of Trulliber. Adams summarises the situation appropriately when he exclaims "*nihil habeo cum porcis*"; ironically, he has had much more to do with "swine" than he thinks.

Trulliber's lack of compassion towards the distresses of his neighbours is emphasised when he refuses Adams' request for a loan of fourteen shillings. Fielding used the situation to test the benevolence of the clergy. Adams, in his role of the readers' moral guide, presents the moral instruction of his author when he, naïvely but correctly, suggests that Trulliber, in lending him the small amount, will have "an Opportunity of laying up a Treasure in a better Place than any this World affords".<sup>97</sup> Ironically, Adams misinterprets the reply of Trulliber, who bursts forth:

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XIV, p. 162.

<sup>95</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (12 April, 1740), Volume II, pp. 98ff.

<sup>96</sup> Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Book II, Ch. XIV, pp. 162-163.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XIV, p. 165.



'Sir, I believe I know where to lay my little Treasure up as well as another; . . . To be content with a little is greater than to possess the World, which a Man may possess without being so. Lay up my Treasures! what matters where a Man's Treasure is, whose Heart is in the Scriptures? there is the Treasure of a Christian.'<sup>98</sup>

Believing that Trulliber's heart is placed firmly in the Scriptures and that he prefers his treasure to be stored in the next world, Adams, with tears in his eyes, exclaims that he has been fortunate to enter the home of a good man. However, the narrator informs readers of the man's real nature when, in reply to Adams' request, he answers:

'I wish, with all my Heart, the Tithing-Man, was here, . . . I would have thee punished as a Vagabond for thy Impudence. Fourteen Shillings indeed! I won't give thee a Farthing. I believe thou art no more a Clergyman than the Woman there, (pointing to his Wife) but if thou art, dost deserve to have thy Gown stript from thy Shoulders, for running about the Country in such a manner.'<sup>99</sup>

Although he pretends to follow the Scriptures, Trulliber's actions demonstrate a total neglect of benevolence and compassion. His words, when subjected to Shaftesbury's test of ridicule, are found devoid of meaning. Rather than display benevolence, Trulliber summons the parish constable to rid his house of the beggar.

After Adams reminds Trulliber that "as a Christian, much more as a Clergyman, [he is] obliged to relieve [his] Distress", the narrator relates the ensuing discussion:

'Dost preach to me,' replied *Trulliber*, 'dost pretend to instruct me in my Duty?' 'Ifacks, a good Story,' cries Mrs. *Trulliber*, 'to preach to my Master.' 'Silence, Woman,' cries *Trulliber*; 'I would have thee know, Friend, (addressing himself to *Adams*,) I shall not learn my Duty from such as thee; I know what Charity is, better than to give to Vagabonds.' . . . 'I am sorry,' answered *Adams*, 'that you do know what Charity is, since you practise it no better; I must tell you, if you trust to your Knowledge for your Justification, you will find yourself deceived, tho' you should add Faith to it without good Works.' 'Fellow,' cries *Trulliber*, 'Dost thou speak against Faith in my House? Get out of my Doors, I will no longer remain under the same Roof with a Wretch who speaks wantonly of Faith and the Scriptures.' 'Name not the Scriptures,' says *Adams*. 'How, not name the Scriptures! Do you disbelieve the Scriptures?' cries *Trulliber*. 'No, but you do,' answered *Adams*. 'if I may reason from your Practice: for their Commands are so explicite, and their Rewards and Punishments so immense, that it is impossible a Man should steadfastly believe without obeying. Now, there is no more Command more express, no Duty more frequently enjoined than Charity. Whoever therefore is void of Charity, I make no scruple of pronouncing that he is no Christian.' 'I would not advise thee, (says *Trulliber*) to say that I am no Christian. I won't take it of you: for I believe I am as good a Man as thyself;' (and indeed, tho' he was now rather too

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XIV, p. 166.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XIV, pp. 166-167.

corpulent for athletic Exercises, he had in his Youth been one of the best Boxers and Cudgel-players in the County.) His Wife seeing him clench his Fist, interposed, and begged him not to fight, but shew himself a true Christian, and take the Law of him. As nothing could provoke *Adams* to strike, but an absolute Assault on himself or his Friend; he smiled at the angry Look and Gestures of *Trulliber*; and telling him, he was sorry to see such Men in Orders, departed without farther Ceremony.<sup>100</sup>

By using Adams as moral educator, Fielding aimed at instructing readers about what constituted true charity and "Good-nature". Ironically, Trulliber and his wife, symbols of the Church, are totally ignorant of virtue. They present readers with another view of those individuals who, basing their lives on principles of selfishness and vice, ignore virtue because it fails to satisfy their vicious desires and passions. The scene presents one of only a few occasions when the "good-natured" Adams becomes aggressive to an antagonist. The parson's aggression, however, echoes that of his author, who believed that "whoever [was] void of Charity . . . [was] no Christian". With his hypocrisy exposed and his passions excited, Trulliber retaliates by threatening to assault his adversary. Ironically, he is restrained by his wife, who suggests that he "shew himself a true Christian" by seeking redress in the law. Given the fact that Trulliber had "so great an Authority in his Parish, that they [the parishoners] all lived in the utmost Fear and Apprehension of him",<sup>101</sup> it is not surprising that readers should find the parish deficient of benevolent individuals. Adams laments, on leaving the parish, "that it was possible in a Country professing Christianity, for a Wretch to starve in the midst of his Fellow-Creatures who abounded".<sup>102</sup> Having assimilated readers into the text, Fielding, by satirising Trulliber and his parishioners, forced them to examine their own consciences, lest they, too, be guilty of affecting benevolence.<sup>103</sup> Ideally, readers, on completing their reading of *Joseph Andrews*, should react to the distresses of their neighbours in a way similar to that of the drummer; for, only by displaying virtue could they be rewarded with true happiness. Although the "poor Pedlar" may go without, financially, in this life, his

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XIV, pp. 167-168.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XV, p. 169.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XV, p. 169.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XV, p. 170. Fielding comments, "I shall refer it to my Reader, to make what Observations he pleases on this Incident".

reward, according to the philosophies of Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, would be the happiness he derived from his acts of virtue; for, virtue brought its own rewards.

Following the example of the hypocrisy of Trulliber, Fielding provided readers with a more difficult test in distinguishing between "Good-nature" and its affected opposite. In a scene drawn from real life, Adams, just after having lamented the deterioration of "Good-nature" in the world, is duped by the benevolent expressions of a "courteous and obliging Gentleman", who "esteem[s] Riches only as they give [him] an opportunity of doing Good".<sup>104</sup> Delighted at an offer of horses and linen, Adams replies:

'Blessed be the Hour which first introduced me to a Man of your Charity: you are indeed a Christian of the true primitive kind, and an honour to the Country wherein you live. I would willingly have taken a Pilgrimage to the holy Land to have beheld you: for the Advantages which we draw from your Goodness, give me little pleasure, in comparison of what I enjoy for your own sake; when I consider the Treasures you are by these means laying up for yourself in a Country that passeth not away. . . . Was ever any thing so unlucky as this poor Gentleman? I protest I am more sorry on his account, than my own. You see, *Joseph*, how this good-natur'd Man is treated by his Servants; one of them locks up his Linen, another physicks his Horses; and I suppose by his being at this House last Night, the Butler had locked up his Cellar. Bless us! how Good-nature is used in this World!'<sup>105</sup>

The passage contains an important didactic message for readers; for, on this occasion, Adams symbolises those individuals who, failing to scrutinise the motives of others, allow themselves to be duped by the words of vicious characters. However, combined with the author's warning of the need to be wary of the motives of others, there is an accurate description of the way in which readers should react to the true "Christian". Adams' willingness to "Pilgrimage to the holy Land" should be indicative of the reaction and respect that readers should have toward a man of genuine virtue. Although somewhat naïve in his belief that "knowledge [can] only to be learnt from books",<sup>106</sup> Adams provided readers with an example of an individual upon whom they could base their own benevolent dispositions, while they journeyed through Fielding's didactic novel. Believing, as his parson expostulates, that no individuals were without some need of moral correction, Fielding aimed at instructing his readers in the pursuit of virtue.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XVI, p. 173.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XVI, pp. 173, 175.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. XVI, p. 176.

With the story of Wilson, Fielding entered into the eighteenth-century debate concerning the form of moral education that was necessary for young men. Being "without a [moral] Guide",<sup>107</sup> Wilson, like many young gentlemen with education, good family and wealth, eagerly affects the manners of the fashionable townsfolk. Readers are told, much to the horror of Adams, that Wilson formed intrigues with "half a dozen with the finest Women in Town", so as to win a "Reputation of Intriguing".<sup>108</sup> Fielding used Wilson's account to support the argument, stressed by Locke, Defoe and Chesterfield, that young men who were left to their own resources, without moral guidance, would most likely fall victims to the corrupt manners of fashionable society. Adams censures the man over his corrupt manners, only to be told by the "Man of Sense" that vanity, which is readily exhibited upon the English stage as being the norm, is the cause of his having lived "the Life of an Animal".<sup>109</sup> Having had the opportunity to examine his character, Wilson expresses verbally what Fielding had already demonstrated to readers, in the dispositions of a large number of characters in the novel, that society's ills are based predominately on vanity. Much to the dismay of Adams, Wilson relates his escapades into vanity, which include how he debauched a young girl away from her mother by the "Use of Flattery, Promises, and Presents".<sup>110</sup> The tale, which resembles Richardson's instruction to young women in *Pamela*, warns women of the need to be wary of the flattery and promises of men, who seek only the destruction of their virtue. After introducing the young girl "into the Acquaintance of some other kept Mistresses", who play cards and "frequent Plays", Wilson notes that:

She had not liv'd long in this Intimacy, before I perceived a visible Alteration in her Behaviour; all her Modesty and Innocence vanished by degrees, till her Mind became thoroughly tainted. She affected the Company of Rakes, gave herself all manner of Airs, was never easy but abroad, or when she had a Party at my Chambers. She was rapacious of Money, extravagant to Excess, loose in her Conversation: and if ever I demurred to any of her Demands, Oaths, Tears and Fits, were the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 202.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 203.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, pp. 204-205.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 207.

immediate Consequences. . . . [she] became in the end an abandoned Profligate; and . . . at last ended her miserable Life in *Newgate*.<sup>111</sup>

Correctly, Wilson assumes blame for the girl's loss of innocence. Like Richardson, Fielding also described, in fine detail, the consequences for young women who abandoned virtue for a life of fashion. Ironically, Wilson is duped by the woman who is not only unfaithful to him, but also squanders his wealth. Echoing his instruction in *Jonathan Wild*, Fielding warned readers that individuals always associated with others who displayed the same moral fibre as themselves. Readers, therefore, should not be surprised to find that Wilson had been duped by the woman.

In spite of his protestations against women, Wilson allows vanity to conquer reason in his affair with the "charming Saphira". It is only after having lived a life based on affectation and vanity that Wilson can recognise how these vicious passions can affect both the good and bad alike. He comments:

Indeed its Characterstick is Affectation, and this led and governed by Whim only: for as Beauty, Wisdom, Wit, Good-nature, Politeness and Health are sometimes affected by this Creature; so are Ugliness, Folly, Nonsense, Ill-nature, Ill-breeding and Sickness likewise put on by it in their Turn. Its Life is one constant Lye, and the only Rule by which you can form any Judgement of them is, that they are never what they seem. If it was possible for a Coquette to love . . . it would wear the Face of Indifference if not of hatred to the beloved Object; you may therefore be assured, when they endeavour to persuade you of their liking, that they are indifferent to you at least. And indeed this was the Case of my *Saphira*, who no sooner saw me in the number of her Admirers, than she gave me what is commonly called Encouragement.<sup>112</sup>

Wilson's words, which stress that vanity can affect individuals of both benevolent and malevolent temperaments alike, should warn readers that they cannot become too complacent in considering themselves above the vanities displayed by the characters in the text. The words should instruct readers to moderate their passions, lest they, too, be deceived by vanity. Wilson exemplifies the individual who, too easily, falls victim to the snares of the vain woman who, "affect[ing] the low Voice, Whisper, Lisp, Sigh, Start, Laugh, and many other Indications of Passion, . . . daily deceive[s] thousands".<sup>113</sup> In

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 208.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, pp. 209-210.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 210.

addition, following the didactic method of La Bruyère, Fielding provided his readers with some insight into the motives which caused characters, such as Richardson's Coquetilla and Fielding's own Saphira and Leonora, to encourage admirers to satisfy their own selfish needs. In contrast to good-natured women, of whom Fanny is an example, these affected women find neither permanent happiness nor future reward.

Wilson's continued attack upon vanity had its basis in the philosophies of Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson. Fielding, however, refusing to allow his writing to have an indoctrinating effect upon his readers, interposed Wilson's commentary with the ironical sight of Adams, berating vanity himself and searching for his sermon on the same subject. Readers are informed:

First then, says [Wilson], I concluded that the general Observation, that Wits are most inclined to Vanity, is not true. Men are equally vain of Riches, Strength, Beauty, Honours, &c. . . . My second Remark was, that Vanity is the worst of Passions, and more apt to contaminate the Mind than any other: For as Selfishness is much more general than we please to allow it, so it is natural to hate and envy those who stand between us and the Good we desire. . . . the vain Man seeks Pre-eminence; and every thing which is excellent or praise-worthy in another, renders him the Mark of his Antipathy. *Adams* now began to fumble in his Pockets, and soon cried out, 'O la! I have it not about me.' - Upon this the Gentleman asking him what he was searching for, he said he searched after a Sermon, which he thought his Master-piece, against Vanity. 'Fie upon it, fie upon it,' cries he, 'why do I ever leave that sermon out of my Pocket? I wish it was within five Miles, I would willingly fetch it, to read it to you.' The Gentleman answered, that there was no need, for he was cured of the Passion. 'And for that very Reason,' quoth *Adams*, 'I would read it, for I am confident you would admire it: Indeed, I have never been a greater Enemy to any Passion than that silly one of Vanity.' The Gentleman smiled and proceeded . . .<sup>114</sup>

In the passage, Fielding emphasised that vanity could affect both good and bad individuals alike, without their being able to recognize it. Adams' willingness to travel some distance to retrieve his sermon and read it to the gentleman, irrespective of the need, provides testimony to the fact that vanity not only affects all individuals, but that they are also blind to its existence. Like Wilson, readers should smile at the exposure of vanity in the parson, who had proclaimed himself its greatest enemy. At the same time, however, readers had to be careful that they, while laughing at the vanity of Adams, did not blind themselves to the effect that vanity could have on their own dispositions.

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, Book III, Ch. III, pp. 214-215.

At the conclusion of his history, the narrator informs readers that Wilson is saved from destruction by the very force of virtue itself, in the form of the benevolent Harriet Hearty. Becoming an heiress on inheriting the winnings of Wilson's lottery ticket, she, touched by Wilson's condition, gives him two hundred pounds so that he can repay his debts. Finally, after correcting his passionate advances, Harriet accepts a proposal of marriage from Wilson, prior to retiring to the country with him, to live a life of bliss, save for the loss of their son. Wilson's final words offer sound moral instruction to readers about the ways of the world. He comments:

In short, I had sufficiently seen, that the Pleasures of the World are chiefly Folly, and the Business of it mostly Knavery; and both, nothing better than Vanity: The Men of Pleasure tearing one another to pieces, from the Emulation of spending Money, and the Men of Business from Envy in getting it. My Happiness consisted entirely in my Wife, whom I loved with an inexpressible Fondness, which was perfectly returned. . . . we retired . . . from a World full of Bustle, Noise, Hatred, Envy, and Ingratitude, to Ease, Quiet, and Love.<sup>115</sup>

In the portrait of Wilson, Fielding, deviating deliberately from the Mandeville's doctrine, argued that individuals who repented their vicious ways could be reformed and find happiness. Like Shaftesbury, he claimed that many individuals, rather than being naturally evil, had allowed their vicious appetites to control their behaviour. These same individuals could be educated, through the medium of fiction, to recognise virtue and abandon vice.

Wilson's history provided Fielding with the opportunity of informing readers about the effects that a faulty or immoral education could have on the behaviour and manners of young men. Adams exclaims that "the Cause of all the Misfortunes . . . [and] Calamities" which befell Wilson can be attributed to "Public Schools [which] are the Nurseries of all Vice and Immorality".<sup>116</sup> However, in spite of Adams' strong assertions that public schools corrupt the morals of individuals, readers are presented with an alternative argument by Joseph Andrews, who claims that "great Schools are little Societies, where a Boy of any Observation may see in Epitome what he will afterwards

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. III, p. 224.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. V, pp. 229-230.

find in the World at large".<sup>117</sup> Ironically, Adams' preference for a "private School, where Boys may be kept in Innocence and Ignorance" so as to preserve them from temptation, highlights the very problem with his own existence - his lack of knowledge of the world, and his inability to deduce the true motives behind the words of other individuals. Although preserving the autonomy of his readers, Fielding did not leave them without a moral guide in deciding which system provided the better form of education. The extremes of both arguments are exposed in the passage below:

'Who would not rather preserve the Purity of his Child, than wish him to attain the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences; which, by the bye, he may learn in the Classes of a private School? for I would not be vain, but I esteem myself to be second to none, *nulli secundum*, in teaching these things; so that a Lad may have as much Learning in a private as in a public Education.' 'And with Submission,' answered *Joseph*, 'he may get as much Vice, witness several Country Gentlemen, who were educated within five Miles of their own Houses, and are as wicked as if they had known the World from their Infancy. I remember when I was in the Stable, if a young Horse was vicious in his Nature, no Correction would make him otherwise; I take it to be equally the same among Men: if a Boy be of a mischievous wicked Inclination, no School, tho' ever so private, will ever make him good; on the contrary, if he be of a righteous Temper, you may trust him to *London*, or wherever else you please, he will be in no danger of being corrupted. Besides, I have often heard my Master say, that the Discipline practised in public Schools was much better than that in private.' - 'You talk like a Jackanapes,' says *Adams*, 'and so did your Master. Discipline indeed! because one Man scourges twenty or thirty Boys more in a Morning than another, is he therefore a better Disciplinarian? . . . and if I was Master of six Boys only, I would preserve as good Discipline amongst them as the Master of the greatest School in the World. I say nothing, young Man; remember, I say nothing; but if Sir *Thomas* himself had been educated nearer home, and under the Tuition of somebody, remember, I name nobody, it might have been better for him - but his Father must institute him in the Knowledge of the World. *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit* .<sup>118</sup>

Ironically, the vanity of Adams, in his enthusiastic belief that he is the "greatest of all Schoolmasters", highlights the narrow-mindedness of the parson, who refuses to acknowledge that both forms of education have their advantages and disadvantages. Fielding used Adams' proclamation, that "no man is wise all the time", to remind readers that they should scrutinise the claims of all individuals, even those of good-natured individuals, prior to making any decisions or judgements. In contrast to the exemplary nature of Richardson's Pamela, Fielding asserted that, in reality, all individuals possessed

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. V, pp. 230-231.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. V, pp. 231-232.



certain vanities; some individuals, however, were able to control them in a better way than others. If Adams' view of education appeared distorted and narrow, then so too did Joseph's reply. What was important about the author's moral instruction was that both forms of education, if not supervised by individuals of virtuous dispositions, could equally corrupt the morals of the young.

Just as he had presented readers with the corruptions of public education, documented in the figure of Wilson, Fielding did the same with private education, in the figure of the Squire. Ironically, Fielding preceded the scene at the house of the Squire with a discourse on "Charity", delivered by Joseph. Andrews begins:

'I have often wondered, Sir, . . . to observe so few Instances of Charity among Mankind; for tho' the Goodness of a Man's Heart did not incline him to relieve the Distresses of his Fellow-Creatures, methinks the Desire of Honour should move him to it. What inspires a Man to build fine Houses, to purchase fine Furniture, Pictures, Clothes, and other things at a great Expence, but an Ambition to be respected more than other People? Now would not one great Act of Charity, one Instance of redeeming a poor Family from all the Miseries of Poverty, restoring an unfortunate Tradesman by a Sum of Money to the means of procuring a Livelihood by his Industry, discharging an undone Debtor from his Debts or a Goal, or any such like Example of Goodness, create a Man more Honour and Respect than he could acquire by the finest House, Furniture, Pictures or Clothes that were ever beheld? For not only the Object himself, who was thus relieved, but all who heard the Name of such a Person must, I imagine, reverence him infinitely more than the Possessor of all those other things. . . . Indeed it is strange that all Men should consent in commending Goodness, and no Man endeavour to deserve that Commendation; whilst, on the contrary, all rail at Wickedness, and all are as eager to be what they abuse.'<sup>119</sup>

Although Joseph's discourse on charity, derived significantly from the philosophy of Isaac Barrow, is honourable in its recommendation that all individuals should participate in benevolent actions in order to relieve the distresses of their fellow-beings, there is still need for readers to weigh his words against the philosophy of Butler. Critics have failed, on the whole, to grasp the subtle use of irony which Fielding directed at the boy, who had received a private education himself. Like Butler, Fielding supported acts of benevolence because such acts brought with them their own internal reward or happiness. Although Joseph recommends such acts, he does so with a secondary objective in view, that such acts will redound to the credit and honour of the agent. This gulf, between what Joseph

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, Book III, Ch. VI, pp. 233-235.

recommends and the actual philosophy of true benevolence, provided a means by which the author could test the genuineness and sincerity of the benevolence of his readers. There was, however, another important point to be deduced from Joseph's discussion; that was, Fielding's support of Shaftesbury's doctrine that no good action could be ridiculed.<sup>120</sup> Fielding believed that, while ridicule was the best means of exposing both affectation and folly, it could never deride true virtue.

Juxtaposed to the discourse on charity, Fielding included an example of the insensitivity of individuals who, having received a private education, should be expected to display benevolence and charity. Fielding's educational method remained the same; he aimed at providing readers with the facts, and forcing from them a judgement. One such example concerns the Squire's education, about whom the narrator informs readers:

He had been educated (if we may here use that Expression) in the Country, and at his own Home, under the Care of his Mother and a Tutor, who had Orders never to correct him nor to compel him to learn more than he liked, which it seems was very little, and that only in his Childhood; for from the Age of fifteen he addicted himself entirely to Hunting and other rural Amusements, for which his Mother took care to equip him with . . . all other Necessaries: and his Tutor endeavouring to ingratiate himself with his young Pupil, who would, he knew, be able handsomely to provide for him, became his Companion, not only at these Exercises, but likewise over a Bottle, which the young Squire had a very early Relish for. At the Age of twenty, his Mother began to think she had not fulfilled the Duty of a Parent; she therefore resolved to persuade her Son . . . to that which she imagined would well supply all that he might have learned at a public School or University. This is what they commonly call *Travelling*; which, with the help of the Tutor who was fixed on to attend him, she easily succeeded in. He made in three Years the Tour of *Europe*, as they term it, and returned home, well furnish'd with *French* Clothes, Phrases and Servants, with a hearty Contempt for his own Country; . . . But what distinguished him chiefly, was a strange Delight which he took in every thing which is ridiculous, odious, and absurd in his own Species; . . . for which purpose he was always provided with a Set of Fellows whom we have before called Curs; and who did indeed no great Honour to the Canine Kind, . . . they were to turn even Virtue and Wisdom themselves into Ridicule for the Diversion of their Master and Feeder.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VI, p. 234. Joseph comments: "I defy the wisest Man in the World to turn a true good Action into Ridicule. I defy him to do it. He who should endeavour it, would be laughed at himself, instead of making others laugh". This statement may be compared with Shaftesbury's admission in *An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (IV. i), in which he comments that: "One may defy the World to turn real . . . *Generosity* into Ridicule" (*Characteristics*, i, p. 129), a point also noted by Battestin, in *Joseph Andrews*, p. 234.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VII, pp. 244-245.

The passage provided an indictment of that form of private education in which neither discipline nor reason was applied to the education of the youth. Following the thoughts of Locke, Defoe and Chesterfield, Fielding condemned any form of education which failed to control excessive passion. In addition, he argued that the "tour of Europe", in which individuals travelled, without a moral guide, was a major cause of contemporary affectation and vice. Such individuals, while overseas and after returning, surrounded themselves with persons who not only shared the same corrupt manners, but who also strove to ridicule virtue and wisdom. The narrator observes the effect of this deficient education, when he informs readers that Adams is ridiculed by the Squire's "curs":

As soon as Dinner was served, while Mr. *Adams* was saying Grace, the Captain conveyed his Chair from behind him; so that when he endeavoured to seat himself, he fell down on the Ground; and thus compleated Joke the first, to the great Entertainment of the whole Company. The second Joke was performed by the Poet, who sat next to him on the other side, and took an Opportunity, while poor *Adams* was respectfully drinking to the Master of the House, to overturn a Plate of Soup into his Breeches; which, with the many Apologies he made, and the Parson's gentle Answers, caused much Mirth in the Company. Joke the third was served up by one of the Waiting-men, who had been ordered to convey a Quantity of Gin into Mr. *Adam's* Ale, which he declaring to be the best Liquor he ever drank, but rather too rich of the Malt, contributed again to their Laughter.<sup>122</sup>

Readers, perceiving the abuse of good nature, should laugh not at Adams but at those who attempt, yet fail, to ridicule the "good-natured" man. Ideal readers should not only feel the utmost sympathy for the way in which the parson is abused, but feel utter contempt for his antagonists. Adams, censuring the behaviour of his companions, anticipates the censure of ideal readers of the text to his inhospitable treatment. He comments:

'Sir, I am sorry to see one to whom Providence hath been so bountiful in bestowing his Favours, make so ill and ungrateful a Return for them; for tho' you have not insulted me yourself, it is visible that you have delighted in those that do it, nor have once discouraged the many Rudenesses which have been shewn towards me; indeed towards yourself, if you rightly understood them; for I am your Guest, and by the Laws of Hospitality entitled to your Protection. . . . Your Seating me at your Table was an Honour which I did not ambitiously affect; when I was here, I endeavoured to behave towards you with the utmost Respect; if I have failed, it was not with Design, nor could I, certainly, so far be guilty as to deserve the Insults I have suffered.'<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VII, pp. 245-246.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VII, pp. 247-248.

Far from being naïve, Adams becomes, for readers, their educator in "good-nature". His comment, and the episode as a whole, indicates the inability of ridicule to degrade genuine virtue. Thus, Adams expresses correctly "great Contempt for the Folly of Mankind, who sacrificed their Hopes of Heaven to the Acquisition of vast Wealth, since so much Comfort was to be found in the humblest State and the lowest Provision".<sup>124</sup>

Adams summarises Fielding's moral instruction when he comments that riches "swell the Heart with Vanity, puff up the Cheeks with Pride, shut our Ears to every call of Virtue, and our Bowels to every Motive of Compassion!" For the Squire, this is the consequence of a corrupt private education. Fielding's definition of charity and natural benevolence was outlined in the discussion between the parson and Peter Pounce:

*Adams* answered, that Riches without Charity were nothing worth; for that they were only a Blessing to him who made them a Blessing to others. 'You and I,' said *Peter*, 'have different Notions of Charity. I own, as it is generally used, I do not like the Word, nor do I think it becomes one of us Gentlemen; it is a mean Parson-like Quality; tho' I would not infer many Parsons have it neither.' 'Sir,' said *Adams*, 'my Definition of Charity is a generous Disposition to relieve the Distressed.' 'There is something in that Definition,' answered *Peter*, 'which I like well enough; it is . . . a Disposition - and does not so much consist in the Act as in the Disposition to do it; but alas, Mr. *Adams*, Who are meant by the Distressed? Believe me, the Distresses of Mankind are mostly imaginary, and it would be rather Folly than Goodness to relieve them.' 'Sure, sir,' replied *Adams*, 'Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness, and other Distresses which attend the Poor, can never be said to be imaginary Evils.' 'How can any Man complain of Hunger,' said *Peter*, 'in a Country where such excellent Sallads are to be gathered in almost every Field? or of Thirst, where every River and Stream produces such delicious Potations? And as for Cold and Nakedness, they are Evils introduced by Luxury and Custom. A Man naturally wants Clothes no more than a Horse or any other Animal, and there are whole Nations who go without them: but these are things perhaps which you, who do not know the World.'<sup>125</sup>

Following the ideas of philosophers such as Barrow and Forbes,<sup>126</sup> Fielding believed that individuals should always be ready to act as charitably as they could to the "poor Brethren".<sup>127</sup> Rather than portraying Adams as naïve, Fielding made the hypocritical

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. VIII, p. 252.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. XIII, pp. 274-275.

<sup>126</sup> Barrow, *The Works of the Learned Isaac Barrow, D.D.* (I, 14); Forbes, *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects*, "Essay on Self-Love", Section ix, pp. 280-81, and "Additions to the Essay on Self-Love", No. III, pp. 355-356.

<sup>127</sup> Fielding re-emphasised this point in *The Covent-Garden Journal*, No. 39 (May 16, 1752), pp. 226-230.

Pounce, both in his refusal to be charitable and in his assertions that the world's distresses were imaginary, appear the figure of ridicule. From an educational point of view, Fielding argued that all individuals should follow the example of Parson Adams and learn not only the verbal definitions of charity and benevolence, but, more importantly, learn how to express these virtues in their own actions. By condemning the assertions of Pounce, readers should be well on their way to achieving an education in virtue.

Adams' good nature and virtue is further exemplified in his refusal to succumb to the pressures of Lady Booby, who has forbidden him to read the three banns in preparation for the marriage of Joseph and Fanny. The narrator informs readers that, since her "Dismission of *Joseph*", her selfish passions have not abated; instead, his image has "remained lurking in her Mind". The narrator continues that:

Restless, interrupted Slumbers, and confused horrible Dreams were her Portion the first Night . . . she then blamed, she cursed the hasty Rashness of her Temper; her Fury was vented all on herself, and *Joseph* appeared innocent in her Eyes. Her Passion at length grew so violent that it forced her on seeking Relief, and now she thought of recalling him: But Pride forbad that, Pride which soon drove all softer Passions from her Soul . . . Revenge came now to her Assistance; and she considered her Dismission of him, stript, and without a Character, with the utmost Pleasure. She rioted in the several kinds of Misery, which her Imagination suggested to her, might be his Fate; and with a Smile composed of Anger, Mirth, and Scorn, viewed him in the Rags in which her Fancy had drest him.<sup>128</sup>

Unable to restrain her passions and vengeance, and inspired by Mrs. Slipslop, Lady Booby's character resembles that of Richardson's Lovelace. Fielding, like La Bruyère, blamed the power of habit and lack of education for these excesses of passion in women. "Instructed by her Mother, that Master is a very monstrous Kind of Animal", a woman is taught to fly from a man "as the innocent Hare doth from the Greyhound".<sup>129</sup> As they become wiser, women perceive men differently from what they had been taught, and thus find difficulty in uniting the conflicting views. A discrepancy, therefore, occurred in their minds between the notions of "Gentleness, Softness, Kindness, Tenderness, [and]

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. I, pp. 278-279. After her discussion with Adams, the narrator describes her torment, when he notes that "her Mind was distracted, and her Soul tossed up and down by many turbulent and opposite Passions. She loved, hated, pitied, scorned, admired, despised the same Person by Fits, which changed in a very short Interval". Book IV, Ch. IV, p. 287.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, p. 300.

Fondness"<sup>130</sup> and their opposites: censure, deceit, and revenge. Thus, argued Fielding, women "really believe[d] they hate[d] what they love[d]", the view reflected in Lady Booby's attempt to cause unhappiness for Joseph and deprive Adams of his cure.

In spite of Lady Booby's threats, Adams argues that poverty should provide no barrier to denying any the couple "the common Privileges, and innocent Enjoyments which Nature indulges to the animal Creation". He continues:

'Madam, . . . I know not what your Ladyship means by the Terms *Master* and *Service*. I am in the Service of a Master who will never discard me for doing my Duty: And if the Doctor (for indeed I have never been able to pay for a Licence) thinks it proper to turn me out from my Cure, G - will provide me, I hope, another. At least, my Family as well as myself have Hands; and he will prosper, I doubt not, our Endeavours to get our Bread honestly with them. Whilst my Conscience is pure, I shall never fear what Man can do unto me.'<sup>131</sup>

Opposite Lady Booby's malevolence, Adams maintains dignity and virtue, even above a concern for his own existence. Cautioning readers against renouncing virtue, even in times of suffering, Adams instructs them that, despite all else, God will never abandon the virtuous. In reply to Lady Booby's insult that she has demeaned herself in talking to him, Adams concludes with words that signify Fielding's instruction to readers, that if she were to "enquire farther into this matter" she would applaud, rather than condemn his worthy actions. Like his author, Adams admits that he "shall enter into no Person's Doors against their Will".<sup>132</sup> In terms of the novel of moral instruction, this meant that the autonomy of readers had to be preserved, so that they could make a conscious decision to pursue the cause of virtue. Rather than indoctrinate his readers with his views, Fielding believed that readers must "open their doors" and find what constituted true virtue; this could only be achieved by forcing them to scrutinise characters, motives and situations for themselves. Only when this form of enquiry had been completed could readers begin to comprehend good nature and virtue.

Fielding believed that his readers should try to emulate the characters of Adams, Joseph and Fanny, if they were to achieve good nature. Unlike Richardson's paragons of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VII, p. 300.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. II, p. 283.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. II, p. 284.

virtue, these characters presented readers with real and human dispositions; for, as well as their strengths, they also had their weaknesses. Mrs. Slipslop aptly describes the characters when she observes that "there was always something in those low-life Creatures which must eternally distinguish them from their Betters".<sup>133</sup> This distinguishing feature is their benevolence or good nature. Lady Booby summarises the character of Joseph when she comments that:

'His Behaviour is such that would not shame the best Education. . . . Every thing he doth hath no mark of the base Motive of Fear, but visibly shews some Respect and Gratitude, and carries with it the Persuasion of Love - And then for his Virtues; such Piety to his Parents, such tender Affection to his Sister, such Integrity in his Friendship, such Bravery, such Goodness, that if he had been born a Gentleman, his Wife would have possesst the most invaluable Blessing. . . Is he not more worthy of Affection than a dirty Country Clown, tho' born of a Family as old as the Flood, or an idle worthless Rake, or little puisny Beau of Quality? And yet these we must condemn ourselves to, in order to avoid the Censure of the World; to shun the Contempt of others, we must ally ourselves to those we despise; we must prefer Birth, Title and Fortune to real Merit. It is a Tyranny of Custom, a Tyranny we must comply with: for we People of Fashion are the Slaves of Custom.'<sup>134</sup>

Fielding strengthened his instruction by having Lady Booby, a character beset with uncontrollable passions, comment upon the character of Joseph, a character worthy of emulation. Lady Booby confirms that the "tyranny of custom" is responsible for the affectation, hypocrisy, and vanity so prevalent in contemporary society.

After presenting two further examples of affectation in Beau Didapper and Parson Adams' wife, Fielding had Adams instruct both Joseph and Fanny on the need for self-control in all matters. Stressing the need for reason to control the passions in relation to the loss of Fanny, Adams advises Joseph that, although he cannot blame him for "these first Agonies of Grief, he must learn to master them by "summon[ing] Reason as quickly as he can to his Aid; and [learn] Patience and Submission". Ironically, Adams tells the youth to remain "comforted" even though he may expect the "utmost Violence" to be perpetrated upon "the prettiest, kindest, loveliest, sweetest young Woman". More importantly, Fielding used Adams to present readers with the traditional Christian

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VI, p. 295.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VI, pp. 295-296.

instruction, that "no Accident happens to us without the Divine Permission, and that it is the Duty of a Man, much more of a Christian, to submit". Advising Joseph "peaceably and quietly [to] submit to all the Dispensations of Providence", Adams reminds him "that all the Misfortunes . . . which happen to the Righteous, happen to them for their own Good". He concludes by emphasising to Joseph the duty of all Christian beings, "to abstain from immoderate Grief".<sup>135</sup> Although he is correct in suggesting that Joseph should control his immoderate grief and accept that afflictions are often sent by Providence to test the Christian natures of individuals, Fielding satirised both the parson's method of comforting the youth and those doctrines of the Church which ignored the fact that individuals did suffer from excessive grief. Adams' lecture is not only ridiculous in the way that he increases Joseph's grief by elaborating the perfect qualities of Fanny, but the lecture is undermined by Adams' own excessive passions when he is attended by afflictions. In this sense, his lecture contained elements similar to the "Enthusiasms", against which the author instructed his readers.

Adams resumes the same tone when he warns both Joseph and Fanny of the need to subdue their "brutal Lusts and Affections". Advising them to "submit in all things to the Will of Providence", he continues:

All Passions are criminal in their Excess, and even Love itself, if it is not subservient to our Duty, may render us blind to it. Had *Abraham* so loved his Son *Isaac*, as to refuse the Sacrifice required, is there any of us who would not condemn him? *Joseph*, I know your many good Qualities, and value you for them: but as I am to render an Account of your Soul, which is committed to my Cure, I cannot see any Fault without reminding you of it. You are too much inclined to Passion, Child, and have set your Affections so absolutely on this young Woman, that if G - required her at your hands, I fear that you would reluctantly part with her. Now believe me, no Christian ought so to set his Heart on any Person or Thing in this World., but that whenever it shall be required or taken from him in any manner by Divine Providence, he may be able, peaceably, quietly, and contentedly to resign it.<sup>136</sup>

Adams' words also present readers with the orthodox Christian view of the need to submit everything to the will of Providence. As Joseph's teacher, Adams shares with his author the view that moderation is required in all things. Ironically, however, when

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., Book III, Ch. XI, pp. 264-266.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VIII, p. 308.



Adams is put to the test himself and is told that his son, Dick, has drowned, he fails miserably in following his own moral instruction. Instead of maintaining the stoical conviction that individuals must be prepared to lose those closest to them and submit themselves to the Divine Will, Adams "deplore[s] his Loss with the bitterest Agony".

The narrator informs readers that:

*Joseph*, who was overwhelmed with Concern likewise, recovered himself sufficiently to endeavour to comfort the Parson; in which Attempt he used many Arguments that he had at several times remember'd out of his own Discourses both in private and publick, (for he was a great Enemy to the Passions, and preached nothing more than the Conquest of them by Reason and Grace) but he was not at leisure now to hearken to his Advice. 'Child, Child,' said he, 'do not go about Impossibilities. Had it been any other of my Children I could have born it with patience; but my little Prattler, the Darling and Comfort of my old Age - the little Wretch to be snatched out of Life just at his Entrance into it; the sweetest, best-temper'd Boy, who never did a thing to offend me. . . . 'My poor *Jacky*, shall I never see thee more?' cries the Parson. - 'Yes, surely,' says *Joseph*, 'and in a better Place, you will meet again never to part more.' - I believe the Parson did not hear these Words, for he paid little regard to them, but went on lamenting whilst the Tears trickled down into his Bosom.<sup>137</sup>

Ironically, the parson, forgetting his discourses on the need to maintain moderate grief in relation to all misfortunes, must be reminded by his pupil, Joseph, against being "too inclined to Passion". Even when Dick is returned to his father alive, Adam's joy is excessive, for he "dance[s] about the room like one frantick". Rather than condemn the excessive behaviour of the parson, the narrator informs readers that the parson merely "felt the Ebullition, the Overflowings of a full, honest, open Heart towards the Person who had conferred a real Obligation".<sup>138</sup> Despite Adams' earlier warnings about the need to moderate the excesses of passion, benevolent readers should not censure the man for his excessive joy on finding his son alive; instead, they should share his happiness. Fielding, in attacking those forms of religious teaching which promoted inhumanity, emphasised to readers the great gulf which existed in the hearts of good-natured individuals, between the appearance - indifferent submission to misfortune - and the reality - immense grief for the loss of a child or the joy at his return.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VIII, p. 309.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VIII, p. 310.

Fielding tested the sagacity of his readers by forcing them to examine that the judgements they had just made were, in fact, the correct ones. After allowing Adams to explain his exhibition of passion, the narrator continues the conversation between the parson and Joseph Andrews, in the following words:

'Boy,' reply'd *Adams*, raising his Voice, 'it doth not become green Heads to advise grey Hairs - Thou art ignorant of the Tenderness of fatherly Affection; when thou art a Father thou wilt be capable then only of knowing what a Father can feel. No Man is obliged to Impossibilities, and the Loss of a Child is one of those great Trials where our Grief may be allowed to become immoderate.' 'Well, sir,' cries *Joseph*, 'and if I love a Mistress as well as you your Child, surely her Loss would grieve me equally.' 'Yes, but such Love is foolishness, and wrong in itself, and ought to be conquered,' answered *Adams*, 'it savours too much of the Flesh.' 'Sure, sir,' says *Joseph*, 'it is not sinful to love my Wife, no not even to doat on her to Distraction!' 'Indeed but it is,' says *Adams*. 'Every Man ought to love his Wife, no doubt; we are commanded so to do; but we ought to love her with Moderation and Discretion.' - 'I am afraid I shall be guilty of some Sin, in spite of all my Endeavours,' says *Joseph*; 'for I shall love without any Moderation, I am sure.' - 'You talk foolishly and childishly,' cries *Adams*.<sup>139</sup>

Fielding satirised the words of Adams, for he, like ideal readers, knew that actions, not words, provided the best insight into a character's humanity and virtue. Throughout the novel, Fielding, in warning readers to be wary of the words of individuals, emphasised that all individuals should investigate the motives behind the words and actions of others. Correctly, Joseph rebukes his mentor on the issue of passion, and despite Adams' protestations that the boy is ignorant of the tenderness of fatherly affection, the protagonist concludes by stating that he shall "love without any Moderation". By doing so, Joseph, like Wilson, with his true love for Harriet, will show his humanity, and be rewarded with happiness. In a further ironical twist to the parson's words, Mrs. Adams attacks her husband's idea that "husbands can love their wives too well", adding that she would burn any sermon which offered a contrary view; she continues:

'I am certain you do not preach as you practise; for you have been a loving and a cherishing Husband to me, that's the truth on't; and why you should endeavour to put such wicked Nonsense into this young Man's Head, I cannot devise. Don't hearken to him, Mr. *Joseph*, be as good a Husband as you are able, and love your Wife with all your Body and Soul too.'<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VIII, p. 310.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. VIII, p. 311.

A "violent rap" on the door concludes the scene, but not before Fielding's instruction had been clearly instilled into the minds of his readers. Mrs. Adams, by providing the last word on the issue, relayed the author's views on the subject. Although Fielding claimed that passion should be kept within the bounds of moderation, love of one's family or one's friends was very much a "natural" virtue which formed an indispensable part of "Good-nature". Consequently, any theological doctrine which denied the notion of true love, by requiring that individuals submit to the "Divine Plan" with indifference, was, in practice, ridiculous. Only by decoding the meanings of the remarks of both Adams and Joseph could readers be satisfied with discovering Fielding's instruction. Fielding asserted that all passion should be exercised with moderation; however, true love, far from being a passion, was a virtue which could never be carried to excess. Thus, neither Adams nor Joseph were to be censured for their apparent excesses in relation to virtue.

Fielding concluded the novel with several humorous episodes, based on the inability of characters to control passion. Fanny, on hearing that she is Joseph's sister, faints, allowing both Didapper and Lady Booby to renew their attacks upon both Fanny and Joseph, respectively. Lady Booby's uncontrolled passion is rekindled; she muses:

'Ha! and do I doat thus on a Footman! I despise, I detest my Passion. - Yet why? Is he not generous, gentle, kind? - Kind to whom? to the meanest Wretch, a Creature below my Consideration. . . . No, I will tear his Image from my Bosom, tread on him, spurn him. . . . To sacrifice my Reputation, my Character, my Rank in Life, to the Indulgence of a mean and vile Appetite. - How I detest the Thought! How much more exquisite is the Pleasure resulting from the Reflection of Virtue and Prudence, than the faint Relish of what flows from Vice and Folly!' <sup>141</sup>

Lady Booby cannot rid her "mad passion" of the thought of Joseph, even though she is aware of the consequences of marrying below her. The passage offered readers the opportunity to judge the character of the woman who ironically comments that she must not sacrifice her reputation to vile appetite, and must maintain her virtue and prudence. Her character is exposed as being ridiculous, for she has always indulged her passions to the point of making the innocent suffer. Her comments, therefore, stress her essential

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., Book IV, Ch. XIII, pp. 327-328.

hypocrisy; for, while she proclaims the need for virtue and prudence, her actions demonstrate that she lives a life of vice and folly.

In much the same way, the farcical "Night-Adventure" exposes the hypocrisy of Mrs. Slipslop, who tries to salvage her reputation by screaming rape when Didapper stumbles into her bed looking for Fanny. In truth, however, her actions demonstrate that she has willingly attempted to entice Didapper into a carnal embrace. Readers are told:

Beau *Didapper* no sooner had perceived his Mistake, than he attempted to escape from the Bed . . . but the watchful *Slipslop* prevented him. For that prudent Woman being disappointed of those delicious Offerings which her Fancy had promised her Pleasure, resolved to make an immediate Sacrifice to her Virtue. . . At that instant therefore, . . . she caught fast hold of his Shirt . . . roaring out, 'O thou Villain! who hast attacked my Chastity, and I believed ruined me in my Sleep; I will swear Rape against thee, I will prosecute thee with the utmost Vengeance.' The Beau attempted to get loose, but she held him fast, and when he struggled, she cry'd out, 'Murther! Murther! Rape! Robbery! Ruin!'<sup>142</sup>

Far from being concerned about virtue or preserving her chastity, the screams of the deceitful Mrs. Slipslop are affected in order to maintain her reputation in the eyes of her mistress. The situation becomes farcical, when Adams, always ready to come to the assistance of his fellow creatures, leaps naked from his bed, and runs to the woman's aid. Ironically, despite pleas of innocence, it is the man of good nature who, being caught with the screaming woman, is reviled by Lady Booby "as the wickedest of all Men. . . [for] choosing her House as the Scene of his Debaucheries, and her own Woman for the Object of his Bestiality".<sup>143</sup> Fielding, however, emphasised the innocent nature of the parson's character, in his mistaking Fanny's room for his own and his "lay[ing] by [her] side" until morning. Unlike Wilson, who is morally re-educated by Harriet Hearty, neither Lady Booby nor Mrs. Slipslop, being unable to control their passions, can become anything more than one-dimensional exposures of affectation and hypocrisy. Consequently, they could neither achieve virtue nor be rewarded with ultimate happiness.

At the conclusion of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding rewarded his good characters, whose journey through life had been hampered by the designs of selfish and vicious

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. XIV, p. 331.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. XIV, p. 332.

individuals. His reward, however, was a movement away from that form of reward for "affected virtue" which, he believed, Richardson had offered readers in *Pamela*. In *Joseph Andrews*, there was no apparent or necessary connection between virtue and worldly reward; rather, reward came coincidentally. Although Joseph and Fanny were united at the conclusion of the work, Fielding's primary characters did not seek an earthly reward; their reward was to be found in the benevolent and good-natured principle that goodness and virtue brought with them their own internal rewards and happiness. Fielding claimed that it was the duty of all individuals to maintain goodness, in spite of all misfortunes and obstacles of vice; for, in turn, this would result in an improvement in the moral standards of society. This, then, was Fielding's moral instruction in *Joseph Andrews*, an instruction which turned the minds of readers towards the pursuit of virtue, by exposing the ridiculous nature of affectation, hypocrisy and other related follies. Although both Richardson and Fielding attempted to inculcate virtue in the minds of their readers, their methods were completely different. Fielding, believing that human beings would never achieve the exemplary level of a Pamela, took as his instructional medium, three characters who, like all human beings, had their own affectations and weaknesses. He believed that readers would pursue virtue only if they were given models of behaviour with whom they shared a common humanity and a common set of worldly experiences. Only then could readers be educated in, and appreciate, virtue.

It was for this reason, the educative purpose of the text, that Fielding warned readers not "to travel through these pages too fast", lest they miss the instruction "observed by the slower and more accurate reader". Those who travelled too quickly through the pages were more likely to err in their judgements about the work, as did Francis Coventry who, missing the moral aim behind Fielding's writing, claimed that the "Delicacy of Stile and Sentiment [had] been quite neglected in some Dialogues". He continued:

Lewdness is too mean a Branch of Humour . . . for a Man of Mr. *Fielding's* Sense to have Recourse to: and we hope that he will henceforth leave it to

those barren Writers of Comedy who have no other Way of pleasing, but a scandalous Coincidence with the deprav'd Taste of a vicious Audience.<sup>144</sup>

Elizabeth Carter was more correct when, in a letter to Catherine Talbot, she commented:

It must surely be a marvellous wrongheadedness and perplexity of understanding that can make any one consider this complete satire as a very immoral thing, and of the most dangerous tendency, and yet I have met with some people who treat it in the most outrageous manner.<sup>145</sup>

It was Fielding's aim to correct such vices as affectation, avarice, hypocrisy, hate, lust and pride; this testified to his work being didactic rather than mimetic. As a means of correcting folly and vice, he employed irony and satire to distinguish them from virtue and truth. More importantly, however, Fielding's didactic method necessitated that readers be assimilated into the world of the text and that they learn from experiences based upon real-life situations. Thus, only by exercising their own judgement, or sagacity, could readers be educated in the pursuit of virtue. Coventry summarised Fielding's didactic method, in an earlier part of *An Essay on a New Species of Writing*, when he commented that, in his "Design of Reformation", Fielding, avoiding "the old beaten Track" of the lecture, "found it necessary to open a new vein of Humour, and . . . compile Characters which really existed. . . [resulting in] a lively Representative of real life".<sup>146</sup> Fielding was, indeed, an "uncommon Genius" in the way he blended, in *Joseph Andrews*, humour and ridicule with characters and scenes representative of real life. His purpose was to educate his readers in "Good-Nature" and virtue. Rather than making them "fear to look into such a glass", Fielding forced readers to examine their own characters. In this, he certainly did "more than the greatest divines [had] yet been capable of".<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Francis Coventry, *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding: With a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism* (London: Printed for W. Owen, near Temple-Bar, 1751), pp. 41-42.

<sup>145</sup> Elizabeth Carter, "Letter to Catherine Talbot" (January 1, 1743), in *Henry Fielding: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Claude Rawson (Penguin: Middlesex, 1973), p. 61.

<sup>146</sup> Coventry, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

<sup>147</sup> Lady Henrietta Luxborough, "Letter to William Shenstone" (March 23, 1748-9); reprinted in *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 160.

**Chapter X                      Fielding's Didactic Instruction in *Tom Jones*:  
Moderating Good Nature with Prudence**

*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, like *Joseph Andrews*, written seven years earlier, was predominantly a novel of moral instruction, interfused with elements of humour. The novel, which conforms to the traditional approach to moral education, uses humour as a means of entertainment in order to draw readers into accepting the validity of the author's moral doctrine on the need to pursue "Good Nature" and virtue. However, in *Tom Jones*, the didactic instruction was qualified by a direct appeal to readers to apply prudence to their good nature. In contrast to his earlier novel, which had exposed affectation and hypocrisy, Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, extended the process of education by assuming that readers could recognise some vices, and judge them appropriately. Thus, anticipating the criticism that was to depict *Tom Jones* as either a "dissolute book" or a novel that would "sap the foundation of morality",<sup>1</sup> Fielding commented that:

I hope my Reader will be convinced, at his very Entrance on this Work, that he will find in the whole Course of it nothing prejudicial to the Cause of Religion and Virtue; nothing inconsistent with the strictest Rules of Decency, nor which can offend even the chastest Eye in the Perusal. On the contrary, I declare, that to recommend Goodness and Innocence hath been my sincere Endeavour in this History. This honest Purpose . . . is likeliest to be attained in Books of this Kind; for an Example is a Kind of Picture, in which Virtue becomes as it were an Object of Sight, and strikes us with an Idea of that Loveliness, which *Plato* asserts there is in her naked Charms.

Besides displaying that Beauty of Virtue which may attract the Admiration of Mankind, I have attempted to engage a stronger Motive to Human Action in her Favour, by convincing Men, that their true Interest directs them to a Pursuit of her. For this Purpose I have shewn, that no Acquisitions of Guilt can compensate the Loss of that solid inward Comfort

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<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hawkins, cited p. 229 above; and Samuel Richardson in a letter to J. B. de Freval (January 21, 1750-1), in Carroll, *Selected Letters*, p. 175.

of Mind, which is the true Companion of Innocence and Virtue; nor can in the least Balance the Evil of that Horror and Anxiety which, in their Room, Guilt introduces into our Bosoms. . . . Lastly, I have endeavoured strongly to inculcate, that Virtue and Innocence can scarce ever be injured but by Indiscretion; and that it is this alone which often betrays them into the Snares that Deceit and Villainy spread for them. A Moral which I have more industriously laboured, as the teaching it is, of all others, the likeliest to be attended with Success; since, I believe, it is much easier to make good Men wise, than to make bad Men good.

For these Purposes I have employed all the Wit and Humour of which I am Master in the following History; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh Mankind out of their favourite Follies and Vices.<sup>2</sup>

In defending his novel against accusations of immorality, Fielding argued that it was his primary intention to promote the causes of religion and virtue over the sham happiness offered by affectation and vice. The criticisms of Hawkins, Johnson and Richardson, in relation to Fielding's immorality, however, were based on a misinterpretation of the author's didactic aim. They failed to realise that Fielding not only disapproved of the moral misdemeanours of his protagonist, but that he felt it necessary, in order "to recommend Goodness and Innocence", to "picture" villainy in real-life colours. Consequently, by refining Shaftesbury's didactic method, Fielding believed that it was possible "to laugh Mankind out of their favourite Follies and Vices".

If he proved successful in attacking vice and getting readers to scrutinise their own values, Fielding believed that readers, after decoding the moral instruction in the text, would apply his values, which censured affectation and vice, to their own lives. In spite of all else, argued Fielding in *Amelia*, readers could always be consoled with knowing "that however few of other good things of life [were their] lot, the best of all things, which is innocence, [was] always within [their] own power".<sup>3</sup> While he acknowledged that fortune could make individuals unhappy, he claimed that it could never make them entirely miserable, without their consent. Fielding maintained that it was within the power of all individuals to choose between submitting to vice or pursuing virtue. However, in cases where individuals had been deficiently educated in distinguishing

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, ed. F. Bowers and M. C. Battestin (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), Volume I, "Dedication to George Lyttleton", pp. 7-8. Future references will be from this edition of the text.

<sup>3</sup> Fielding, *Amelia*, in 2 vols. (1930; rpt. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1966), Volume II, Book, VIII, Ch. III, p. 69.



between virtue and vice, Fielding offered his fiction, a narrative based on real life, as a moral palliative. Recognising that "Good Nature" was too often abused in this world, he warned readers that they should always apply prudence to their acts of benevolence.

Addressing readers directly, the narrator comments that:

For they (readers) may here find that Goodness of Heart, and Openness of Temper, tho' these may give them great Comfort within, and administer to an honest Pride in their own Minds, will by no Means, alas! do their Business in the World. Prudence and Circumspection are necessary even to the best of Men. They are indeed as it were a Guard to Virtue, without which she can never be safe. . . . Let this, my young Readers, be your constant Maxim, That no Man can be good enough to enable him to neglect the Rules of Prudence; nor will Virtue herself look beautiful, unless she be bedecked with the outward Ornaments of Decency and Decorum.<sup>4</sup>

In her essay, "Prudence: A Case Study", Eleanor Newman Hutchens argues correctly that Fielding presented two prudence themes in *Tom Jones*.<sup>5</sup> What was more important, however, was that Fielding had attempted to educate his readers to distinguish between a negative prudence, exemplified in the hypocrisy and selfishness of such characters as Blifil, and a positive prudence, displayed, later in the novel, by Allworthy and Jones. Following the theories of benevolence promoted by Shaftesbury and Butler, who advocated that benevolence and self-love were not necessarily incompatible, Fielding instructed readers to develop, within their own breasts, a form of prudence which, to use the words of Adam Ferguson, would "direct a man in what he [was] to wish for himself, for his friend, for his country, and for mankind".<sup>6</sup> Allworthy presents the author's instruction when he comments that if individuals neglect prudence, then they "lay the Foundation of [their] own Ruin". Like Adams, Allworthy is readily deceived by hypocrisy; thus, it became Fielding's aim to educate readers against this weakness.

With the exception of a greater number of authorial intrusions into the text, Fielding used the same didactic technique as he did in *Joseph Andrews*. The intrusions indicated a more determined effort, on the part of the author, to guide the moral education

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<sup>4</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book III, Ch. vii, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Newman Hutchens, *Irony in Tom Jones* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), pp. 101-119.

<sup>6</sup> Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Kincaid and W. Creech, 1773), Part VI, Ch. V, Section iii, p. 230.

of his readers. One way in which the author achieved this was by directing the attention of readers to the educational purpose of books and chapters. For example, he used the titles to point to the moral lesson contained within, in a similar vein to his introduction to Book Three in which he suggested that "the Reader may pick up some Hints concerning the Education of Children". Further examples of the instruction inherent in some of the chapters can be seen in the following examples:

*A short Sketch of that Felicity which prudent Couples may extract from Hatred; with a short Apology for those People who overlook Imperfections in their Friends .<sup>7</sup>*

*Containing a Hint or two concerning Virtue, and a few more concerning Suspicion .<sup>8</sup>*

*What arrived while the Company were at Breakfast, with some Hints concerning the Government of Daughters .<sup>9</sup>*

By drawing the attention of readers to the particular moral concerns of both books and chapters, Fielding emphasised the specific learning experiences that readers should gain from their reading. This contrasted the general education with which the author had provided readers in *Joseph Andrews*. Furthermore, this technique provided readers with a moral framework in which to judge the events of the text. Fielding stressed his didactic method when he had the narrator comment:

Bestir thyself therefore on this Occasion; for tho' we will always lend thee proper Assistance in difficult Places, as we do not, like some others, expect thee to use the Arts of Divination to discover our Meaning; yet we shall not indulge thy Laziness where nothing but thy own Attention is required, for thou art highly mistaken if thou dost imagine that we intended, when we begun this great Work, to leave thy Sagacity nothing to do, or that without sometimes exercising this Talent, thou wilt be able to travel through our Pages with any Pleasure or Profit to thyself.<sup>10</sup>

In *Tom Jones*, Fielding argued that readers could only appreciate the true meaning of the text, and improve their manners and morals, by exercising their sagacity.

Readers are introduced to the good-natured Allworthy when the Squire, "an agreeable Person, [of] sound Constitution [and] solid Understanding, and a benevolent

<sup>7</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book II, Ch. VII, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Book XI, Ch. X, p. 614.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. VI, p. 706.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Book XI, Ch. ix, p. 614.

Heart",<sup>11</sup> returns home, after a three month stay in London, to find a child sleeping in his bed. Other than providing the background to the history, the first Book allows readers to contrast the selfishness of characters such as Mrs. Deborah Wilkins and Miss Bridget Allworthy with the benevolence of Squire Allworthy. Exhibiting her malevolent nature, for example, Mrs. Wilkins, after inveighing against "such wicked Sluts",<sup>12</sup> continues:

'For my own part, . . . it goes against me to touch these misbegotten Wretches, whom I don't look upon as my Fellow Creatures. Faugh, how it stinks! It doth not smell like a Christian. If I might be so bold to give my Advice, I would have it put in a Basket, and sent out and laid at the Church-Warden's Door. . . . But if it should not, we have discharged our Duty in taking proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such Creatures to die in a state of Innocence, than to grow up and imitate their Mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them.'<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to Allworthy's recommendation that compassion be shown to the child, Fielding satirised the corrupt nature of the woman who, personifying the selfishness and depravity of human nature advocated by Hobbes and the Calvinists,<sup>14</sup> could deny a fellow-creature the very opportunity of life itself while she herself remained dependent upon the goodness of her benefactor. Both in her refusal to touch the "noxious Animal"<sup>15</sup> and in her abuse of Jenny Jones, Mrs. Wilkins personifies the hypocrisy and malevolence against which both Allworthy and readers need to be educated. Ironically, in spite of her professions of charity, it is Mrs. Wilkins who, preferring to turn out of doors a child who has committed no sin, appears unchristian. Even the benevolence of Miss Bridget Allworthy is a sham for, while commending the charity of her brother, she berates profusely the mother of the child with titles such as "impudent Slut, . . . wanton Hussy, . . . audacious Harlot, . . . wicked Jade, [and] vile Strumpet".<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the two women, Allworthy, touched by the "gentle pressure" of the child's squeeze, not only presents the author's notion of what constitutes true virtue, but also his moral

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. II, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. III, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. III, pp. 40-41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. VII. Battestin comments upon this in his footnote to p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. IV, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. IV, p. 45.

doctrine, stated earlier in *An Essay on the Knowledge and Characters of Men*, that forgiveness is one of the highest acts of virtue.

This notion of forgiveness is emphasised further in Allworthy's lecture to Jenny Jones. Although he warns all women of the evils associated with relinquishing their virtue and abandoning chastity, Allworthy commends Jenny Jones on her humanity. He comments:

'How base and mean must that Woman be, how void of that Dignity of Mind, and decent Pride, without which we are not worthy of the Name of human Creatures, who can bear to level herself with the lowest Animal, and to sacrifice all that is great and noble in her, all her Heavenly Part, to an Appetite which she hath in common with the vilest Branch of the Creation! For no Woman sure, will plead the Passion of Love for an Excuse. This would be to own herself the meer Tool and Bubble of the Man. Love, however barbarously we may corrupt and pervert its Meaning, as it is a laudable, is a rational Passion, and can never be violent, but when reciprocal; for though the Scripture bids us love our Enemies, it means not with that fervent Love, which we naturally bear towards our Friends; much less that we should sacrifice to them our Lives, and what ought to be dearer to us, our Innocence. Now in what Light, but in that of an Enemy, can a reasonable Woman regard the Man, who solicits her to entail on herself, all the Misery I have described to you, and who would purchase to himself a short, trivial, contemptible Pleasure, so greatly at her Expence! For by the Laws of Custom the whole Shame, with all its dreadful Consequences, falls entirely upon her. Can Love, which always seeks the Good of its Object, attempt to betray a Woman into a Bargain, where she is so greatly to be the Loser? If such Corrupter, therefore, should have the Impudence to pretend a real Affection for her, ought not the Woman to regard him, not only as an Enemy, but as the worst of all Enemies; a false designing, treacherous, pretended Friend, who intends not only to debauch her Body, but her Understanding at the same Time?'<sup>17</sup>

Although the author's instruction to Jenny Jones was similar to that promoted by Richardson, Fielding differed in both his method and tone. Whereas the former offered little hope to women who lost their virtue - with the only real exception being Sally Godfrey and even then, "the truth is preserved as much as possible"<sup>18</sup> - a traditional view emphasised by Allworthy's vindictive neighbours, who also wish to see the woman severely punished or imprisoned for her impropriety,<sup>19</sup> Fielding, while not condoning

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. VII, pp. 52-53.

<sup>18</sup> Richardson, *Pamela*, Volume II, "The Journal", Thursday, p. 501.

<sup>19</sup> The narrator informs readers that Allworthy tempers justice with mercy and refuses to gratify the disposition of the "Mob" who in order to pity "poor Jenny", desired that she be "sacrificed to Ruin and Infamy by a shameful Correction in *Bridewel*" (Fielding, op. cit., Volume I, Book I, Ch. IX, p. 59).

Jenny's behaviour, offered some real hope for women who had lost their virtue. Abandoning the traditional Christian doctrine of a vengeful God, Fielding offered repentant sinners some hope of forgiveness. Arguing that sentencing women to Bridewell was not only too severe a punishment for their actions, Fielding was aware that such sanctions did little to improve or reform the morals of such individuals. When he argues that his "Sermon" is directed at strengthening Jenny "for the Future", because he has "Hopes of [inspiring her into] hearty Repentance", Allworthy advocates the doctrine of his author. In advising her to "be a good Girl the rest of [her] Days", Allworthy offers Miss Jones the same moral instruction that Fielding offered his readers, that "there [was] more Pleasure, even in this World, in an innocent and virtuous Life, than in one debauched and vicious". Ultimately, it is not Allworthy with whom the woman must reconcile herself, but one "whose Favour is of much greater Importance".<sup>20</sup> Allworthy's words, then, reflect the more benevolent and forgiving attitude to sinners, adopted by such philosophers as the Latitudinarian Divines in the middle part of the eighteenth century. Certainly, with some hope for the future, Jenny Jones can exclaim that, because of Allworthy's benevolence, she will repay goodness with further goodness. Fielding re-emphasised this argument, when he had Allworthy rebuke Captain Blifil's idea that "bastard" children should be punished. He comments:

'But to represent the Almighty as avenging the Sins of the Guilty on the Innocent, was indecent, if not blasphemous, as it was to represent him acting against the first Principles of natural Justice, and against the original Notions of Right and Wrong, which he had himself implanted in our Minds.'<sup>21</sup>

Thus, in rejecting the harsh doctrine of the Calvinists, Fielding offered all sinners, especially children born out of wedlock, some hope of forgiveness and the prospect of future happiness.

There was, however, another important didactic lesson which emanated from Allworthy's lecture to Miss Jones, concerning the need to instruct individuals against the deceptive nature of appearances. Fielding had examined this, several years earlier, in a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. VII, pp. 53, 55. Battestin gives a full account of the traditional basis of this argument in his footnote to page 80.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book II, Ch. II, p. 80.

poem entitled "To John Hayes, Esq.", in which he had commented that the nature of any individual comprised a mixture of good and evil. He wrote:

And see how various Men at once will seem;  
How Passions blended on each other fix,  
How Vice with Virtues, Faults with Graces mix;  
How Passions opposite, as sour to sweet,  
Shall in one Bosom at one Moment meet.  
With various Luck for Victory tend,  
And now shall carry, and now lose their End.<sup>22</sup>

Fielding recognised that individuals could so readily disguise their vices under the appearance of virtue that the ability to distinguish between the two became difficult.<sup>23</sup> This problem, which affected good-natured individuals, is addressed by Booth, in *Amelia*, when he asks, in relation to the issue that "good heart[s] will at all times betray the best head[s] in the world", "how should then the sincerest of hearts have any idea of deceit?"<sup>24</sup> Underlying the answer was the reason for Fielding's change in instructional method in the seven years between *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. By the time of the latter novel, Fielding could see that readers required more than a simple exposure to affectation and vice, if they were to improve their morals. Moreover, they needed a more rounded education, an education which would not only enable them to recognise vice, but one which would allow them to deal with it more effectively. *Tom Jones* provided this new form of moral education by forcing readers, through the use of their sagacity, to distinguish virtue from vice. By using Allworthy, Fielding reminded readers of the "useful lesson" stressed in *Jonathan Wild*, that they must "not too hastily, nor in the gross, bestow either [their] praise or censure; since [they] shall often find a mixture of good and evil in the same character [which] may require a very accurate judgement and a very elaborate inquiry to determine on which side the balance turns".<sup>25</sup> Consequently,

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<sup>22</sup> Fielding, "To John Hayes, Esq.", in Fielding, *The Miscellanies*, ll. 16-22, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Fielding had argued this point as early as March 4, 1740, in *The Champion* (Volume I, p. 329). He commented that folly and vice "are continually industrious to disguise themselves" because the world never judges them thoroughly, and adds, prior to giving examples, that consequently, there exist "so narrow bounds between some virtues and some vices, that it is very difficult to distinguish between them".

<sup>24</sup> Fielding, *Amelia*, Volume I, Book II, Ch. II, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Fielding, *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great*, Book I, Ch. I, p. 39.

Fielding sought to teach his readers to apply prudence to their good nature. Having once achieved this, readers would not only be able to distinguish virtue from vice, but also be able to increase their own happiness.

Although there are numerous examples of this form of instruction throughout the novel, none provides readers with a better example than the character of Blifil. Blifil is the product of an education deficient in virtue, not solely on the basis of that provided by Thwackum and Square, but also on the basis of that education given to him by his parents, who affect good nature in the hope of self-aggrandizement. Realising that Allworthy will be without an heir, Captain Blifil, for example, seizes upon the opportunity of marrying Bridget Allworthy. In contrast to the Shaftesburian principle of benevolence, expressed by Allworthy in his argument that "however guilty the Parents might be, the Children were certainly innocent", Captain Blifil, in his suggestion that "such base-born Children . . . ought to be brought up to the lowest and vilest Offices of the Commonwealth",<sup>26</sup> exhibits the inhumanity and concern for self-advantage promoted by Hobbes and Mandeville. His selfishness is emphasised in his discourse on charity, in which he denies that charity consists in performing acts of generosity. For Captain Blifil, professions of charity released individuals from the requirement of doing anything further. In contrast, although often imprudent in his benevolence, Allworthy exemplifies the author's didactic intention. Fielding maintained that true benevolence and charity required the direct involvement of individuals in lessening "the Distresses of another . . . by giving what even [their] own Necessities [could] not well spare". Like Butler, he argued that charity was not virtuous, if it consisted in relieving one's "brethren only with [one's] superfluities". He continued:

'As to the Apprehension of bestowing Bounty on such as may hereafter prove unworthy Objects, because many have proved such; surely it can never deter a good Man from Generosity: I do not think a few or many Examples of Ingratitude can justify a Man's hardening his Heart against the Distresses of his Fellow-Creatures; nor do I believe it can ever have such Effect on a truly benevolent Mind. Nothing less than a Persuasion of universal Depravity can lock up the Charity of a good Man.'<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book II, Ch. II, p. 79.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Volume I, Book II, Ch. VI, p. 96.

In rejecting the negative and selfish philosophies of Hobbes, Mandeville and the Calvinists, Allworthy became the author's mouth-piece for arguing that a few examples of ingratitude cannot justify individuals' relinquishing virtue. For Fielding, it was one of the greatest gifts for individuals to be able to forgive the transgressions of others, even when these were aimed directly at their own well-being. At the same time, readers should not be surprised to find, given the doctrine presented in *Jonathan Wild* which stressed that malicious individuals always associate with characters of like dispositions, that Bridget Allworthy affects grief on the death of her husband. The narrator notes that:

[She] conducted herself through the whole Season in which Grief is to make its Appearance on the Outside of the Body with the strictest Regard to all the Rules of Custom and Decency, suiting the Alterations of her Countenance to the several Alterations of her Habit . . . till the Day came in which she was allowed to return to her former Serenity.<sup>28</sup>

With two such parents as moral educators, it is not unexpected that young Blifil develops corrupt and vicious manners and morals. Lacking moral guidance in how to control his passions, Blifil's nature is motivated by deceit, hypocrisy and selfishness.

Although Dudden correctly describes Blifil as the "villain" of the novel, he errs in describing the young man as "the one unreal character in *Tom Jones*".<sup>29</sup> According to James Harris, Fielding spent considerable time, prior to the writing of this work, "in a promiscuous intercourse with persons of all ranks, his pictures of human kind had neither been so various nor so natural".<sup>30</sup> Fielding also commented that:

In short, Imitation here will not do the Business. The Picture must be after Nature herself. A true Knowledge of the World is gained only by Conversation, and the Manners of every Rank must be seen in order to be known.<sup>31</sup>

Although the description of Blifil's character is exaggerated to suit the author's technique of ridiculing affectation and vice, Fielding deliberately exposed readers to the type of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. I, p. 117.

<sup>29</sup> F. Homes Dudden, *Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times*, Volume II, p. 655.

<sup>30</sup> James Harris, "Philological Enquiries", in *Works*, (1781) III, pp. 163-164; also quoted in Dudden, op. cit., p. 631.

<sup>31</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. I, p. 742.



malicious character that they could encounter in daily life. Such a character is best described, when the narrator, in relation to Miss Western, comments:

To say the Truth, *Sophia*, when very young, discerned that *Tom*, tho' an idle, thoughtless, rattling Rascal, was no-body's Enemy but his own; and that Master *Blifil*, tho' a prudent, discreet, sober, young Gentleman, was, at the same Time, strongly attached to the Interest only of one single Person; and who that single Person was, the Reader will be able to divine without any Assistance of ours.<sup>32</sup>

It was part of the author's didactic design to educate readers against being duped by characters, who based all their actions and words upon selfishness and vice.

Emphasising the didactic nature of *Tom Jones*, Fielding suggested that he would provide readers with "much higher and harder Exercises of Judgement and Penetration",<sup>33</sup> in order to distinguish virtue from vice. Ironically, readers are introduced to Blifil, "a Lad of remarkable Disposition; sober, discreet, and pious, beyond his Age",<sup>34</sup> in opposition to Jones' "loose kind of Disposition" and "Propensity to many Vices". The fact that Blifil is so well loved by both members of Allworthy's household and neighbours, indicates that many individuals are unable to discern virtue from vice. Consequently, by forcing readers to investigate beyond the mere verbal description of each character's disposition, a task of which Allworthy is incapable, Fielding tried to teach them to search beyond the hypocritical masks adopted by vicious characters. The narrator informs readers that Allworthy's compassion for Blifil is founded upon unrestrained passion, the detestation of the latter's mother toward him. It is this compassion, unqualified by prudence, that blinds Allworthy to the young man's malevolent nature.

Fielding tested the sagacity of his readers when he had Jones caught poaching on the property of Squire Western. Realising that his inconstancy could ruin Black George, Jones, despite Thwackum's beatings and protestations, refuses to divulge the name of his accomplice, a point that ingratiates him with all the servants.<sup>35</sup> Readers are told that

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. V, p. 165.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. I, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. II, p. 118.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. V, p. 133.

"Tom bore his Punishment with great Resolution . . . [more] contented to be flead rather than betray his Friend, or break the Promise he had made".<sup>36</sup> The incident provides readers with two valuable lessons. In the first, Fielding, following the principles of John Locke, argued that the cane provided an inadequate means of discipline, either in helping individuals attain virtue or in chastising them. In fact, it is Allworthy's compassion towards the boy that comes much closer to making him disclose the name of his accomplice. In the second instance, Fielding focused upon the concept of prudence. Although Allworthy correctly describes the boy as acting under a mistaken notion of "Honour", he can still display compassion for the boy, who refuses to compromise his principles. This virtuous trait, which contrasts the vicious motives behind Blifil's disclosure of Black George's identity, endears Jones to both Allworthy and readers of the text. Unfortunately, however, readers are made aware, through Black George's abuse of Jones' good nature and "Honour", that when prudence is ignored, even virtue can be abused or misdirected.

In spite of his good nature, Jones continues to be abused because he fails to apply prudence to his benevolence. When he sells his horse, a gift given him by Allworthy, Jones personifies the theory of benevolence recommended by the Latitudinarians and philosophers of the moral sense theory, such as Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, each of whom had advocated that "to love the public, . . . and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as lies within [one's] power, [was] the height of goodness".<sup>37</sup> Jones' love of his neighbours and his willingness to promote the welfare of others, without considering his own interests, provides readers with a moral lesson, similar to that advanced by Barrow and Hutcheson. Furthermore, this virtuous trait advanced Fielding's instruction, expressed in *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, that:

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. II, p. 122.

<sup>37</sup> Shaftesbury, "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm to My Lord \* \* \* \* ", in *The Characteristics*, Volume I, ed. J. M. Robertson (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), Section iv, p. 27.

Good Nature is that benevolent and amiable Temper of Mind which disposes us to feel the Misfortunes, and enjoy the Happiness of others; and consequently pushes us on to promote the latter, and prevent the former: and that without any abstract Contemplation on the Beauty of Virtue, and without the Allurements or Terrors of Religion.<sup>38</sup>

Jones' genuine concern for the welfare of his fellow creatures is displayed when he informs Allworthy, with tears running down his cheeks, that he sold the horse because he "could not bear to see these poor Wretches naked and starving . . . [without trying] to save them from absolute Destruction".<sup>39</sup> Ironically, however, Jones is chastised by Thwackum for selling his Bible, the very book which enjoins all individuals to help and love their neighbours, to aid the Seagrim family. The chastisement, which ignores totally the virtuous cause of Jones' action, supported the author's earlier contention that "both Religion and Virtue have received more real Discredit from Hypocrites, than the wittiest Profligates or Infidels could ever cast upon them".<sup>40</sup> In contrast to the goodness and humanity of Jones, the vicious Blifil purchases the Bible, not out of any concern for Jones' welfare, but in order to expose the protagonist as "unchristian". Although he guided the reaction of readers to characters through the use of irony, it was Fielding's intention that he present the facts as they occurred. Consequently, readers themselves were left with the task of judging the characters.

The episode, which culminates in the release of Sophia's bird, provides readers with further evidence of the way in which vicious behaviour often goes undetected and unpunished in this world. Unable to accept that Sophia prefers Tom to himself, Blifil causes Jones as much distress as he can. Fielding guided the judgement of readers not by directly censuring the young man, but by emphasising the uniqueness of the bird, Sophia's love for it, and Tom's declaring Blifil "a pitiful, malicious Rascal".<sup>41</sup> In reply to Allworthy's question on the reason for the disturbance, the hypocritical Blifil answers:

'Indeed, Uncle, I am very sorry for what I have done; I have been unhappily the Occasion of it all. I had Miss *Sophia's* Bird in my Hand, and

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<sup>38</sup> Fielding, *An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men*, in *Miscellanies*, Volume I, p. 158.

<sup>39</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book III, Ch. VIII, p. 143.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book III, Ch. IV, p. 129.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book IV, Ch. III, p. 160.

thinking the poor Creature languished for Liberty, I own, I could not forbear giving it what it desired: for I always thought there was something very cruel in confining any Thing. It seemed to me against the Law of Nature, by which every Thing hath a Right to Liberty; nay, it is even unchristian; for it is not doing what we would be done by: But if I had imagined Miss *Sophia* would have been so much concerned at it, I am sure I would never have done it. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Although Allworthy's lack of prudence blinds him to Blifil's true motives, this same blindness should not affect the more sagacious readers. Fielding used the episode to stress to readers that benevolence, when unmoderated by prudence, was a defective trait. In not punishing the boy and by accepting that he "acted rather from a generous than unworthy Motive", Allworthy allows for the continuance of vice. Although he labels "the Action inconsiderate", he admits that it is "pardonable only in a Child". Fielding, however, guided the reaction of readers to the incident, when he had the narrator intrude upon the narration of events and add that "as to that malicious Purpose which *Sophia* suspected, it never once entered into the Head of Mr. *Allworthy*".<sup>43</sup>

Jones' unqualified goodness is promoted throughout the novel by the author, for the emulation of readers. He resists the charms of Sophia Western, for example, because his conscience will neither allow him to "possess himself of Mr. Western's Fortune" nor take advantage of another individual. In applying conscience to his actions, Jones directly contrasts Blifil who, representing the selfishness documented by Mandeville, attempts all forms of deceit in order to advance his own interests. Even with Molly Seagrim, the protagonist does not deviate from his virtuous principles, even though it may be to his own advantage, for he believes that "to debauch a young Woman, however low her Condition [is] . . . a very heinous Crime".<sup>44</sup> Other instances of Jones' good nature can be perceived in his defending Molly against the jealousy of the women in the churchyard, and in his admission of paternity in order to implore Allworthy to "revoke [his] Warrant, and . . . not send [Molly] to a Place which must unavoidably prove her Destruction".<sup>45</sup> In addition to stressing the goodness of Jones, the youth voices his creator's criticism of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. III, p. 160.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. IV, pp. 162-163.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. VI, pp. 174, 176.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. XI, p. 193.

the harsh treatment of sentencing to Bridewell young women who, through lack of prudence, became pregnant.

Although Fielding did not support promiscuous behaviour, he did believe that the sanction of imprisonment against fornication was excessive. He directed the attention of his readers to the issue, by allowing them some insight into the severe reaction of neighbours, members of the Allworthy household, and Molly's own family to the girl's predicament. In order to satirise those individuals who asserted that they were superior to their fellow-creatures, Fielding included the conversation between Molly and her mother, who begins:

'she hath brought a Disgrace upon us all. She's the vurst of the Vamily that ever was a Whore.' 'You need not upbraid me with that, Mother,' cries *Molly*, 'you yourself was brought to-bed of Sister there within a Week after you was married.' 'Yes, Hussy,' answered the enraged Mother, 'so I was, and what was the mighty Matter of that? I was made an honest Woman then; and if you was to be made an honest Woman, I should not be angry; but you must have to be doing with a Gentleman, you nasty Slut, you will have a Bastard, Hussy, you will; and that I defy any one to say of me.'<sup>46</sup>

In a scene resembling that of the Snap family, the author allowed the woman's corruption of language to reflect her inner moral corruption. Ironically, she attacks her daughter for the very "Disgrace" of which she had once been guilty. Her hypocrisy is emphasised when she rounds on the young girl, stating that she, at least, had gained respectability by marrying a week prior to the birth of her child. Rather than judge Molly too harshly, educated readers should censure the hypocrisy and vicious nature of her mother.

In portraying Sophia's attempt at restraining love with reason, Fielding aimed at attacking those philosophers who had advocated that love could be overcome by the application of reason. In this, Fielding was anticipating the philosophy of David Hume, who stressed that reason was not sufficient, in itself, in overcoming the passions. The narrator comments:

In the Affair of Love, which out of strict Conformity with the Stoic Philosophy, we shall here treat as a Disease, this Proneness to relapse is no less conspicuous. Thus it happened to poor *Sophia*; upon whom, the very next Time she saw young *Jones*, all the former Symptoms returned, and from that Time cold and hot Fits alternately seized her Heart. . . . That

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. IX, pp. 184-185.

Passion, which had formerly been so exquisitely delicious, became now a Scorpion in her Bosom. She resisted it therefore with her utmost Force, and summoned every Argument her Reason (which was surprizingly strong for her Age) could suggest, to subdue and expel it. She resolved therefore to avoid *Tom Jones*, as much as possible.<sup>47</sup>

Fielding often associated the image of love with the idea of "Disease". He commented, for example, "that when [love was] denied a Vent in one Part, it [would] certainly break out in another".<sup>48</sup> It is this inability on the part of individuals to overcome the passion of love that brings about the downfall of Molly Seagrim. More importantly, however, Fielding asserted that this passion affected not only women of the lower class, but all women, even the likes of Sophia Western, whose "Lips, . . . Eyes, . . . Blushes, and many little involuntary Actions" betrayed the love that she attempted to conceal.

Ironically, Sophia's virtue is saved partly by Jones' inability to acknowledge "the Advances of [the] young Lady" and partly by his maintenance of a virtuous disposition - a disposition which contrasts him with the vicious manners of many contemporary men. The narrator notes that the good nature of the protagonist extends beyond his recognition "of the great Worth of *Sophia* . . . her Accomplishments, and . . . her Goodness",<sup>49</sup> to an unwillingness to abandon Molly. He comments:

To lay aside all Allegory, the Concern for what must become of poor *Molly*, greatly disturbed and perplexed the Mind of the worthy Youth. The superior Merit of *Sophia*, totally eclipsed, or rather extinguished all the Beauties of the poor Girl; but Compassion instead of Contempt succeeded to Love. He was convinced the Girl had placed all her Affections, and all her Prospect of future Happiness in him only.<sup>50</sup>

Fielding's example of the reflective nature of Jones provided an innovative method of instruction for readers of the mid eighteenth-century novel. Jones offered readers a model, upon which they could base their own characters. Unlike Richardson's Lovelace or Mr. B., Jones could both restrain his passion for Sophia and feel compassion for Molly Seagrim, whose virtue he believed he had corrupted. Thus, by providing readers with a virtuous protagonist, who could examine the motives which lay behind his actions,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book IV, Ch. XII, pp. 198-199.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. II, p. 219.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. II, p. 220.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. V, p. 226.

Fielding instructed readers that they too should emulate Jones' good nature, if they were to attain virtue.

In contrast to the good nature of Jones, Fielding exposed the vicious instincts and selfishness of Square, a man who was always ready to violate the virtue of women. Ironically, Square assumes responsibility for the moral development of the protagonist. Intruding into the text, the narrator tries vainly to defend Square when he comments:

Philosophers are composed of Flesh and Blood as well as other human Creatures; and however sublimated and refined the Theory of these may be, a little practical Frailty is as incident to them as to other Mortals. It is, indeed, in Theory only and not in Practice, as we have before hinted, that consists the Difference: For tho' such great Beings think much better and more wisely, they always act exactly like other Men. They know very well how to subdue all Appetites and Passions, and to despise both Pain and Pleasure; and this Knowledge affords much delightful Contemplation, and is easily acquired; but the Practice would be vexatious and troublesome; and, therefore, the same Wisdom which teaches them to know this, teaches them to avoid carrying it into Execution.<sup>51</sup>

The author's instruction was particularly important for readers, in that he emphasised, albeit ironically, the reasons why so many philosophers had abandoned their doctrines and reverted to the behaviour of normal human beings. The passage indicts the tutor who, although he denounces Jones for his immoral behaviour, acts contrary to all perceived notions of virtue. Thus, by presenting what appears to be an unbiased commentary, the narrator, acting on behalf of the author, undermines the character of Square who, far from having any love for "the natural Beauty of Virtue", is concerned only with satisfying his own appetites. Like Blifil, Square also personifies the negative aspects of the theory of self-love expounded by La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes and Mandeville. It is not surprising that the malicious, and yet worldly, philosopher can easily triumph "over the poor Remains of Virtue which subsisted in the Bosom of *Molly*, [who] was yet but a Novice in her Business, [and] had not arrived to that Perfection of Assurance which helps off a Town Lady in any Extremity".<sup>52</sup> Like Square, Molly too is a totally self-interested individual; for, just after she has vowed her eternal love for Jones

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. V, p. 230.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. V, p. 231.

"with solemn and vehement Protestations of the purest Love and Constancy",<sup>53</sup> she is discovered entertaining Square in her room. As did Mandeville in *The Virgin Unmask'd*, Fielding also blamed the behaviour of women upon a corrupt "moral" education. In Molly's case, the girl's mother, always willing to "share in the Profits arising from [her daughter's] Iniquity", had contributed significantly to her daughter's vicious nature.

Concerning himself with the inability of the good-natured characters to recognise vice, Fielding complemented the deception and hypocrisy displayed towards Jones with Allworthy's "deathbed scene". Whereas the good-natured Jones runs immediately to the bedside of the supposedly-dying Allworthy,<sup>54</sup> Blifil, who professes concern, preoccupies himself with thoughts of inheriting his uncle's wealth. In contrast to the good nature of Tom, the narrator describes the reactions of Mrs. Wilkins, Square and Thwackum who, overcome by selfishness, concern themselves not with Allworthy's physical condition, but rather their poor legacies. For example, Mrs. Wilkins, more concerned about the "five hundred Pound" she has saved in his Service, comments:

It is a fine Encouragement to Servants to be honest; and to be sure, if I have taken a little Something now and then, others have taken ten times as much; and now we are all put in a Lump together. If so be that it be so, the Legacy may go to the Devil with him that gave it. No, I won't give it up neither, because that will please some Folks. . . . This is my Reward for taking his Part so often, when all the Country have cried Shame of him for breeding up his Bastard in that Manner; but he is going now where he must pay for all. It would have become him better to have repented of his Sins on his Death-bed, than to glory in them, and give away his Estate out of his own Family to a mis-begotten Child. Found in his Bed, forsooth! A pretty Story! . . . Lord, forgive him, I warrant he hath many more Bastards to answer for, if the Truth was known. One Comfort is, they will all be known where he is a going now.<sup>55</sup>

Mrs. Wilkins' words, which emphasise the negative side of the benevolent philosophies of Shaftesbury and Butler, stress the selfish reasons for her working in the Allworthy household. However, in addition to the episode itself, Fielding's didactic method played a significant part in educating readers; for, rather than indoctrinating them with his instruction, he allowed the woman's words to betray her own vicious motives. In this

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. V, p. 232.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. VII, p. 244.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. VIII, p. 246.



way, Fielding, by preserving their autonomy, forced readers, on the basis of the information provided, to decode the moral instruction inherent in the text. Thus, readers became responsible, at least in part, for their own moral development.

In addition to Mrs. Wilkins, Fielding also satirised the selfish characters of Square and Thwackum who, like the woman, expected far greater rewards from their benefactor. In a hypocritical manner, Square, reflecting on the "Duty" he has done the family and the "Care [he has] taken in the Education of [the] two Boys", comments:

'I would not have you imagine I am therefore dissatisfied; for *St. Paul* hath taught me to be content with the little I have. Had the Modicum been less, I should have known my Duty. But though the Scripture obliges me to remain contented, it doth not enjoin me to shut my Eyes to my own Merit, nor restrain me from seeing, when I am injured by an unjust Comparison.'<sup>56</sup>

Fielding used Square and Thwackum to stress to readers the ways in which Christian doctrine could be perverted in order to support selfish desires. Each of the characters, for example, deceives Allworthy with a fake concern for the welfare of his benefactor. The author, however, guided the moral education of his readers by offering subtle commentary on the characters and the situations that arose. In one such case, the narrator distinguishes Jones' behaviour from that of the other characters. From this, alert readers should anticipate that Fielding meant that Jones was morally superior to those hypocritical and vicious characters who awaited the Squire's death. This view is substantiated by Jones' "immoderate Excess of Rapture" on Allworthy's recovery. Although the intoxication of Jones serves only to arouse the wrath of the others, the narrator emphasises the following moral lesson:

To say the Truth, nothing is more erroneous than the common Observation, that Men who are ill-natured and quarrelsome when they are drunk, are very worthy Persons when they are sober: For Drink, in reality, doth not reverse Nature, or create Passions in Men which did not exist in them before. It takes away the Guard of Reason, and consequently forces us to produce those Symptoms, which many, when sober, have Art enough to conceal. It heightens and inflames our Passions (generally indeed that Passion which is uppermost in our Mind) so that the angry Temper, the amorous, the generous, the good-humoured, the avaricious, and all the other Dispositions of Men, are in their Cups heightened and exposed.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. VIII, p. 247.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. IX, p. 253.

The honest exuberance of Jones provides testimony of the young man's good nature. In contrast to the three other characters, Jones is, indeed, a character of "much Goodness, Generosity and Honour".<sup>58</sup> However, like his benefactor, his character is flawed by his inability to discern virtue from vice. It was Fielding's aim that both Jones and readers be taught prudence, simultaneously.

In the introduction to Book Six, Fielding refuted the contention of philosophers who, like Bernard Mandeville, had argued that "there were no such things as Virtue or Goodness really existing in Human Nature".<sup>59</sup> Fielding distinguished between lust and love in an attempt to highlight to readers what Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson had advocated: "that there is in some (I believe in many) human Breasts, a kind and benevolent Disposition, which is gratified by contributing to the Happiness of others".<sup>60</sup> Like Butler, Fielding assumed that benevolence brought with it its own "exquisite Delight". Adding that "Esteem and Gratitude are the proper Motives to Love", he instructed readers that love was not totally self-interested. He continued:

Examine your Heart, my good Reader, and resolve whether you do believe these Matters with me. If you do, you may now proceed to their Exemplification in the following Pages; if you do not, you have, I assure you, already read more than you have understood; and it would be wiser to pursue your Business, or your Pleasures (such as they are) than to throw away any more of your Time in reading what you can neither taste nor comprehend. To treat of the Effects of Love to you, must be as absurd as to discourse on Colours to a Man born blind; since possibly your Idea of Love may be as absurd as that which we are told such blind Man once entertained of the Colour Scarlet: that Colour seemed to him to be very much like the Sound of a Trumpet; and Love probably may, in your Opinion, very greatly resemble a Dish of Soup, or a Sir-loin of Roast-beef.<sup>61</sup>

Contrasting those writers who left readers to their own devices in reading the text, Fielding's intrusion forced readers to consider the full implications of his instruction. Although he argued that, if readers accepted the narrow and selfish views propounded by such writers as Mandeville, they should abandon their reading of the text and pursue other

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. VII, p. 244.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. I, p. 268. Battestin provides some commentary upon this point in his footnote to pp. 268-269.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. I, p. 270.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. I, pp. 271-272.

pleasures, he still appealed to their sagacity by emphasising that his aims would only be realised on completing the text. Thus, his didactic method compelled any readers, who could boast of even the smallest degrees of sagacity, to pursue their reading in order to decode the didactic meaning of the text.

By incorporating into the text a scene in which Squire Western compels his daughter, Sophia, to marry whom he deems suitable and most advantageous to the interests of the family, Fielding addressed squarely the mid eighteenth-century debate concerning the duty and responsibility of children in obeying the wishes of their parents. In the scene, based substantially on Richardson's *Clarissa*, Fielding satirised women who, like Mrs. Western, assumed, on the basis of their reading modern plays and romances, that they were "perfect Mistress[es] of Manners, Customs, Ceremonies, and Fashions".<sup>62</sup> Such women, argued Fielding, lacked all insight into "the plain simple Workings of honest Nature". Rather than offering her niece any moral instruction, Mrs. Western, promoting the continuation of a corrupt education for young girls, advises Sophia that she "should read Books, which would teach [her] a little Hypocrisy" and "instruct [her on] how to hide [her] Thoughts a little better".<sup>63</sup> In an ironical and yet didactic digression from the association of deceit with vicious individuals, Fielding stressed that virtuous individuals, when they tried to assume vicious traits, either failed to maintain hypocrisy, deceit or vice or had their motives misconstrued. This, in turn, could produce catastrophic consequences, as it does for Sophia who, fearing that "the sagacious Lady suspected her Passion for *Jones*", attempts to wipe out her aunt's suspicions, by concealing "a throbbing melancholy Heart with the utmost Sprightliness in her Countenance, and the highest Gaiety in her Manner". However, the girl's motives, in "overacting her Part" and addressing "her whole Discourse" to Blifil, are misconstrued by Mrs. Western as an indication of her love for Blifil over Jones. Ironically, the older woman, who compliments herself on being "a Woman of great Art"<sup>64</sup> and inspection, is

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. II, p. 272.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. V, p. 287.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. III, pp. 279-80.

readily deceived. At the same time, however, Sophia's affectation results in her being forced by her father, into marrying Blifil.<sup>65</sup>

In ridiculing Western's belief that "Parents [are] the best Judges of proper Matches for their Children; [and] that, for his Part, he should insist on the most resigned Obedience from his Daughter",<sup>66</sup> the author satirised the "almost universally exercised"<sup>67</sup> and tyrannical nature of parents, who forced their children into marriages based on "selfishness", rather than love. As a guide for the moral development of his readers, Fielding offered a model of correct behaviour in the form of Allworthy who argues that, although such an alliance would be "advantageous in point of Fortune", he would only "complete the Affair . . . if the young People liked each other". Although Allworthy lacks the wisdom to see through Western's deceitful scheme, his words offer readers, especially parents, some educative advice in relation to proposing marriages for their children. At the same time, Allworthy's words provide readers with a standard upon which they can judge the actions and words of both Sophia's father and aunt. The hypocrisy of Mrs. Western is revealed when, finding that the true object of her niece's affection is Jones, she asks whether Sophia would stoop "to disgracing [her] Family by allying [herself] to a Bastard?" The passionate woman continues:

'I thought the Pride of our Family would have prevented you from giving the least Encouragement to so base an Affection. . . . No, no, *Sophy*, . . . as I am convinced you have a violent Passion, which you can never satisfy with Honour, I will do all I can to put your Honour out of the Care of your Family: For when you are married, those Matters will belong only to the Consideration of your Husband. . . Marriage hath saved many a Woman from Ruin.'<sup>68</sup>

Mrs. Western's words emphasise the corrupt and vicious nature of her character, which is devoid of virtuous principles. After Tom decides to go to sea, she assures Sophia, contrary to the argument being proposed by the author, that the dislike of a prospective

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<sup>65</sup> Readers are told that Western, when acquainted with the knowledge, bursts forth: "How! in Love, . . . in Love without acquainting me! I'll disinherit her, I'll turn her out of Doors, stark naked, without a Farthing" (*Ibid.*, Volume I, Book VI, Ch. ii, pp. 274-275).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book VI, Ch. III, p. 281.

<sup>67</sup> Dudden, *op. cit.*, Volume II, p. 639.

<sup>68</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book VI, Ch. V, pp. 288, 290.

husband does not provide a sufficient objection to marriage.<sup>69</sup> She argues that marriage is "a Fund in which prudent Women deposit their Fortunes to the best Advantage, in order to receive a larger Interest for them, than they could have elsewhere".<sup>70</sup> Her passionate and vicious character complements that of her brother who, on being told of his daughter's aversion to Blifil, curses and denounces her.<sup>71</sup> Rather than accepting some of the blame for Sophia's deficient education, Mrs. Western admonishes her brother for having educated the girl in "a Manner directly contrary to [her] Advice". She continues:

Had I been trusted entirely with the Care of her Education, no such Accident as this had ever befallen you: So that you must comfort yourself by thinking it was all your own Doing; and indeed, what else could be expected from such Indulgence? - . . . How often have I told you, that *English* Women are not to be treated like *Ciracessian* Slaves. We have the Protection of the World: We are to be won by gentle Means only, and not to be hector'd, and bullied, and beat into Compliance. I thank Heaven, no *Salique* Law governs here. Brother, you have a Roughness in your Manner which no Woman but myself would bear. I do not wonder my Niece was frightened and terrified into taking this Measure; and to speak honestly, I think my Niece will be justified to the World for what she hath done . . . it is all your own Fault.<sup>72</sup>

By extension, educated readers should recognise that Fielding was also censuring the corrupt form of education that Sophia would have received under the auspices of Mrs. Western. Although her responses exhibit passion rather than any concern for virtue, she, nonetheless, stresses to readers, a view shared by the author himself, that women are not "Ciracessian Slaves", who can be forced into complying with the wishes of their masters. Such "Laws", argued Fielding, had become antiquated, especially given the contemporary moral climate in which many individuals believed that women had a right to choose prospective husbands who would reciprocate their love.

Mrs. Honour provides readers with Fielding's instruction concerning marriage, when she admits to Sophia that, "rather than submit to be the Wife of that contemptible

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. III, pp. 333-334.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. III, p. 332.

<sup>71</sup> Western passionately claims that, should his daughter marry Jones, he is "resolved [to] turn her out o' Doors, [where] she shall beg and starve and rot in the Streets" (Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. X, p. 305).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book X, Ch. VIII, pp. 557-558.

Wretch, [she] would [sooner] plunge a Dagger into [her] Heart".<sup>73</sup> Through the persona of Mrs. Honour, Fielding offered his female readers a radical deviation from the traditional belief that parents had the right to compel their daughters to marry whom they deemed suitable. Despite being threatened with dismissal by Mrs. Western, Mrs. Honour refuses to compromise her principles. She, therefore, becomes the moral focus upon which readers can judge other characters. Fielding strengthened his moral instruction by including the satirical sketch of the Quaker, who is encountered by Jones on his travels. Ironically, the Quaker, a man who boasts of having a conscience and of having never injured a fellow creature, condemns his daughter for marrying without his consent, and on the basis of love. In retaliation to her marriage, he comments:

'No, as she has married for Love, let her live on Love if she can; let her carry her Love to Market, and see whether any one will change it into Silver, or even into Halfpence. . . . It must have been . . . a long premeditated Scheme to cheat me: For they have known one another from their Infancy; and I have always preached to her against Love - and told her a thousand Times over, it was all Folly and Wickedness. Nay, the cunning Slut pretended to hearken to me, and to despise all Wantonness of the Flesh; and yet, at last, broke out at a Window two Pair of Stairs: For I began, indeed, a little to suspect her, and had locked her up carefully, intending the very next Morning to have married her up to my Liking. But she disappointed me within a few Hours, and escaped away to the Lover of her own chusing, who lost no Time: For they were married and bedded, all within an hour.'<sup>74</sup>

In addition to exposing Fielding's hatred of the hypocrisy of Quakers, the scene offered further insight into the concept of filial duty. Because the girl has married for love, the correct motive in the eyes of the author, the Quaker, believing that he has been cheated, despises his daughter. Ironically, he accuses her of losing no time in being "married and bedded", the very thing that he had attempted to do by locking the girl in her chamber, in anticipation of having her married "first thing next morning". In this instance, Fielding had Jones guide the moral development of readers in relation to the foolishness of the Quaker when, rounding angrily on the Quaker, he warns him not to let himself be "the only Cause of Misery to one [he] *pretend[s]* to love".<sup>75</sup> Ideally, Jones' "Piece of

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. VII, p. 349.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. X, pp. 363-364.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. X, p. 364. [My italics]

Advice" should reflect the view of benevolent and morally educated readers who, like Shaftesbury, Butler and the author himself, should condemn parents who, pretend love and concern for their children's welfare, and yet act in an antithetical way, by forcing them to marry for the wrong reasons. Such expressions of concern and love, argued Fielding, were pretentious and selfish. Appropriately, readers, as does Jones, should react "with some Violence" to the Quaker, who is aptly described as being "out of his Senses".

Fielding also warned readers of the abuses that had to be endured by virtuous characters, who refused to modify their excessive benevolence in a corrupt society. Following his instruction in *Jonathan Wild*, the author examined the ways in which virtuous individuals, through a lack of prudence, fell easy prey to the snares of the more vicious. Examples of this recur throughout the text; they include Allworthy's inability to discern the true motives behind the words of Squire Western and Blifil, and in the way in which Jones' honesty contributes to his banishment from Allworthy's household. When asked about his designs on Sophia, for example, Jones replies that:

Reason dictates to me, to quit all Thoughts of a Woman who places her Affections on another; my Passion bids me hope she may, in Time, change her Inclinations in my Favour.<sup>76</sup>

The honesty of this reply, in conjunction with Blifil's vicious accusations against him, results in Jones' being banished by a man, who is unable to distinguish hypocrisy from truth. Allworthy retorts:

'that he had forgiven him too often already, in Compassion to his Youth, and in Hopes of his Amendment: That he now found he was an abandoned Reprobate, and such as it would be criminal in any one to support and encourage. . . . I cannot avoid saying, there is no Part of your Conduct which I resent more than your ill Treatment of that good young Man (meaning *Blifil*) who hath behaved with so much Tenderness and Honour towards you.'<sup>77</sup>

Educated readers should recognise immediately the irony in the narrator's claim that Allworthy "perfectly knew Mankind". In spite of his goodness, Allworthy, with his

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. X, p. 307.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. XI, pp. 310-311.

inability to scrutinise the motives of individuals, fails to provide readers with a character upon whom they can base their own moral development.

Although Jones' honesty is laudatory, his worldly innocence, when combined with a lack of prudence, allows the "abandoned Reprobates" of the world to take advantage of him. Even though he banished Jones, Fielding assured readers that Allworthy was a genuinely benevolent character, by having him supply the protagonist with a wallet containing banknotes worth five hundred pounds. However, soon after Jones' leaving the estate, Fielding provided another example of the susceptibility of the virtuous in relation to the vicious when Jones' wallet is appropriated by Black George, the same person whom he had earlier protected. Although Black George delivers Sophia's gift of sixteen pounds to Jones, readers should not interpret this as an indication of some new-found honesty within the man. For readers, Fielding's moral instruction was based in the philosophies of Shaftesbury and Butler, who had maintained that individuals who acted correctly for the wrong reasons were no better than those who committed the wrongs themselves. Ironically, the narrator informs readers that "Conscience obtained a compleat Victory in the Mind of *Black George*",<sup>78</sup> when, in fact, the delivery of the money serves only to substantiate the vicious nature of Black George. Far from displaying any honesty, the actions of Black George are based on self-interest; alternatively, failure to have delivered the money would easily have resulted in his being discovered a thief and his being prosecuted.

After re-asserting that his "new species of writing" recorded only the truth about human nature, a theme introduced in *Jonathan Andrews*, and displayed in the affectation and hypocrisy of landladies, surgeons<sup>79</sup> and "vile petty-foggers",<sup>80</sup> Fielding introduced readers to the morally instructional scene involving the protagonist and the Man of the Hill. Rushing to the aid of the old man, besieged by two "Ruffians", Jones suggests that he has "only discharged the common Duties of Humanity, and what [he] would have

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VI, Ch. XIII, p. 320.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. III, pp. 411-413.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. VIII, pp. 430-435.



done for any Fellow Creature" in the same situation.<sup>81</sup> In return, the old man recounts his "unhappy", yet didactic, life-story, which has culminated in his detestation of "Mankind; not on Account so much of their private and selfish Vices, but for those of a relative Kind; such as Envy, Malice, Treachery, Cruelty, with every other Species of Malevolence".<sup>82</sup> The Man of the Hill provides an example of the person who, seeing the corrupt and selfish nature of humankind depicted by philosophers such as Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld, and Mandeville, withdraws from all social intercourse. Such an example, argued Fielding, was not to be imitated. Readers had to be taught that an indiscriminate reprobation of all those who lapsed into error was antithetical to good nature. The author reminded readers that:

A single bad Act no more constitutes a Villain in Life, than a single bad Part on the Stage. The Passions, like the Managers of a Playhouse, often force Men upon Parts, without consulting their Judgement, and sometimes without any Regard to their Talents. Thus the Man, as well as the Player, may condemn what he himself acts . . . .

Upon the whole then, the Man of Candour, and of true Understanding, is never hasty to condemn. He can censure an Imperfection, or even a Vice, without Rage against the guilty Party. In a Word, they are the same Folly, the same Childishness, the same Ill-breeding, and the same Ill-nature, which raise all the Clamours and Uproars both in Life, and on the Stage. The worst of Men generally have the Words *Rogue* and *Villain* most in their Mouths, as the lowest of all Wretches are the aptest to cry out *low* in the Pit.<sup>83</sup>

Fielding claimed that virtuous individuals should never condemn others indiscriminately; for, too often, hasty criticism resulted in individuals' neglecting to examine their own consciences. Jones' benevolence towards his fellow-creatures, despite his lack of prudence, provides readers with the author's moral instruction; for, as Fielding reminded readers, even "the finest Composition of human Nature, as well as the finest China, may have a Flaw in it".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. X, p. 448. Jones again displays his humanity and concern for his fellow creatures when he saves a woman from rape at the hands of Northerton. The narrator notes that, on hearing the violent screams, Jones "without the least Apprehension or Concern for his own Safety, made directly to the Thicket whence the Sound had issued" (Volume I, Book IX, Ch. II, p. 495).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. X, pp. 450-451.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VII, Ch. I, pp. 328-329.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book II, Ch. VII, p. 107.

The history of the Man of the Hill provides Jones, and readers, with a lesson in prudence. Having had his pride injured by those whom he held dearest - his mistress and his friend - the old man turns against the world, imagining "every human Creature whom [he] saw, desirous of betraying [him]".<sup>85</sup> He informs Jones and Partridge that, although he has travelled abroad in order to see the variety in the human species, he has found only the "same Hypocrisy, the same Fraud; in short, the same Follies and Vices, dressed in different Habits".<sup>86</sup> Although the Man of the Hill presents readers with a realistic description of eighteenth-century London, Preston describes him correctly as "a satirist satirised", because of his failure to exercise any practical form of benevolence.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, his excessive nature, which seems almost Calvinist at times, should not to be emulated by readers. Withdrawing from the world on the basis that "Man alone hath basely dishonoured his own Nature, by Dishonesty, Cruelty, Ingratitude, and accursed Treachery", he informs Jones that he intends to worship "that glorious, immortal and eternal Being", and enquire "how a benevolent Being should form so imperfect, and so vile an Animal".<sup>88</sup>

Such an excessive negativity towards all individuals should force readers, as Fielding had anticipated, to dismiss the philosophy of the Man of the Hill as ridiculous. In the same way that Allworthy's excessive benevolence has to be moderated by prudence, so too must the misanthropy of the Man of the Hill. Although Jones admires the way in which the Man of the Hill has aimed at contemplating the goodness and wisdom of God, he concludes appropriately that the man's abhorrence of all individuals "is much too general". He continues:

'Indeed you here fall into an Error, which, in my little Experience, I have observed to be a very common one, by taking the Character of Mankind from the worst and basest among them; whereas indeed, an excellent Writer observes, nothing should be esteemed as characteristical of a Species, but what is to be found among the best and most perfect Individuals of that

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XIV, p. 480.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XV, p. 482.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner: Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 53.

<sup>88</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XV, p. 484.

Species. This Error . . . is generally committed by those who, from Want of proper Caution in the Choice of their Friends and Acquaintance, have suffered Injuries from bad and worthless Men . . . which are very unjustly charged on all the Human Race.<sup>89</sup>

Jones' words offer Fielding's moral instruction to readers; for, the author believed that individuals should never base their judgements of human nature solely on the instances of corruption they saw around them. Such would be to negate the possibilities that Fielding saw for correcting society's ills. Even though he too has been duped by vicious individuals, Jones comments honestly that he has "known Men worthy of the highest Friendship, and Women of the highest Love". Ironically, Fielding undermined the philosophy of the Man of the Hill by having him fail to recognise that he had been saved from his adversaries by the good nature and humanity of the protagonist.

Jones personified, for both the author and his readers, Shaftesbury's belief in the innate goodness of humankind in contrast to the Man of the Hill's Mandevillean insistence on the negativity of all human beings. Ironically, in reply to the old man's comment that he held the same view as Jones when he was the same age, Jones blames the man's negative view of human nature upon his being "incautious in the placing of [his] Affections". He continues:

If there was indeed much more Wickedness in the World than there is, it would not prove such general Assertions against human Nature, since much of this arrives by mere Accident, and many a Man who commits Evil, is not totally bad and corrupt in his Heart. In Truth, none seem to have any Title to assert Human Nature to be necessarily and universally evil, but those whose own Minds afford them one Instance of this natural Depravity.<sup>90</sup>

In having Jones criticise the imprudence of the Man of the Hill, even when his own good nature still required moderation, Fielding made it clear to readers that Jones' moral education had begun. However, the fact that his education was far from complete was highlighted by the protagonist's inability to reply to the Man of the Hill's comment that:

'Knives will no more endeavour to persuade us of the Baseness of Mankind, than a Highwayman will inform you that there are Thieves on the Road. This would indeed be a Method to put you on your Guard, and to defeat their own Purposes. For which Reason tho' Knives, as I remember,

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XV, p. 485.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XV, pp. 485-486.

are very apt to abuse particular Persons; yet they never cast any Reflection on Human Nature in general.'<sup>91</sup>

In presenting the two philosophical extremes, Fielding forced readers to use their own sagacity in discerning where the truth was to be found. The author's moral instruction is presented by Jones who, although he acknowledges that human nature can be varied, claims that to argue that all individuals are naturally evil is to insult God, who made all beings in his own likeness. Wolfgang Iser summarises the implications of the episode between Jones and the Man of the Hill, when he comments:

The story within a story is in the Cervantes tradition and has the same function as in *Don Quixote*: it transforms the intention of the main action into its very opposite, in order to give the reader a clear view of what he is supposed to see. When the Man of the Hill reduces human nature to incurable corruption, at that very moment the hero realizes its "utmost diversity": The greater the contrasts, the greater the reader's obligation to form his own judgement. The extremity of the contrast demands a change in the two poles, which disappear in a general view of human nature, since the reduction to a single quality (or defect) is as emphatically negated as the uncontrolled diversity.<sup>92</sup>

Although Fielding allowed his readers to maintain their autonomy in judging the views of both characters, he never left them "without a Guide"; for, he was always present, within the text, emphasising the facts upon which events had to be judged. For readers, the Man of the Hill became, with his excessively negative view of human nature, as much a figure of ridicule as had been Heartfree, with his totally benevolent view of human nature, in *Jonathan Wild*.

Unlike Richardson who had offered readers models of exemplary behaviour, Fielding provided characters that were readily accessible to readers. Jones, for example, is presented as having the same appetites as any normal young man. After Mrs. Waters refuses to accept his offer of a coat, in a scene which dismayed Richardson, Jones can "not avoid stealing a sly Peep or two [at the woman's breasts], tho' he took all imaginable Care to avoid giving any Offence".<sup>93</sup> In a subtle attack on Richardson, Fielding

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book VIII, Ch. XV, p. 486.

<sup>92</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 50.

<sup>93</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume I, Book IX, Ch. III, p. 500.

admonished his readers, suggesting that they should not "condemn a Character as a bad one, because it [was] not perfectly a good one". He continued:

If thou dost delight in these Models of Perfection, there are Books enow writtento gratify thy Taste; but as we have not, in the Course of our Conversation, ever happened to meet with any such Person, we have not chosen to introduce any such here. To say the Truth, I a little question whether mere Man ever arrived at this consummate Degree of Excellence . . . Nor do I, indeed, conceive the good Purposes served by inserting Characters of such angelic Perfection, or such diabolical Depravity, in any Work of Invention: Since from contemplating either, the Mind of Man is more likely to be overwhelmed with Sorrow and Shame, than to draw any good Uses from such Patterns; for in the former Instance he may be both concerned and ashamed to see a Pattern of Excellence, in his Nature, which he may reasonably despair of ever arriving at; and in contemplating the latter, he may be no less affected with those uneasy Sensations, at seeing the Nature, of which he is a Partaker, degraded into so odious and detestable a Creature.<sup>94</sup>

Fielding contended that readers could not be instructed adequately, if their models of behaviour fell outside the realm of reality. Models of human excellence, he argued, were the chief cause of despair in the world, particularly as their levels of perfection were unattainable for ordinary human beings.

Finding perfection unattainable, Fielding believed that individuals would either seek the gratification of their own appetites and passions or, as the Man of the Hill had done, withdraw from all intercourse with the world. He argued that there should be enough "Goodness in a Character to engage the Admiration and Affection of a well-disposed Mind" and that, where minor character blemishes did occur, these should "raise our Compassion rather than our Abhorrence". He continued:

Indeed, nothing can be of more moral Use than the Imperfections which are seen in Examples of this Kind; since such form a Kind of Surprize, more apt to affect and dwell upon our Minds, than the Faults of very vicious and wicked Persons. The Foibles and Vices of Men, in whom there is a great Mixture of Good, become more glaring Objects, from the Virtues which contrast them, and shew their Deformity; and when we find such Vices attended with their evil Consequence to our favourite Characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our own Sake, but to hate them for the Mischiefs they have already brought on those we love.<sup>95</sup>

Fielding's theory of moral education was innovative in the sense that he claimed readers would learn more about virtue by being exposed to characters who, though essentially

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book X, Ch. I, pp. 526-527.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book X, Ch. I, p. 527.

good natured themselves, displayed some foibles or minor vices. According to the author, there were no perfect beings in life; thus, novels which presented perfect characters distorted reality. Furthermore, there was much to be learned, in terms of consolidating virtue and instructing readers in morality, from contrasting the minor vices of characters against their normal goodness. For this reason, Fielding refused to portray Jones as a perfect being. After the *melée* at the inn, caused by the landlady's unfounded suspicions about Jones and Mrs. Waters, Jones re-establishes his essential goodness by overlooking the landlady's attack upon both himself and Mrs. Waters. Rather than think negatively of the woman, he accepts that his and Mrs. Waters' "Appearance [may have seemed] a little suspicious", and that she had acted "out of Regard to the Reputation of her House".<sup>96</sup> In fact, the landlady, in judging far too quickly the characters of individuals, fails to examine what lies behind the façade of appearances. In contrast, Jones' uncritical reply cements, in the minds of readers, the author's claim that individuals should never condemn others too hastily, especially when they ignored their own defects.

To test the understanding of readers in distinguishing between appearances and truth, Fielding had his narrator inform them that:

To speak out boldly at once, [Mrs. Waters] was in Love, according to the present universally received Sense of that Phrase, by which Love is applied indiscriminately to the desirable Objects of all our Passions, Appetites, and Senses, and is understood to be that Preference which we give to one Kind of Food rather than to another.<sup>97</sup>

By describing the lady's indiscriminate appetites and passion in terms of heroic similes, Fielding satirised the promiscuous behaviour of all individuals who, in contemporary society, confused love with lust. When Jones "is staggered [by the] Force" of the lady's advances, the author guided the minds of readers into validating his hypothesis that, although such advances were common in society, they were also immoral and ridiculous. Although the naïve Jones could not be blamed for his minor transgression from the path of virtue, Fielding used the scene as a means of educating readers against actions of a

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book IX, Ch. IV, p. 506.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book IX, Ch. V, p. 510.

similar nature. The hypocrisy of the woman, however, is exposed when she screams "Rape" in order to protect her affected "Virtue".

Like Richardson, Fielding also commented, at length, upon the manners of contemporary women. By exposing instances of excessive folly and self-interest, he aimed at educating readers to pursue virtue. In the story of Harriet Fitzpatrick's courtship and marriage, Fielding instructed women about the need to beware of the snares of men. In order to attend Harriet, Mr. Fitzpatrick dupes the "worldly" Mrs. Western, her aunt, into believing that he is interested in winning the latter's affections. Overcome by passion, Mrs. Western admits Fitzpatrick to the house, where he turns his attention upon Harriet. As a consequence of a morally deficient education, the young girl is delighted "to rival [her] aunt" for the affections of the man. In spite of the warnings of Mr. Nash who, symbolizing the dictates of reason, tries to save the girl's "Innocence and Youth and Beauty . . . from [the] Clutches" Fitzpatrick,<sup>98</sup> Harriet falls victim to the snares of her pursuer because of her failure to apply either prudence or reason to her passionate nature. Thus, in failing to scrutinise the motives behind Fitzpatrick's behaviour, she becomes a figure of ridicule. Retrospectively, she notes:

'I should not have erred so grossly in my Choice, if I had relied on my own Judgement; but I trusted entirely to the Opinion of others, and very foolishly took the Merit of the Man for granted, whom I saw so universally well received by the Women. What is the Reason, my Dear, that we who have Understandings equal to the wisest and greatest of the other Sex, so often make Choice of the silliest Fellows for Companions and Favourites? It raises my Indignation to the highest Pitch, to reflect on the Numbers of Women of Sense who have been undone by Fools.'<sup>99</sup>

Harriet's question is used as a rhetorical device to encourage all females to scrutinise their own reasons for choosing certain men above others. Realising that women offered "a thousand Excuses to themselves for the Folly of those they like[d]" and failed "to discern a Fool through the Disguises of Gayety and Good-breeding", Fielding stressed that they should act more prudently in relation to the advances of men, lest they be duped and undone.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XI, Ch. IV, p. 585.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XI, Ch. IV, p. 586.

Harriet's experience provides readers with another example of the consequences that await women who either fail to apply reason to their passions or who fail to scrutinise a man's character beyond mere appearances or words. Only after eloping with Fitzpatrick does Harriet discover that she has been preferred "*on the Account of ready Money*". After being transported from England to Ireland, where she undergoes "Suffering and Agonies", Harriet returns to England. She comments that:

To my Fondness he was cold and insensible. My little comical Ways, which you, my *Sophy*, and which others have called so agreeable, he treated with Contempt. In my most serious Moments he sung and whistled; and whenever I was thoroughly dejected and miserable, he was angry, and abused me: for though he was never pleased with my good Humour, nor ascribed it to my Satisfaction in him; yet my low Spirits always offended him, and those he imputed to my Repentance of having (as he said) married an *Irishman*.<sup>100</sup>

When she comments that "Happy . . . is the Woman, who in any State of Life, hath a cheerful good-natured Companion to support and comfort her", Harriet not only offers readers Fielding's instruction on how to assess the value of men, but she also answers Miss Gibson's question, in relation to Richardson's *Clarissa*, as to whom would make the better husband, a Lovelace or a Hickman. On the topic of husbands, however, Fielding was more direct than Richardson, for Harriet warns Sophia that any "Woman of Sense" should "make frequent Trials of [a man's] Temper before Marriage".<sup>101</sup> Despite its radical implications for eighteenth-century readers, Sophia promises to heed the advice offered her by Harriet, even though the latter fails, a second time, to apply it to herself. By applying prudence to their passions, Fielding argued that readers could avoid a fate similar to that endured by Harriet.

In order to educate readers to distinguish true love from its affected opposite, Fielding contrasted the honest and virtuous inclinations of Sophia Western with the vicious inclinations of her kinswoman, Lady Bellaston. Although Angela Smallwood, in her study of the feminist debate in Fielding's work, suggests correctly that Fielding was attempting to mock "the convention by which the woman of fashion display[ed] her

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XI, Ch. V, p. 590.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XI, Ch. VII, p. 595.



modesty and virtue by disguising her true feelings or denying her desired suitor", she errs when she implies that Fielding was advocating that women should forget modesty and reveal their true feelings. She contends that "Fielding believe[d] that the suppression demanded by conventional female modesty should give way to the honest acknowledgement of a worthy passion".<sup>102</sup> This statement, based upon an undefined notion of a worthy passion, may represent an ideal advocated by feminist critics, but it was an ideal which was far too radical for the writer himself. Instead, Fielding stressed that his aim was to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. In "An Invocation", he commented:

Teach me, which to thee is no difficult Task, to know Mankind better than they know themselves. Remove that Mist which dims the Intellects of Mortals, and causes them to adore Men for their Art, or to detest them for their Cunning in deceiving others, when they are, in reality, the Objects only of Ridicule, for deceiving themselves. Strip off the thin Disguise of Wisdom from Self-Conceit, of Plenty from Avarice, and of Glory from Ambition . . . till Mankind learn the Good-Nature to laugh only at the Follies of others, and the Humility to grieve at their own.<sup>103</sup>

Fielding's didactic method was based on drawing the attention of readers to a consideration of their own deficiencies in the hope that they would correct them, after having seen them exposed and ridiculed in the course of the text. Thus, far from writing "depraved" and "immoral" works, as Richardson suggested,<sup>104</sup> Fielding used examples of vice to improve the manners and morals of his readers.

When the hypocritical Lady Bellaston proclaims that she intends to "Share in the Preservation of a young Lady of so much Merit",<sup>105</sup> Fielding not only exposed the woman's dishonest and selfish nature to the scrutiny of readers, but engaged the sagacity of readers in discerning truth from appearance. Applying the philosophies of Shaftesbury and Butler to the Lady's words, ideal readers should conclude that her words are devoid of any honest or true concern for Sophia's welfare. Consequently, the masquerade, with

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<sup>102</sup> Angela J. Smallwood, *Fielding and the Woman Question. The Novels of Henry Fielding and the Feminist Debate* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Press, 1989), p. 129.

<sup>103</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. I, pp. 685-686.

<sup>104</sup> Samuel Richardson, "Letter to Astraea and Minerva Hill", in A. Dobson, *Fielding*, p. 139.

<sup>105</sup> Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. III, p. 695.

its emphasis on appearance and masks, provides her with an appropriate and symbolic setting in which to seduce Jones; for, she is able to maintain the appearance of virtue. In guiding the moral development of readers, Fielding absolved Jones from any blame in transgressing the bounds of morality, when he had the narrator comment that the protagonist "was incapable of any rude or abrupt Behaviour to a Lady".<sup>106</sup>

The narrator informs readers that Tom, in spite of his impatience to see Sophia, resolves "to devote himself to [Lady Bellaston], from that great Principle of Justice, by which the Laws of some Countries oblige a Debtor who is no otherwise capable of discharging his Debt, to become the Slave of his Creditor".<sup>107</sup> In normal circumstances, Tom's actions would be deemed unvirtuous and unjust; however, in this situation, they are appropriate to a world in which debased behaviour and manners take precedence over virtue. The submission of Jones to sexual passion substantiates the didactic purpose of the novel - which requires that individuals moderate their good nature with prudence. In hindsight, the more morally educated Jones reflects on his affair, in this way:

Indeed he began to look on all the Favours he had received, rather as Wages than Benefits, which depreciated not only her, but himself too in his own Conceit, and put him quite out of Humour with both. From this Disgust, his Mind, by a natural Transition turned towards *Sophia*: Her Virtue, her Purity, her Love to him, her Sufferings on his Account, filled all his Thoughts, and made his Commerce with Lady *Bellaston* appear still more odious.<sup>108</sup>

Jones' goodness and sincerity are emphasised when he admits, in his letter to Sophia, that his "great and principal End is [her] Happiness".<sup>109</sup> In spite of his natural sexual appetite, he differs from the many vicious individuals within the world of the text in that he is neither dishonest nor hypocritical in his relations with women. This becomes evident when he chastises Nightingale for "playing the Fool" with Nancy:

'Looke, Mr. *Nightingale*,' said *Jones*, 'I am no canting Hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the Gift of Chastity, more than my Neighbours. I have been guilty with Women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. II, p. 691.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. IX, pp. 724-725.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XV, Ch. IX, p. 819.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVI, Ch. III, p. 844.

injured any - nor would I to procure Pleasure to myself, be knowingly the Cause of Misery to any human Being.'<sup>110</sup>

Despite his earthly imperfections, Jones is presented as a character upon whom readers can model their own behaviour. In the financial assistance he gives to the Andersons' boy, Jones personifies the virtuous qualities of benevolence and compassion. When Anderson admits that the family is obligated to "the worthiest, bravest, [and] noblest of all human Beings", Jones denies that any obligations exist; instead, he replies modestly that, if by the small assistance he has given the boy, he has "preserved a whole Family, [then] Pleasure was never bought so cheap".<sup>111</sup> Fielding used Jones to instruct readers on the qualities that constituted good and virtuous individuals. In reply to Mrs. Miller's hope that he may "meet a glorious Reward", Jones advances Fielding's moral instruction, when he comments:

'If there are Men who cannot feel the Delight of giving Happiness to others, I sincerely pity them, as they are incapable of tasting what is, in my Opinion, a greater Honour, a higher Interest, and a sweeter Pleasure, than the ambitious, the avaritious, or the voluptuous Man can ever obtain.'<sup>112</sup>

In his humble manner, Jones reinforces what the philosophers Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson had advocated in their writings - that benevolent and virtuous individuals are motivated not by any selfish concerns of reward, either earthly or heavenly, but rather by a higher principle, "the Delight of giving Happiness to others". This was Fielding's moral lesson, a lesson which had greater impact because Jones' actions were juxtaposed against the hypocritical and selfish actions of Lady Bellaston. Ideal readers of the text, therefore, should accept the validity of Jones' summation that those who never feel the delight of giving happiness to others should be pitied.

Lady Bellaston personifies "the true Characteristick of the present *Beau Monde*, [which] is rather Folly than Vice" and frivolity.<sup>113</sup> In her attempts to seduce Jones, she provides readers with evidence of the author's criticism of the morally deplorable state of

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. IV, p. 755.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. X, p. 727.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIII, Ch. X, p. 728.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. I, p. 744.

education for women in contemporary society, particularly those of the aristocratic class.

Fielding notes that:

Our present Women have been taught by their Mothers to fix their Thoughts only on Ambition and Vanity, and to despise the Pleasures of Love as unworthy their Regard; and being afterwards, by the Care of such Mothers, married without having Husbands, they seem pretty well confirmed in the Justness of those Sentiments; whence they content themselves, for the dull Remainder of Life, with the Pursuit of more innocent, [and] more childish Amusements, the bare Mention of which would ill suit with the Dignity of this History.<sup>114</sup>

When she comments that "no Woman of Virtue, unless a very near Relation indeed, would visit a young Gentleman at ten at Night, and stay four Hours in his Room with him alone",<sup>115</sup> Mrs. Miller defines, on behalf of the author, the way in which readers should interpret the manners of the other woman.

Fielding, however, did not confine his criticism only to women of the upper class. Ironically, the author used Nancy Miller to stress to readers the consequences of uncontrolled passions for women of the lower classes. In fact, it is Mrs. Miller who, in spite of claims that she knows the type of education that young women should receive in relation to behaviour and manners, is responsible for the excessive and uncontrollable nature of her daughter's passions. The mother comments:

'O Mr. *Jones*, . . . even you, though I know the Goodness of your Heart, can have no Idea of what I feel. The best, the kindest, the most dutiful of Children. O my poor *Nancy*, the Darling of my Soul; the Delight of my Eyes; the Pride of my Heart; Too much, indeed, my Pride; for to those foolish, ambitious Hopes, arising from her Beauty, I owe her Ruin. Alas! I saw with Pleasure the Liking which this young Man had for her. I thought it an honourable Affection; and flattered my foolish Vanity with the Thoughts of seeing her married to one so much her superior. And a thousand Times in my Presence, nay, often in yours, he hath endeavoured to soothe, and encourage these Hopes by the most generous Expressions of disinterested Love, which he hath always directed to my poor Girl, and which I, as well as she, believed to be real. Could I have believed that these were only Snares laid to betray the Innocence of my Child, and for the Ruin of us all?'<sup>116</sup>

In failing to teach her daughter how to control her pride and vanity, Mrs. Miller fails to educate the girl against the snares of men, whose aim it is to deprive unwary women of

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. I, pp. 743-744.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. III, p. 750.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. VI, p. 764.

their virtue. Consequently, Nightingale is not as evil as the lady suggests, for he personifies the punishment meted out to those who fail to moderate their "amour-propre". The story, which concludes with Nightingale's admission that he does love Nancy,<sup>117</sup> carries with it two significant lessons. The first concerns the need to educate women against the snares of men, while the second focuses upon the need for parents to overcome their own selfish motives and promote the happiness of their children. By having Mrs. Miller comment retrospectively on the situation, Fielding guided the reactions of his readers by allowing them direct insight into the minds of the characters, affected by avarice and pride.

In the Preface to Book Fifteen, Fielding distinguished himself from those moralists who claimed that "Virtue [was] the certain Road to Happiness, and Vice to Misery".<sup>118</sup> Aware that the goodness of individuals did not protect them from suffering, Fielding argued that the only comfort for the virtuous was the inward comfort that they received from acting virtuously. His hypothesis, that virtue did not necessarily bring happiness and vice misery, reasserted a point made by Richardson who claimed, in *Clarissa*, that, in reality, virtuous individuals were not always rewarded with happiness in this life; often, they were subjected to greater instances of "Ingratitude" and "Mischief". Fielding stressed, however, that this should not hinder the practice of benevolence, for such individuals would ultimately receive a gift far greater than any material reward - the gift of an "inward comfort of mind". Some years earlier, he had commented that:

a glorious Consideration to the virtuous Man, is that he may rejoyce even in never attaining that which he so well deserves, since it furnishes him with a noble Argument for the Certainty of a future State. As it is inconsistent with the Justice of a supremely wise and good Being, to suffer his honest and worthy Endeavours to go unrewarded, can the Heart of Man be warmed with a more ecstatic Imagination, than that the most excellent Attribute of the great Creator of the Universe is concerned in rewarding him?<sup>119</sup>

Fielding anticipated that this "inward comfort of mind" would provide readers with a strong reason for abandoning vice and following virtuous principles, even though they

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. VII, p. 769.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XV, Ch. I, p. 783.

<sup>119</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (March 4, 1739/40), Volume I, pp. 381-382.

could remain unrewarded on earth. Jones, for example, maintains his good nature in spite of his ostracism from Allworthy's household. In addition, Sophia Western must combat the combined scheming of Lady Bellaston, "who, under all the Smiles which she wore in her Countenance, concealed much Indignation against [her]",<sup>120</sup> and Lord Fellamar, who attempts to lay siege to her virtue. However, after analysing the corrupt morals of women in contemporary society and, in particular, Lady Bellaston, the narrator notes that, in relation to having their love thwarted, women will never "carry [their] Enmity higher than upon these Disappointments". He concludes, in words which summarise the vicious motives behind Lady Bellaston's treatment of Sophia, that, having once been in "the Possession of a Man", passionate women will go to any lengths even "half way to the Devil", to prevent any other Woman from enjoying the same.<sup>121</sup>

In order to support the didactic aim of the novel, Fielding, in a subtle attack on Richardson's *Pamela*, informed readers that he would "do no Violence to the Truth and Dignity of History" in order to bring about happiness at the conclusion of his novel. Thus, despite Mrs. Miller's attempts to convince Allworthy of the goodness of Jones, Allworthy refuses to believe anything ill about his nephew, at least until such time as it can be proved. Just after Blifil has accused Jones of being "one of the greatest Villains upon Earth", the narrator records a conversation between Mrs. Miller, who exclaims that Jones, far from being a villain, "is one of the worthiest Creatures breathing", and Allworthy. He continues:

'I must own, Madam,' said *Allworthy* very gravely, 'I am a little surprized to hear you so warmly defend a Fellow you do not know.' 'O I do know him, Mr. *Allworthy*,' said she, 'indeed I do; I should be the most ungrateful of all Wretches if I denied it. O he hath preserved me and my little Family; we have all Reason to bless him while we live. - And I pray Heaven bless him, and turn the Hearts of his malicious Enemies. . . . Believe me, Sir, he hath been abused, grosly abused to you; . . . he deserves a kinder Appellation from you, had you heard the good, the kind, the grateful Things which I have heard him utter of you; he never mentions your name but with a sort of adoration. . . You are deceived, sir. . . I do not pretend to say the young Man is without Faults; but they are the Faults of Wildness and of Youth; Faults which he may, nay which I am certain he will relinquish, and

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<sup>120</sup> Fielding *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XV, Ch. II, p. 785.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Book XVI, Ch. VIII, p. 866.

if he should not, they are vastly over-balanced by one of the most humane tender honest Hearts that ever Man was blessed with.<sup>122</sup>

Fielding used the persona of Mrs. Miller not only to communicate to readers what their reactions to Jones should be, but also to satirise virtuous individuals who failed to apply inspection and prudence to their good nature. In this way, she re-emphasises Fielding's didactic instruction, that all individuals should examine fully the motives which lie behind the actions, appearances and words of those with whom they come into contact. Blaming the calamities which befall the virtuous upon the "blind guidance of a predominant passion" and a neglect of prudence, Fielding, in *Amelia*, wrote:

'I question much, whether we may not by natural means account for the success of knaves, the calamities of fools, with all the miseries in which men of sense sometimes involve themselves by quitting the directions of prudence, and following the blind guidance of a predominant passion.'<sup>123</sup>

Although Allworthy epitomized Fielding's uneducated man of good nature, he is not foolish in all matters; for example, in relation to the prospective marriage of Sophia Western, he comments:

'Indeed I heartily wished to receive so great a Jewel into my Family; but tho' I may wish for many good Things, I would not therefore steal them, or be guilty of any Violence or Injustice to possess myself of them. Now to force a Woman into a Marriage contrary to her Consent or Approbation, is an Act of such Injustice and Oppression, that I wish the Laws of our Country could restrain it; but a good Conscience is never lawless in the worst-regulated State, and will provide those Laws for itself, which the Neglect of Legislators hath forgotten to supply. . . . Shall we tear her very Heart from her, while we enjoin her Duties to which a whole Heart is scarce equal. I must speak very plainly here, I think Parents who act in this Manner are Accessaries to all the Guilt which their Children afterwards incur, and of Course must, before a just Judge, expect to partake of their Punishment; but if they could avoid this, good Heaven! is there a Soul who can bear the Thought of having contributed to the Damnation of his Child?'<sup>124</sup>

Allworthy re-echoes Fielding's argument that parents should never compel their children into marriages, based on selfish motives. Ironically, it is only in relation to circumstances concerning himself that Allworthy's benevolence deteriorates into foolishness, for the good man is blind to the viciousness that surrounds him.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVII, Ch. II, pp. 877-878.

<sup>123</sup> Fielding, *Amelia*, Volume I, Book I, Ch. i, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> Fielding *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XVII, Ch. III, pp. 882-884.

Arriving "at the last Stage of [the] long Journey", Fielding re-emphasised the didactic nature of his work, in a simile which likened readers to "Fellow-Travellers in a Stage-Coach". Addressing readers as friends, he continued:

If I have been an entertaining Companion to thee, I promise thee it is what I have desired. If in any Thing I have offended, it was really without any Intention. Some Things perhaps here said, may have hit thee or thy Friends; but I do most solemnly declare they were not pointed at them. I question not but thou hast been told, among other Stories of me, that thou wast to travel with a very scurrilous Fellow: But whoever told thee so, did me an Injury. No Man detests and despises Scurrility more than myself; nor hath any Man more Reason; for none has ever been treated with more: And what is a very severe Fate, I have heard some of the abusive Writings of those very Men fathered upon me, who in other of their Works have abused me themselves with the utmost Virulence.<sup>125</sup>

Fielding justified his work in the eyes of his readers by emphasising that his aim had been to entertain them while, at the same time, instructing them in the pursuit of virtue. He reaffirmed, in retaliation to the accusations made against him by writers such as Richardson and Johnson, his detestation of any form of scurrility or immorality in his novel. At the same time, he asserted that a portrayal of real-life situations was necessary, if readers were to be morally educated, through a reading of the text. Thus, where the focus of his instruction was on the correction of corrupt manners and morals, he argued that some episodes had to be pointed.

Although Fielding concluded his work with the virtuous achieving happiness, this happiness, in contrast to Richardson's earthly reward for the maintenance of virtue in *Pamela*, was more coincidental. In Fielding's view, happiness could only be achieved after individuals had applied prudence to their good-nature. For example, Jones, on hearing from Partridge that he has "been a-Bed with [his] own Mother", attempts to blame "Fortune" for his predicament, as did many individuals in real life. He cries:

'Fortune will never have done with me, till she hath driven me to Distraction. But why do I blame Fortune? I am myself the Cause of all my Misery. All the dreadful Mischiefs which have befallen me, are the Consequences only of my own Folly and Vice.'<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. I, pp. 913-914.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. II, pp. 915-916.



Jones' words, rather than offering any comment on "Fortune", reinforce the author's didactic instruction that individuals are themselves responsible for their own misfortunes. Battestin correctly notes that "Jones's confession of moral responsibility is crucial to the theme of prudence in the novel".<sup>127</sup> Readers are taught two lessons: firstly, they are instructed that, in order to pursue virtue, they must correct their own follies; and secondly, they are taught to modify their benevolence with prudence, lest they also fall victims to the snares of the vicious.

Ironically, after Allworthy informs Mrs. Miller that he would be "heartily pleased to find [that Tom] could acquit himself of everything",<sup>128</sup> he is delivered a letter from Mr. Square absolving Jones from all vicious behaviour. In it, the dying man admits that he had allowed "The Pride of Philosophy" to intoxicate his reason. Suggesting that he has realised "the Way of Truth, before [sinking] into utter Darkness for ever", he continues:

'When I reflect on the Actions of my past Life, I know nothing which sits heavier upon my Conscience, than the Injustice I have been guilty of to that poor Wretch, your adopted Son. I have not indeed only connived at the Villainy of others, but been myself active in Injustice towards him. Believe me, my dear Friend, when I tell you on the Word of a dying Man, he hath been basely injured. . . . Believe me . . . this young Man hath the noblest Generosity of Heart, the most perfect Capacity for Friendship, the highest Integrity, and indeed every Virtue which can enoble a Man. He hath some Faults, but among them is not to be numbered the least want of Duty or Gratitude towards you. On the contrary, I am satisfied when you dismissed him from your House, his Heart bled for you more than for himself.'<sup>129</sup>

On the eve of his death, Square, having seemingly overcome his passionate and self-interested nature, shows that, even though the "taste" may be corrupted, "no Man [is] ever without some Conscience".<sup>130</sup> Thus, through the reflective nature of conscience, Square attains an "inward Comfort of the Mind". When, at the conclusion of his letter, he admits that "worldly Motives were the wicked and base Reasons" of his misrepresenting the character of Jones, Square should be seen as having achieved some self-

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XIV, Ch. VIII, p. 770.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. III, p. 922.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. IV, p. 927.

<sup>130</sup> Alexander Forbes, "Essay on Self-Love", Section X, in *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects* (1734), p. 283.

enlightenment. His words reinforce Fielding's moral instruction, which stressed that all individuals had the opportunity of reforming their characters while they lived.

In the character of Blifil, Fielding presented an individual whose nature could not be reformed. Mrs. Miller, with the aid of Nightingale, finally implicates Blifil with having bribed members of the press gang into lying against Jones. Deceitfully, however, the vicious man defends himself, saying that he is guilty of one offence only, that of offering "Compassion for those who [did] not deserve it".<sup>131</sup> With Blifil's declaration that compassion is one "of the most amiable of Human Weaknesses", Fielding's instruction took on a far more didactic tone. Correctly defined, compassion is a virtue that should be taught to all readers. However, too often during the course of the novel, readers are exposed to an affected form of compassion, or as Blifil observes, compassion applied to "those who do not deserve it". Fielding claimed that affected compassion contributed significantly to the continuance of folly and vice in society. He believed that all individuals, and by extension readers, should examine the motives behind their expressions of benevolence and compassion, and ascertain whether or not the objects in focus are truly deserving of the benevolence and compassion which are about to be bestowed upon them. Consequently, the author promoted the need for prudence in discerning the worthy from the unworthy objects of benevolence. Failure to apply prudence, or moderate excessive virtue, argued Fielding, in a lesson that was to be taken up by Oliver Goldsmith, rendered all virtuous individuals foolish in the eyes of the world.

Fielding distinguished the virtuous Allworthy from those individuals who, affecting benevolence, appeared to live like honest individuals, by keeping good house and entertaining "Neighbours with a hearty Welcome at [their] Table, and [who were] charitable to the Poor".<sup>132</sup> Like Allworthy, readers also needed to be morally educated in order to discern the "very artful Man" from individuals of true virtue. Fielding succeeded in this task by having readers assimilate themselves into the world of the text, and by having them share in the moral development of Allworthy. Only when he can scrutinise

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. V, p. 932.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book I, Ch. III, p. 38.

thoroughly the motives of all individuals can Allworthy be labelled a genuinely "good-natured man". Fielding advocated that:

Prudence and Circumspection are necessary even to the best of Men. They are indeed as it were a Guard to Virtue, without which she can never be safe. . . . Let this, my young Readers, be your constant Maxim, That no Man can be good enough to enable him to neglect the Rules of Prudence; nor will Virtue herself look beautiful, unless she be bedecked with the outward Ornaments of Decency and Decorum.<sup>133</sup>

Only at the conclusion of the novel, and after having undergone a process of moral education, does Allworthy realise that Blifil is the "worst of Villains", and a "wicked Viper which [he has] so long nourished in [his] Bosom".<sup>134</sup> "Ashamed of [his] past Behaviour",<sup>135</sup> he asks for the forgiveness of Jones, and continues:

'You now see, *Tom*, to what Dangers Imprudence alone may subject Virtue . . . Prudence is indeed the Duty which we owe to ourselves; and if we will be so much our own Enemies as to neglect it, we are not to wonder if the World is deficient in discharging their Duty to us; for when a Man lays the Foundation of his own Ruin, others will, I am afraid, be too apt to build upon it.'<sup>136</sup>

After discovering the truth about the real natures of Jones and Blifil, Allworthy realises that prudence is a duty owed by all individuals to both themselves and others. Only by applying prudence to good nature can virtuous individuals be certain of discharging correctly their duties to their fellow creatures. Since readers have shared the same moral education as Allworthy, they too should conclude their reading of the text as more morally educated beings.

Like proponents of the moral sense theory, Fielding rejected the Hobbesian doctrine that all individuals acted from self-interest, for such a doctrine denied the existence of virtue in the world. Although many malicious individuals existed within society, Fielding believed that human nature comprised a mixture of good and evil. Despite Jones' proclamation that his uncle's "Goodness [and] Tenderness overpowers, unmans, [and] destroys" him,<sup>137</sup> Allworthy still personified the author's belief that there

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book III, Ch. VII, p. 141.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. VIII, p. 950.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. IX, p. 954.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. X, pp. 959-960.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. X, p. 959.

were faults even within the best-natured individuals. In relation to Allworthy, the forgiving Jones comments:

'The wisest Man might be deceived as you were, and, under such a Deception, the best must have acted as you did. Your Goodness displayed itself in the Midst of your Anger . . . Alas, Sir, I have not been punished more than I have deserved; and it shall be the whole Business of my future Life to deserve that Happiness you now bestow on me . . . I thank Heaven I have had Time to reflect on my past Life, where, though I cannot charge myself with any gross Villainy, yet I can discern Follies and Vices more than enough to repent and to be ashamed of; Follies which have been attended with dreadful Consequences to myself, and have brought me to the Brink of Destruction.'<sup>138</sup>

Ironically, although Allworthy has been generous to Jones, he does not embody exemplary virtue, because, lacking prudence, he has failed to discern the underlying motives of those individuals with whom he associates. However, in addition to stressing the need to apply prudence to qualify excessive benevolence, Jones' words also emphasised Fielding's instruction that virtuous individuals should forgive those who trespass against them. Not only does Jones forgive Allworthy's imprudence, but he also displays his humanity and virtue in forgiving Blifil. However, in order to prevent Jones' kindness becoming too excessive, Allworthy intervenes, commenting:

'Child, . . . you carry this forgiving Temper too far. Such mistaken Mercy is not only Weakness, but borders on Injustice, and is very pernicious to Society, as it encourages Vice. The Dishonesty of this Fellow I might perhaps have pardoned, but never his Ingratitude. And give me Leave to say, when we suffer any Temptation to atone for Dishonesty itself, we are as candid and merciful as we ought to be; and so far I confess I have gone: for I have often pitied the Fate of a Highwayman, when I have been on the Grand Jury; and have more than once applied to the Judge on the Behalf of such as have had any mitigating Circumstances in their Case; but when Dishonesty is attended with any blacker Crime, such as Cruelty, Murder, Ingratitude, or the like, Compassion and Forgiveness then become Faults. I am convinced the Fellow is a Villain, and he shall be punished; at least as far as I can punish him.'<sup>139</sup>

Allworthy's words provide both Jones and readers with the moral aim of the novel. The author acknowledged that, although compassion was a virtuous trait, individuals should not allow themselves to be duped by expressions of reformation without first examining the motives which lay behind such professions of repentance. Fielding believed that, in

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. X, p. 959.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book VIII, Ch. XI, p. 969.

severe cases, unless some form of punishment was meted out to offenders, vice would continue to flourish. Allworthy's words, therefore, substantiated what Fielding had commented upon in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers*, when he noted that, although "Mercy may appear more amiable . . . Severity to an Individual may, perhaps, be in the End the greatest Mercy, not only to the Public in general . . . but to many Individuals".<sup>140</sup> Because this formed an integral part of the author's instruction to readers, the protagonist is unable to offer his benefactor "any Reply" to the contrary. Unlike Richardson's heroines, who were "infinitely too good to live in this World",<sup>141</sup> Fielding's characters, Jones and Allworthy, were made to live in this world. At the novel's conclusion, they have finally "acquired . . . Discretion and Prudence". Consequently, Fielding's didactic characters presented readers with "real" models of behaviour, upon which they could base their own lives. Jones' future happiness with Sophia Western is assured because he has achieved those qualities about which Allworthy had earlier admonished him:

'I am convinced . . . that you have much Goodness, Generosity, and Honour in your Temper; if you will add Prudence and Religion to these, you must be happy: For the three former Qualities, I admit, make you worthy of Happiness, but they are the latter only which will put you in Possession of it.'<sup>142</sup>

At the conclusion of the the novel, Jones attains happiness because he has added prudence and religion to his nature. Bruce McCullough summarises the instruction adequately, when he comments that "Tom's career serves as a lesson in the value of generosity and disinterestedness and also in the need for prudence".<sup>143</sup>

After *Tom Jones*, Fielding, although he never lost sight of the need to instruct his readers in the pursuit of virtue, adopted a more pessimistic tone in his writing, most probably as a result of his research into crime and its consequences. In his introduction to *Amelia*, for example, he commented that:

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<sup>140</sup> Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers*, Sec. X, p. 164.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book XVIII, Ch. XI, p. 967.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., Volume I, Book V, Ch. VII, p. 244.

<sup>143</sup> Bruce McCullough, *English Representative Novelists: Defoe to Conrad* (New York: 1946), p. 48

The following book is sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well as public as private, which at present infest the country . . . .<sup>144</sup>

In *Amelia*, however, instead of relying fully on the sagacity of readers to appreciate and interpret the moral lessons for themselves, Fielding's didactic method took on a far more indoctrinating aspect, such as when Harrison comments that, "Vanity is always contemptible; but when joined with dishonesty, it becomes odious and detestable".<sup>145</sup> Following this, the narrator launches into a discussion between Amelia and her children on the subject of goodness and the difficulties that it faces in the world. After she has informed her children that the family has been undone because other vicious individuals have taken a hatred to her husband, the narrator continues that:

[T]he boy . . . answered, "Nay, mamma, how can that be? have you not often told me that if I was good everybody would love me?" "All good people will," answered she. "Why don't they love papa then?" replied the child, "for I am sure he is very good." "So they do, my dear," said the mother, "but there are more bad people in the world, and they will hate you for your goodness." "Why then, bad people," cries the child, "are loved by more than the good." - "No matter for that, my dear," said she, "the love of one good person is more worth having than that of a thousand wicked ones; nay, if there was no such person in the world, still you must be a good boy; for there is One in Heaven who will love you, and His love is better for you than that of all mankind".<sup>146</sup>

Although virtuous individuals should still pursue prudence, the instruction highlighted a change in didactic focus for Fielding. No longer was there the same optimism in reforming society as a whole; rather, seeing the impossibility of this, the author aimed at instructing individuals singly to pursue virtue. He believed that, if for no other reason, individuals should pursue virtue in order to attain the love of God. Thus, in *Amelia*, Fielding provided readers with his version of the exemplary woman - the "admirable woman [who] never let a day pass without instructing her children in some lesson of religion and morality". In addition, Fielding implemented, in the novel, the Shaftesburian technique of exposing Amelia's charity and virtue to the test of ridicule so as to stress that

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<sup>144</sup> Fielding *Amelia*, in two volumes (London: Dent, 1966), Volume I, Introduction, p. xv.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, Book IV, Ch. III, p. 173.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, Book IV, Ch. III, p. 174.

true virtue could never be ridiculed. In much the same way as the children would grow into virtuous adults by listening to the advice of their mother, Fielding implied that readers too would become more virtuous by heeding the moral instruction within his novels.

It was Fielding's didactic intention that Amelia should convert Booth to Christianity, a Christianity based on benevolence and virtue. Amelia speaks for the author when she advocates the need for benevolence, compassion and goodness in all individuals. For example, as part of the moral instruction for readers, the narrator records Amelia's discussion with Booth about "goodness". Stressing that "great men" have no idea of the "common distresses of mankind", Booth continues:

"Compassion, if thoroughly examined, will, I believe, appear to be the fellow-feeling only of men of the same rank and degree of life for one another, on account of the evils to which they themselves are liable. Our sensations are, I am afraid, very cold towards those who are at a great distance from us, and whose calamities can consequently never reach us."

"I remember," cries Amelia, "a sentiment of Dr. Harrison's, which he told me was in some Latin book; *I am a man myself, and my heart is interested in whatever can befall the rest of mankind*. That is the sentiment of a good man, and whoever thinks otherwise is a bad one".

"I have often told you, my dear Emily," cries Booth "that all men, as well the best as the worst, act alike from the principle of self-love. Where benevolence therefore is the uppermost passion, self-love directs you to gratify it by doing good, and by relieving the distresses of others; for they are then in reality your own. But where ambition, avarice, pride, or any other passion, governs the man and keeps his benevolence down, the miseries of all other men affect him no more than they would a stock or a stone. And thus the man and his statue have often the same degree of feeling or compassion".

"I have often wished, my dear," cries Amelia, "to hear you converse with Dr. Harrison on this subject; for I am sure he would convince you, though I can't, that there are really such things as religion and virtue".<sup>147</sup>

Although there is something Mandevillian about Booth's concept of self-love, it was important that readers understood that Fielding's instruction lay somewhere between the two views. Amelia presents the traditional New Testament notion of virtue, which requires that all individuals assist their fellow-creatures. Such a view, observed Fielding, although ideal, was no longer appropriate given the corrupt nature of society. With Butler and Hutcheson, he argued that benevolence could not be bestowed upon all individuals in an indiscriminate manner; instead, benevolence should be applied prudently and, more

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Book X, Ch. IX, p. 214.

importantly, stem from the correct motives. In her concept of universal benevolence, therefore, Amelia seems naïve. Such a concept is open to abuse because, as Booth suggests, too many individuals, failing to see that benevolence and self-love can be complementary, allow their good natures to be usurped by the negative passions of ambition, avarice, pride and selfishness. Although Booth, like many readers, needs to be morally instructed in order to see that happiness and self-love can co-exist with benevolence, religion and virtue, Amelia also has to be taught that the Christianity of the New Testament is not always practical.

However, even given this point, Fielding, along with Barrow and Tillotson, still associated morality with religion. They argued that all virtuous individuals should extend benevolence, compassion and love to their neighbours, in accordance with the dictates of the gospels. Reminding readers that the maintenance of virtue was always within their own power, Fielding instructed individuals to avoid luxury, pride, and the satisfaction of the appetites and passions, all of which gave no pleasure when "compared to the warm, solid Content, the swelling Satisfaction, the thrilling Transports and the exulting Triumphs, which a good Mind enjoy[ed], in the Contemplation of a generous, virtuous, noble, benevolent Action".<sup>148</sup> Consequently, virtue depended not upon the actions and words of individuals, but upon the intentions or motives which lay behind them. It was Fielding's insistence on his didactic aim, to promote morality and virtue, that resulted in John Cleland's labelling Fielding's "new species of writing" both "virtuous and laudable". Cleland's review of *Amelia* could be applied to each of Fielding's novels. In it, he commented:

But be it said, to the honour of the *English*, and to this writer in particular, that he never thought so ill of the public, as to make his court to it at the expence of the sacred duties of morality. Where-ever the obligation of painting the corruptions of mankind, and the world, *not as it should be, but as it really exists*, forces him into descriptions in which his actors depart from the paths of virtue and prudence, he is sure to make examples of them, perhaps more salutary, than if he had made them too rigidly adhere to their duty. Their follies and vices are turned so as to become instructions in the issue of them, and which make a far more forcible impression than merely

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<sup>148</sup> Fielding *Tom Jones*, Volume II, Book XII, Ch. X, p. 654.



speculative maxims and dry sentences. *Longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla.* Sen. Epist. 6.<sup>149</sup>

By this means too the author imitates nature in enforcing its capital laws; by the attractions of pleasure he puts into Morality in action; it is alive, and insinuates its greatest truths into the mind, under the colours of amusement and fiction. Readers are, by the magic of this association, made to retain what has at once instructed and diverted them, when they would be apt to forget what has perhaps no more than wearied, or *Dulled* them. The chief and capital purport of this work is to inculcate the superiority of virtuous conjugal love to all other joys; to prove that virtue chastens our pleasures, only to augment them; and to exemplify, that the paths of vice, are always those of misery, and that virtue even in distress, is still a happier bargain to its votaries, than vice, attended with all the splendor of fortune. So just, so refined a morality, would alone, with a candid and ingenuous reader, compensate for almost any imperfections in the execution of this work.<sup>150</sup>

Refuting the claims of Fielding's antagonists, such as Richardson and Johnson<sup>151</sup> who claimed that the author's writing fostered the continuance of vice, Cleland stressed that Fielding's didactic method was conducive to promoting virtue in all readers. Following Seneca's maxim, Fielding, rather than stating precepts, inculcated his instruction through the use of effective, real-life examples within the text. In contrast to Richardson, he employed an innovative methodology which forced readers to use their sagacity in decoding the meaning of the text. Consequently, by using their own cognitive skills in decoding the moral instruction, readers should be able to apply the instruction to their own lives.

Like the writer of *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela*,<sup>152</sup> Fielding believed that Richardson had erred in presenting readers with models

<sup>149</sup> Seneca, *Epistles*, No. 6. Translation: "The way is long through precepts, short and effective through examples".

<sup>150</sup> John Cleland, *The Monthly Review* (December 1751), V, 510-515, in *Fielding: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. Paulson and T. Lockwood (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 305-306.

<sup>151</sup> Hannah More, in a letter to her sister, in 1780, commented, "I never saw Johnson really angry with me but once; . . . I alluded rather flippantly, I fear, to some witty passage in Tom Jones: he replied, 'I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it: a confession which no modest lady should ever make. I scarcely know a more corrupt work'". From *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More* (1834), i, p. 168; also quoted in *Fielding: The Critical Heritage*, p. 443.

<sup>152</sup> Anonymous, *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela* (1754), pp. 18-20. Also quoted in *Fielding: The Critical Heritage*, p. 366. The writer comments: "In Grandison, you have endeavoured to give an example of universal goodness and benevolence. But I am afraid you have strained and stretched that character too far; you have furnished him with too great a variety of

of unattainable perfection. In order to improve morality, readers had to be shown characters who displayed a virtue "copied from nature". Samuel Johnson criticised this element of Fielding's "new species of writing", when he claimed:

In Narratives, where historical Veracity has no Place, I cannot discover why there should not be exhibited the most perfect Idea of Virtue; of Virtue not angelical, nor above Probability; for what we cannot credit we shall never imitate; but of the highest and purest Kind that Humanity can reach, while, when exercised in such Trials as the various Revolutions of Things shall bring upon it, may, by conquering some Calamities, and enduring others, teach us what we may hope, and what we may perform. Vice, for Vice is necessary to be shewn, should always disgust; nor should the Graces of Gaiety, or the Dignity of Courage, be so united with it, as to reconcile it to the Mind.<sup>153</sup>

Not only did Johnson, however, fail to appreciate the part that ridicule and satire could play in correcting folly and vice in Fielding's works, but he also overlooked the author's argument that virtue would be inculcated more readily into the minds of readers by presenting them characters whose virtue was attainable, in contrast to presenting characters whose perfection lay beyond the realm of human attainment. Furthermore, after having been assimilated into the text, readers could more readily apply the moral instruction to their own lives because they had taken an active part in decoding it. Before he attacked Fielding's writing, Doctor John Hill, who imitated *Tom Jones* in his *The Adventures of Mr. Loveill*, summarised the author's didactic method aptly when he commented that:

Every Man's Heart told him the Descriptions were just, while he was reading them, and every Incident had its peculiar Moral or Instruction couch'd under it, inspiring to something laudable, or cautioning against some Foible, which all Characters of a like Turn must have Propensity to.

In the Course of these Histories our Hearts were mended, while the Imagination seemed even to ourselves all that was concerned in the Attention we paid to them; and we were instructed while we thought we were only entertained.<sup>154</sup>

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accomplishments, some of them destructive, at least not so consistent with the principal and most shining virtue. *The man is every thing*, as Lucy or Harriet says; which no man ever was, or will be".

<sup>153</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, No. 4 (March 31, 1750), p. 24.

<sup>154</sup> Dr. John Hill, *The History of a Woman of Quality: A Parallel between the Characters of Lady Frail, and the Lady of Quality in 'Peregrine Pickle'* (1751, pp. 3-5.), in *Fielding: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 283-284.

Hill's words emphasised the difficulty that modern critics have had in appreciating the intricacies of Fielding's instruction. In order to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue, Fielding used a didactic method in which entertainment provided the vehicle for conveying his moral instruction. Indeed, Hill described Fielding's method appropriately, when he noted that "we were instructed while we thought we were only entertained".

In order to discredit philosophers who argued that individuals could never attain virtue, Fielding combined the Shaftesburian doctrine of the innate goodness of individuals with the Latitudinarian doctrine of the delight that virtuous individuals received in doing good. For the author, it was disinterested love, the reconciliation of both self-love and benevolence, that brought "exquisite delight" and happiness for all individuals. Thus, at the conclusion of each of his novels, the happiness achieved by each of Fielding's protagonists should not be seen in terms of earthly reward; rather, it was resultant upon the inward happiness, or "comfort of mind", received in acting for the good of others. In this sense, the author's doctrine was akin to that of Butler, who had advocated that the highest level of happiness was gained from "loving one's neighbour". Simultaneously, readers, by assimilating themselves into the world of the text and sharing in the moral education of Fielding's protagonists, should also conclude their reading with an improved set of morals, which should help them to pursue virtue and attain true happiness. Inherent in Fielding's philosophy was the belief that all individuals were capable of reforming minor vices and pursuing virtue, if given the correct form of moral education. He commented:

Virtue forbids not the satisfying our Appetites, Virtue forbids us only to glut and destroy them. The temperate Man tastes and relishes Pleasure in a Degree infinitely superior to that of the voluptuous. . . . The Sot soon ceases to enjoy his Wine, the Glutton his Dainties, and the Libertine his Women. The temperate Man enjoys all in the highest Degree, and indeed with the greatest Variety: For human nature will not suffice for an Excess of every Passion, and wherever one runs away with a Man, we may generally observe him sacrificing all the rest to the Enjoyment of that alone. The virtuous and temperate Man only hath Inclination, . . . Strength; and . . . Opportunity to enjoy all his Passions. <sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (January 24, 1739/40), Volume I, p. 214.

Only when the appetites and passions became uncontrollable, argued Fielding, did they become sources of vice in individuals. Thus, prudence and reason were necessary in restraining the excessive natures of human beings.

Rather than persevere with the serious form of instruction of his predecessors which, until his time, had failed to correct the folly and vice inherent in society, Fielding linked humour to his didactic purpose so as to instruct his readers in the correction of vice and the pursuit of virtue. He employed ridicule and satire for a twofold purpose: firstly, to expose vice by helping readers see through the falsity of appearances and hypocrisy; and secondly, "to hold the Glass to Thousands in their Closets, [so] that they may contemplate their Deformity, and endeavour to reduce it".<sup>156</sup> Dyson notes correctly that "ridicule is no longer reserved for the hypocrites: Fielding's good characters . . . [also] come in for their share of it as well".<sup>157</sup> However, Dyson ignores another dimension of Fielding's use of ridicule, which was, following the doctrine of Shaftesbury, the part that ridicule could play in promoting virtue. Like Shaftesbury, Fielding asserted that nothing truly virtuous could ever be discredited by applying ridicule to test its veracity. When Fielding applied ridicule to his good characters, it was in order to expose some excessive passion which might have been misconstrued as a positive trait. Thus, foreshadowing the technique used by Oliver Goldsmith, Fielding insisted that excessive instances of virtue should be moderated in order to prevent their supporting the continuance of vice in society. By applying prudence to virtue, individuals should be able to distinguish between true and false examples of virtue. Believing, with Shaftesbury, that "*Everything which is an Improvement of Virtue . . . leads to the greatest and most solid Happiness and Enjoyment*",<sup>158</sup> it was Fielding's aim that readers conclude their reading of the texts with a set of values identical to those of the author, himself. By moderating their good nature with "prudence and circumspection", readers could feel assured that they would

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<sup>156</sup> Fielding *Joseph Andrews*, Book III, Ch. I, p.189.

<sup>157</sup> A. E. Dyson, *The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 17.

<sup>158</sup> Shaftesbury, *Inquiry*, in *Characteristics*, Conclusion, pp. 109-110.

attain true happiness. Fielding's moral instruction was best summarised in his own words, when he claimed that:

The greatest and truest happiness which this world affords, is to be found only in the possession of goodness and virtue; a doctrine which, as it is undoubtedly true, so hath it so noble and practical a tendency, that it can never be too often or too strongly inculcated on the minds of men.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Fielding, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, ed. Claude Rawson (London: J. M. Dent, 1973), p. 3.



Like Fielding, Goldsmith asserted that it was the task of all writers, by exposing the follies and vices of the age, to instruct readers to pursue virtue.

In addition to instructing individuals in the pursuit of virtue, Goldsmith extended Fielding's idea that the novel should teach readers to apply prudence to instances of benevolence. In part, this response was a reaction against the growing popularity of the sentimental novel, which had emphasised that an excess of, or over-indulgence in, emotion was the best way in which individuals could show their love for their neighbours. Following Butler, Goldsmith believed that, in addition to promoting a love of their neighbours, writers should instruct readers to moderate their benevolence and good nature with prudence and reason. He stressed that, where the generosity or compassion of individuals contributed to their own calamities or misfortunes, such acts were both inappropriate and ridiculous. In an unsigned article in the *Critical Review*, one writer, praising Goldsmith for his didactic intentions in supporting humanity and virtue, wrote:

Dr. Goldsmith deserves the highest applause for employing his poetical talents in the support of humanity and virtue, in an age when sentimental instruction will have more powerful influence upon our conduct than any other; when abstruse systems of morality, and dry exhortations from the pulpit, if attended to for a while, make no durable impression.<sup>3</sup>

Goldsmith aimed at restoring virtue to its seat of pre-eminence in a society which had allowed false values, materialism and self-interestedness to usurp its rightful position. Following Shaftesbury, who had argued that true virtue could never be ridiculed, Goldsmith employed irony and satire in order to distinguish virtue from its vicious antithesis. In addition, he emphasised, with Butler and Hutcheson, that virtue depended not so much upon actions and words, but upon the motives that underlay it. Individuals, he argued, should administer virtuous acts in a disinterested and moderate manner, and only after they had distinguished between the deserving and the undeserving.

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<sup>3</sup> Unsigned review, *Critical Review* (June 1770), XXIX, p. 443. Extract quoted from *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. S. Rousseau (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 82.

Goldsmith's moral instruction was based upon an appreciation and recognition of the influence that both the passions and reason had in motivating the behaviour and manners of individuals. Recognising the truth inherent in the maxims of such ancient writers as Martial,<sup>4</sup> Goldsmith suggested that the passions, although they could play a significant part in the decision-making processes of individuals, were "but short lived"; by consequence, prolonged passions could result in the exhibition of folly. Thus, although he did not accept the claim that "reason [was] but a slave to the passions", Goldsmith found, with Hume, that individuals could be motivated towards doing good by the passions. In Fum Hoam's reply to the protagonist's letter in *The Citizen of the World*, for example, Goldsmith admitted that "he who separate[d] sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from the mind alone, [was] in fact as wretched as the naked inhabitants of the forest, who place[d] all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter".<sup>5</sup> Only when individuals allowed their passions to exert control over both prudence and reason, asserted Goldsmith, did they become figures of ridicule. When this occurred, reason, the faculty which allowed individuals to determine between right and wrong, was rendered inoperative. Thus, it became part of the didactic purpose of the author that he instruct individuals to pursue virtue, knowing full well that the passions could also motivate acts of virtue.

In order to prove to readers that instances of excessive benevolence - instances devoid of sound judgement - were detrimental to true virtue, Goldsmith chose to follow Shaftesbury's technique of applying the "test of ridicule" to the moral values held by each of his protagonists. Macdonald Emslie misses the didactic intentions of the author when he argues that Goldsmith, in *The Vicar of Wakefield* and other works, failed to distinguish between that charity which is a duty of all beings, and its opposite which was based solely upon self-indulgence.<sup>6</sup> In distinguishing between genuine and affected

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<sup>4</sup> Martial, *Epigrams*, Book IV, Ep. 29, I. 7. Martial declared that, "Short is the duration of things, which are immoderate".

<sup>5</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter VI, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Macdonald Emslie, *Goldsmith: The Vicar of Wakefield* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1963), p. 53.



virtue, Goldsmith came much closer to the philosophies of Addison and Shaftesbury than what Emslie is willing to admit. Addison had advocated that:

The next way of a Man's bringing his Good-nature to the Test is, to consider whether it operates according to the Rules of Reason and Duty: For if, notwithstanding its general Benevolence to Mankind, it makes no distinction between its Objects, if it exerts it self promiscuously towards the Deserving and the Undeserving, if it relieves alike the Idle and the Indigent, if it gives it self up to the first Petitioner, and lights upon any one rather by Accident than Choice, it may pass for an amiable Instinct, but must not assume the Name of a Moral Virtue.<sup>7</sup>

Although continuous acts of benevolence towards one's neighbours could be laudable, Goldsmith instructed readers that they should learn to distinguish between genuine benevolence and those "amiable Instincts", which some individuals often mistook as virtue. In the case of Young Honeywood, whose excessive benevolence contributes to the abuse he receive from relatives, friends and servants alike, Goldsmith stressed that readers should neither admire, overlook nor pity the faults of foolish characters; instead, they should censure individuals who, through their own indiscretions, contributed to their own calamities. By exposing the folly of such characters, Goldsmith believed that readers could learn to distinguish between true virtue and its affected opposite.

Although Goldsmith's works were not autobiographical, there were some aspects of the writer's own life, such as the need to moderate benevolence, upon which he developed his instruction. For example, after he had left Ireland for England, the author recollected that he had, too often, dispensed thoughtlessly with money to the "apparently needy". M'Donnell, for example, wrote that he saw Goldsmith "only in his bland and kind moods, with a flow, perhaps an overflow, of the milk of human kindness for all who were in any manner dependent upon him".<sup>8</sup> M'Donnell's comment was substantiated by Washington Irving who, in his *Life of Goldsmith*, commented that the author was not only mourned by his colleagues on his death, but also by "the poor objects of his charity to whom he had never turned a deaf ear, even when struggling himself with

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, edited, with introduction and notes, by Donald F. Bond (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965), Volume II, No. 177 (September 22, 1711), pp. 197-198.

<sup>8</sup> Boris Ford, *From Dryden to Johnson: Pelican Guide to English Literature*, Volume 4 (Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), p. 375.

poverty". Having been "overly-educated" in the concept of universal benevolence by his own father, Goldsmith realised, albeit retrospectively, that such a positive trait could be defective, if it was bestowed imprudently upon others. Although there were similarities between the author and the characters of Drybone, in *The Citizen of the World*, and Burchell, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, each of whom is imprudent in his generosity, Goldsmith, himself, never learnt how to moderate his benevolence. Thus, like a number of his protagonists, he was also abused because of his failure to apply prudence to good nature. Basing all decisions upon a passionate and spontaneous overflow of emotion, he became a victim of sentimentalism and died destitute.

It was because of this inability on the part of individuals to exert authority over their passions and to discern true from affected objects of benevolence, that Goldsmith wrote. Rather than write only to entertain readers, Goldsmith instructed readers that they should apply moderation and prudence to acts of benevolence, charity, compassion and pity. In the past, many critics have assumed incorrectly that, as a result of the author's emphasis on the amiable and excessive instincts of his protagonists, he was supporting the sentimental novel. These critics based their arguments on such passages as the one below, recited by the protagonist in *The Citizen of the World*:

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the suffering of the wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! . . . Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance.<sup>9</sup>

However, rather than support the sentimental novel, Goldsmith used examples of excessive instincts, parading as virtues, to make readers consider carefully the consequences that awaited all individuals who based their actions on passion and whim.

In *The Good Natur'd Man*, Goldsmith satirised his protagonist, Honeywood, for the way in which, despite all his amiable instincts, he was unable to discern the genuinely needy suppliant. His benevolence was as greatly affected as the natures of those who approached him for assistance. Jarvis highlights the folly of the young man when he

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<sup>9</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter CXVII, p. 454.

remarks that Honeywood has "some fine name or other for [all his traits]. He calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting every body, universal benevolence".<sup>10</sup> It was part of the didactic method of the author that readers, by observing the reactions of characters closely associated with the protagonists, could gain for themselves a "well-rounded" moral education. In the case above, Jarvis realises that Honeywood, in spite of his good-natured instincts, has received a deficient moral education. Consequently, Goldsmith used Honeywood to instruct readers that they should always scrutinise their acts of benevolence, so that they did not aid the undeserving. Too many individuals, argued the author, confused true benevolence with self-indulgence. It was Goldsmith's aim "to promise an epitome of all the good things that were ever said or written".<sup>11</sup>

In his education of readers, Goldsmith drew upon the didactic techniques of both Henry and Sarah Fielding. In fact, there were some obvious similarities between Sarah Fielding's method, in *The Adventures of David Simple*, and that of two of Goldsmith's major works, *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Citizen of the World*. As was the case with Henry Fielding, Miss Fielding also aimed at educating readers to pursue virtue and to scrutinise the motives of vicious individuals. Readers were educated by their being assimilated into the world of the text, and by following the moral development of the protagonist. Malcolm Kelsall summarised the didactic nature of Miss Fielding's novel, when he stated that:

Her merits are best judged in her handling of allegoric structure and in the integration of moral types in a symbolic framework. The texture of her writing, her handling of language in the creation of scene and character, must be judged as the appropriate dress of an ideal moral fiction. . . . He [David Simple] does not understand the hypocrisy of the double-dealers of the world, and is therefore without a guard against their treachery and guile. He is both innocent and naïve, simple in the sense of being, in the eyes of the world, a silly man: he is clearly Sarah Fielding's version of Heartfree. . . . his ignorance allows a satiric and ironic portrayal both of society and of the protagonist himself.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Goldsmith, *The Good Natur'd Man*, Volume V, Act the First, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Goldsmith, *The Bee; Being Essays on the Most Interesting Subjects*, No. 1 (October 6, 1759), Volume I, p. 354.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*, ed. Malcolm Kelsall (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. xiii.

The character of David Simple, with his good nature and innocence, closely resembled that of Goldsmith's Vicar, who is also without guard against the vicious. Consequently, such ignorance in the ways of the world allowed both writers the opportunity of satirising not only the society in which the characters lived, but also the characters themselves.

Miss Fielding recognised that the task of teaching readers to distinguish between virtuous and vicious manners was far from easy, especially as it often involved re-educating the protagonist and, by association, readers. One example of the difficulty associated with discerning the real motives behind the actions and words of vicious individuals is summarised by Cynthia in her response to David's request that she explain the term, "*fine Ladies*". She continues:

"Indeed, Sir, you have imposed on me the hardest Task in the World: I know them when I meet with them; but they have so little of what we call Character, that I don't know how to go about describing them. They are made up of *Caprice* and *Whim*; they *love* and *hate*, are angry and pleased, without being able to assign a Reason for any of these Passions. If they have a *Characteristick*, it is *Vanity*, to which every thing else seems to be subservient; they always affect a great deal of *Good-nature*. . . . They are not confined to any Station; for I have known, while the Lady has been insulting her Waiting-woman in the Dressing-Room, the Chamber-Maid has been playing just the same Part below stairs, with the Person she thought her inferior, only with a small Variation of Terms".<sup>13</sup>

Miss Fielding described aptly the many women who, appearing in all stations of life, affected appearances so as to satisfy their uncontrollable and selfish appetites and desires. Realising that sermons and maxims had proved inadequate in educating readers to pursue virtue, Miss Fielding employed a didactic method whereby readers could be educated during their "travels", with the protagonist, in the course of the novel. However, like Henry Fielding, she accepted that readers should be allowed to maintain their autonomy and decode the moral instruction for themselves. At the same time, she did not ignore the readers' need of a moral guide; for this purpose, she had Spatter assume the role of textual tutor to David while he was in London, a technique which anticipated Goldsmith's use of Drybone and Burchell.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. vii, pp. 114-115.

Unlike David Simple, Spatter is able to remove the "Mask" adopted by vicious characters. Although he admonishes the vices of humankind, David notes that, underneath the man's apparent "Ill-nature", there lies the benevolent spirit of a man who is known to have done some of "the best-natured Actions in the World". It was Sarah Fielding's aim to use Spatter to instruct David, and readers, to scrutinise the motives of those with whom he came into contact, so that his benevolence would not be abused. Having "more of what *Shakespear* calls the *Milk of Human Kind*, than any other among all the Children of Men . . . [and] Sensations [that are] too strong, to leave him the free Use of his Reason",<sup>14</sup> David had to be taught to control his passions with either prudence or reason. Like readers, he had to be educated to see through the designs of such vicious characters as Orgueil, whose benevolent deeds were motivated by pride and self-interest, and Vernish, who professed his unqualified love for all individuals, yet performed no deeds to prove such love.

In "The Proceedings of Providence Vindicated. An Eastern Tale", in his *Essays from the Royal Magazine*, Goldsmith also tackled the problems associated with excessive benevolence. Asem, like the Man of the Hill in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, becomes a recluse after having had his benevolence abused. Promoting the doctrine of Hobbes and Mandeville, he asserts, incorrectly, that society is totally corrupt, a view countered by Goldsmith, who blamed Asem's isolation squarely upon his own defective education in relation to the ways of the world. The narrator continues:

[Asem] had been taught to love his fellow-creatures with the most ardent affection, but, from the tenderness of his disposition, he exhausted all his fortune in relieving the wants of the distressed . . . the weary traveller never passed his door, he only desisted from doing good, when he no longer had the power of relieving.

From a fortune thus spent in benevolence, he expected a grateful return from those he had formerly relieved: and made his application with confidence of redress; the ungrateful world soon grew weary of his importunity; for pity is but a short-lived passion.<sup>15</sup>

Like Primrose, Asem, with his indiscriminate generosity and inability to discern the deserving from the undeserving recipients of his benevolence, contributes to his own

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Book II, Ch. ix, p. 129.

<sup>15</sup> Goldsmith, *Essays from the Royal Magazine* (1759-1760), Volume III, pp. 58-59.

abuse and misfortune. He becomes a fool in the eyes of the world because he fails to apportion his benevolence with prudence. However, in addition to the author's emphasis on the need for prudence, the passage also highlighted Goldsmith's belief that pity, in this world, was "but a short-lived passion".

Sharing connections with Fielding's *Man of the Hill*, the "Son of Adam" attempts to sever his ties with humankind on the basis that "a thousand vices exist in the world", including "ingratitude, dissimulation, and treachery".<sup>16</sup> Prior to plunging himself into a lake, however, he is offered an alternative way of life by the "Genius", who promises him a world of "rational beings without immorality". After accepting the offer, Asem is surprised by the simplicity of the country he enters, a country inhabited by individuals who are both free from vice and "incapable of ingratitude, injustice, fraud, [and] violence".<sup>17</sup> Asem's relocation becomes part of the author's didactic technique for both the protagonist and readers alike. Comparing this new country to his former land, Asem remarks that this new environment has "no vestiges of handsome houses, no cities, nor any mark of elegant design". Realising that "what they built was for convenience, and not for shew" and that individuals had no motives for private friendship because all were equally meritorious, Asem observes that this new land is devoid of the excessive pleasures and vices of normal society: "vanity, luxury [and] avarice". He is attracted to the ideal nature of the country until his ears are "assaulted with the lamentations of a wretch who lay by the way-side in the most deplorable distress". Maintaining his love for his fellow creatures, Asem runs to the man's assistance and proceeds to ask why it should be that creatures, so free from vice, should suffer so much misery. Asem is surprised by the reply:

Be not surprised, said the wretch who was dying, would it not be the utmost injustice for beings, who have only just sufficient to support themselves, and are content with a bare subsistence, to take it from their own mouths, to put into mine?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume III, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume III, p. 62.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume III, p. 65.

The dying man provides the necessary instruction for both Asem and readers. Since no vice exists in such an environment, Asem realises that, by consequence, there can be no definition of such virtues as benevolence, compassion, friendship, and a love of one's neighbours. Thus, concluding that "to be unacquainted with vice is not to know virtue", Asem accepts that where virtues do exist, then they must be liable to abuse.

Desperately seeking to return to the world he had previously detested, the re-educated Asem realises that he can endure "Ingratitude, contempt, and hatred, . . . for perhaps [he has] deserved them".<sup>19</sup> The experience makes him recognise the folly behind his previous conception of a state of "universal benevolence". He learns that such a conception, without the moderating influence of prudence, is both ridiculous and deserving of abuse. The narrator concludes, by informing readers, that:

The frugality of a few years soon produced opulence, the numbers of his domestics increased, his friends came to him from every part of the city, nor did he receive them with disdain; and a youth of misery was concluded with an old eye of elegance, affluence, and ease.<sup>20</sup>

Goldsmith's method of instruction deviated from the traditional method of didactic instruction in the eighteenth century. Although he maintained that individuals should always pursue virtue, Goldsmith recognised that, without vice, there could be no virtue. For definition and existence, each was dependent upon the other. Where virtue was abused in society, Goldsmith argued that, too often, individuals were themselves to blame for failing to apply inspection, moderation, prudence and reason to their virtuous acts. Individuals who refused to moderate their benevolence, for example, deserved to be abused and ridiculed; for like Pope, Goldsmith also believed that "He knows to live, who keeps the middle state".<sup>21</sup>

Although Goldsmith argued strongly against the philosophy of the innate selfishness of humankind advocated by Hobbes and Mandeville, he realised that the excessive effects of its opposite, the literature of sensibility, were also contrary to the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Volume III, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Volume III, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Pope, "Imitations of Horace" in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One Volume Edition of the The Twickenham Pope*, ed. John Butt (1963; rpt. London: Methuen & Co., 1977), Satire II. ii, l. 61, p. 620.

moral values that should be advocated by writers of literature. Writers of the novel of sensibility, he claimed, promoted a set of values that resulted in individuals being abused and ridiculed in the eyes of the world. Goldsmith asserted that sentimental novels, such as Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* and *Tristram Shandy*, contributed significantly to the continuation of corrupt manners and morals. It was against a doctrine which prompted readers to neglect all prudence and reason, in sharing totally the feelings of their fellows, that Goldsmith and other writers of the school of moral instruction rebelled. Such common feelings, too often, offered individuals no more than a sense of self-gratification and became, in turn, an abuse of genuine virtue. Goldsmith argued that it was the duty of all enlightened writers to direct their satire at romances and novels of sensibility, works "suited to the most vulgar apprehensions", because they had been responsible for corrupting genuine moral instruction, by teaching individuals that excessive and unrestrained passions were normal.

Didactic stories, which exposed corrupt or foolish behaviour and manners, such as those concerning Asem or Lysippus, asserted Goldsmith, provided the best means by which readers could be educated in the pursuit of virtue. He argued that:

In proportion as society refines, new books must ever become more necessary. Savage rusticity is reclaimed by oral admonition alone; but the elegant excesses of refinement are best corrected by the still voice of studious enquiry. In a polite age, almost every person becomes a reader, and receives more instruction from the press than the pulpit. The preaching Bonse may instruct the illiterate peasant; but nothing less than the insinuating address of a fine writer can win its way to an heart already relaxed in all the effeminacy of refinement. Books are necessary to correct the vices of the polite, but those vices are ever changing, and the antidote should be changed accordingly; should still be new.<sup>22</sup>

Like Richardson and Fielding, Goldsmith claimed the novel could play a significant part in reforming the behaviour and manners of individuals, who had neglected virtue for temporal pleasures. More importantly, however, the author recommended that, as vices were "ever changing", writers should adapt their instruction accordingly. In turn, these new forms of didactic instruction would provide "the most useful instruments of reformation". All countries, he concluded, needed preachers and writers; however, "as

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<sup>22</sup> Goldsmith, *A Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter LXXV, pp. 311-312.



the number of readers encrease[d] . . . the writer [became] more useful, and the preaching Bonse less necessary". It was for this reason that Goldsmith attacked those "vulgar works" which aimed at corrupting society's manners and morals. Fielding used the naïve Altangi, for example, to satirise the women of London who, claiming that they are well educated and wise, read corrupt and immoral literature. Ironically, Altangi notes:

It is certain I never could have expected the ladies here [in London],biassed as they are by education, capable at once of bravely throwing off their prejudices, and not only applauding books in which this figure [the *Bawdy*] makes the only merit, but even adopting it in their own conversation. Yet so it is, the pretty innocents now carry these books openly in their hands, which formerly were hid under the cushion; they now lisp their double meanings with so much grace, and talk over the raptures they bestow with such little reserve . . . .<sup>23</sup>

In much the same way as Richardson had attacked the corrupt presentation of morality in the romances, Goldsmith argued that the novel of sentiment, with its obscenities and pertness, had corrupted both the behaviour and manners of contemporary individuals.

For the same reason, Goldsmith also satirised the sentimental dramas, such as those presented by Steele and Cumberland, in which the protagonists spoke a language of elevated sentiment and suffered tribulations designed to evoke the pity and tears of their audience. Such sentimental comedies, in which "the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece", were improper in instructing audiences in the pursuit of virtue. Of the dramatist's role, Goldsmith commented:

Every age produces new follies and new vices, and one absurdity is often displaced in order to make room for another. The dramatic poet, however, who should be, and has often been, a firm champion in the cause of virtue, detects all the new machinations of vice, levels his satire at the rising structures of folly, or drives her from behind the retrenchments of fashion. Thus far then, the poet is useful.<sup>24</sup>

The role of dramatists and poets, like that of writers of fiction, argued Goldsmith, was to expose vice to, and to re-establish virtue in the minds of, their audiences.

Goldsmith's series of Chinese letters, later titled *The Citizen of the World* and published by John Newbery in the *Public Ledger* in 1760-61, provides an excellent work

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<sup>23</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Letter LIII, pp. 148-149.

<sup>24</sup> Goldsmith, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, Ch. XII, Volume I, p. 324.

in which to examine the role of the author as didactic writer and moral theorist. Adopting a literary technique, perfected by D'Argens and Montesquieu, Goldsmith sought to instruct readers in the need to limit excessive benevolence. The technique, of placing a citizen from another country into a new environment and having him communicate his observations to relatives back home, allowed the author ample scope in which to use satire. In order to break down any barriers that could be associated with accepting the validity of the protagonist's observations, especially when that character was a foreigner, Goldsmith introduced Altangi to readers in the following way:

The bearer of this is my friend, therefore let him be yours. He is a native of Honan in China, and one who did me signal services when he was a mandarine, and I a factor at Canton. By frequently conversing with the English there, he has learned the language, though intirely a stranger to their manners and customs. I am told he is a philosopher, I am sure he is an honest man; that to you will be his best recommendation, next to his being the Friend of, Sir.  
Yours &c.<sup>25</sup>

Even though he "is entirely a stranger to the manners and customs" of the English, Altangi is introduced to readers as an honest man, a "Friend" and a "philosopher", a person learned in the principles underlying human conduct, ethics, manners, morals, and thought. By definition, Altangi, therefore, is a "citizen of the world". By stressing this, Goldsmith, in a very subtle way, warned readers that they should treat the observations of the foreigner with caution, lest they be found laughing at their own foibles and follies, rather than at the naïveté of the Chinaman. By offering little insight into Chinese customs, Goldsmith used his protagonist to satirise the customs and beliefs of European people, namely the English, so as not to incur any personal liability.

Although he never allowed it to become excessively pointed, Goldsmith, like Henry Fielding, used irony to attack the foibles and follies of contemporary society, which included, among other things: the manners and morals of individuals and society, institutions, places, fashions, religion, politics, social habits and tastes, national pride, and commentaries on the rich and the poor. At all times, Goldsmith directed these "papers of amusing character" towards providing readers with "a variety of instruction

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<sup>25</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter I, pp. 16-17.

and delight".<sup>26</sup> As one writer in *The Critical Review* noted, the reflections in *The Citizen of the World* should be examined "with regard to utility", rather than according to "the standard of originality". In relation to Goldsmith's didactic method, he continued:

All his observations are marked with good sense, genius frequently breaks the letters of restraint, and humour is sometimes successfully employed to enforce the dictates of reason.<sup>27</sup>

Although Goldsmith argued that individuals should be tolerant of the curious opinions and strange notions of different societies, such as the Chinese, this did not prevent his ridiculing the foibles and follies of his own society. Readers were never left in any doubt about what was being exposed and ridiculed in Goldsmith's writing. Ironically, by allowing the "dull", yet pleasant, Altangi to be corrected so often for his inability to appreciate the customs, behaviour, manners and values of English society, Goldsmith made both his criticism and instruction more pertinent for readers.

Appropriately, Lien Chi Altangi begins his correspondence with words that have direct instructional application for readers:

Friend of my heart,  
*May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience  
preserve thee from vice and misery.*<sup>28</sup>

The italicised words were indicative of the author's didactic method of preserving individuals from vice and ensuing misery, a task which could only be achieved by teaching readers to apply reason to their manners and morals. In a letter to Fum Hoam, the Chinaman expresses his amazement at European customs and vanity, which lead individuals into "departing from nature in their external appearance" so as to become "more beautiful than nature made us". Quite innocently, Altangi approves of such a vanity on the basis that "a desire to be more excellent than others is what actually makes us so". Subtly attacking the vanities of the English, he continues:

To appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and clap it like a brush on his

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<sup>26</sup> Wayne C. Booth, "The Self-Portraiture of Genius: *The Citizen of the World* and Critical Method", in *Modern Philology*, Volume 73(4), Part 2, 1976, p. 585.

<sup>27</sup> *The Critical Review*, Volume 13 (London: 1762), p. 397-400.

<sup>28</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter II, p. 17.

own: the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea, to distinguish between the head and the hair. . . thus, betailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success more from the powder on the outside of his head, than the sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is, to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as fond of powder, and tails, and hog's lard as he: to speak my secret sentiments, my most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horridly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; . . .

But what surprises more than all the rest, is, what I have just now been incredibly informed by one of this country; 'Most ladies here, says he, have two faces; one to sleep in, and another to show in company: . . . they wear more clothes within doors than without; and I have seen a lady who seem'd to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half naked in the streets.'<sup>29</sup>

Adopting the persona of the Chinaman, Goldsmith was able to satirise the way in which both sexes masked their true "natures", by complementing their appearance with false hair, powder and clothing. However, in order to avoid the direct censure of his critics, the author contrasted English women against "the small footed perfections of an Eastern beauty", who had a broad face, short nose, tiny eyes, thin lips, black teeth and thin eyebrows.<sup>30</sup> The apparent digression, which seems to undermine the Chinaman's idea of beauty, was instrumental in emphasising the author's instruction to readers; for, in contrast to the English, whose vanity forces them to disguise their natural appearance, the "beauties of Nangfew" present themselves without any form of disguise. Free from the ill-effects of luxury, these beauties are also free from vanity and its associated vices. When Altangi suggests that he still prefers his "beauties" to English women, his comment provides a huge indictment on English society. Inherent in the Chinaman's criticism was a condemnation of the affectation and vanity of the English, who were far more concerned with "external appearances" than with the "sentiments within". In a further reflection upon the characters of the English, the Chinaman observes that:

The English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter III, pp. 22-26.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter III, pp. 24-25.

their friendship and esteem. . . . Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues as well.<sup>31</sup>

Goldsmith employed the innocent Altangi to satirise the characters and defects of the English, whose lives were based upon affectation and vice.

Following Richardson and Fielding, Goldsmith, although he adopted a different didactic technique, also warned women of the need to beware of the snares of vicious men. However, instead of concentrating upon the consequences for women who were duped by such men, Goldsmith alerted women to the deceitful natures of the opposite sex. In addition to the country squire, Goldsmith warned women that they should be wary of another type of man, one "whose whole employment consist[ed] in corrupting beauty". Examining "the talents of a man thus caressed by the majority of the opposite sex", Goldsmith observed that such a man possessed neither "talents nor beauty", but was rather impudent and assiduous. He continued:

A fellow of this kind employs three hours every morning in dressing his head, by which is understood only his hair.

He is a professed admirer, not of any particular lady, but of the whole sex.

He is to suppose every lady has caught cold every night, which gives an opportunity of calling to see how she does the next morning.

He is upon all occasions to show himself in very great pain for the ladies; if a lady drops even a pin, he is to fly in order to present it.

He never speaks to a lady without advancing his mouth to her ear, by which he frequently addresses more senses than one.

Upon proper occasions he looks excessively tender. This is performed by laying his hand upon his heart, shutting his eyes, and shewing his teeth.

He is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking around the floor eight or ten times with his hat on, affecting great gravity, and sometimes looking tenderly on his partner.

He never affronts any man himself, and never resents an affront from another.

He has an infinite variety of small talk upon all occasions, and laughs when he has nothing more to say.

Such is the killing creature who prostrates himself to the sex till he has undone them; all whose submissions are the effects of design, and who to please the ladies almost becomes himself a lady.<sup>32</sup>

The passage provided a direct warning to women of the techniques employed by this type of man who, in "prostrating himself to the sex", aimed solely at laying siege to the virtue of unsuspecting women. However, the passage also contained some instances in which

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter IV, p. 27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter IX, pp. 45-47.

Goldsmith dropped the persona of the Chinaman, in order to address his readers more directly. In this sense, Goldsmith's method of moral instruction lay somewhere between Butler's use of the sermon and Fielding's use of the novel.

In one sense, Goldsmith's protagonist personifies the innocence of all individuals who, refusing to scrutinise the characters of those with whom they associate, fall victim to the snares of the vicious. Ironically, Altangi believes that the ladies, encountered in the streets of London, are very "hospitable" and "engaging", when compared with their rivals in "Pekin". He comments that:

the manners of the ladies in this city are so very open, and so vastly engaging, that I am inclined to pass over the more glaring defects of their persons . . . I have received more invitations in the streets of London from the sex in one night, than I have met with at Pekin in twelve revolutions of the moon.

Every evening as I return home from my usual solitary excursions, I am met by several of those well disposed daughters of hospitality, at different times and in different streets, richly dressed, and with minds not less noble than their appearance . . . They even seem to think it is their duty to do the honours of the country by every act of complaisance in their power. One takes me under the arm, and in a manner forces me along; another catches me round the neck, and desires to partake in this office of hospitality; while a third, kinder still, invites me to refresh my spirits with wine.<sup>33</sup>

Although the figure of the naïve Chinaman, beset by prostitutes, seems, at first sight, ridiculous, especially as he has allowed himself to be duped by professions of benevolence and good nature from those who seek self-gratification, Goldsmith's satire was directed not so much towards Altangi, but towards the depravity of English society. However, this did not mean that the character of the protagonist was devoid of ridicule. Like Asem and Fielding's Heartfree, Altangi also possesses too much of "the milk of human kindness". He continues:

A few nights ago, one of these generous creatures, dressed all in white, and flaunting like a meteor by my side, forcibly attended me home to my own apartment. She seemed charmed with the elegance of the furniture, and the convenience of my situation. And well indeed she might, for I have hired an apartment for not less than two shillings of their money every week. But her civility did not rest here; for at parting, being desirous to know the hour, and perceiving my watch out of order, she kindly took it to be repaired by a relation of her own, which you may imagine will save some expense, and she assures me that it will cost her nothing. I shall have it back in a few days when mended, and am preparing a proper speech expressive of my gratitude

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter VIII, pp. 42-43.

on the occasion: *Celestial excellence*, I intend to say, *happy am I in having found out, after many painful adventures, a land of innocence, and a people of humanity: I may rove other climes, and converse with nations yet unknown, but where shall I meet a soul of such purity as that which resides in thy breast! . . . Thy servant shall ever retain a sense of thy favour; and one day boast of thy virtue, sincerity, and truth among the daughters of China.*<sup>34</sup>

This incident, indicative of Goldsmith's didactic method throughout the text, not only emphasised the vanity of the Chinaman, but also undermined his ability to distinguish between virtue and vice. Goldsmith satirised the good-natured and innocent demeanour of his visitor, who believes that the hospitality shown him by the ladies of the town is based upon their belief in the principles of benevolence and a love of their neighbours. Through the use of irony, Goldsmith undercut the degree of pity that readers could have for the unsuspecting Chinaman. Like many unsuspecting individuals in real life, the Chinaman is ridiculed for his inability and unwillingness to discern the motives of vicious characters. The watch, therefore, becomes a symbolic token of the submission of the virtuous to the snares of the vicious. As a result of his excessive and foolish good nature and trust, readers should reserve their pity for Altangi because he contributes to his own abuse and deception.

The incident offers excellent instructional piece in terms of warning readers of the need to beware of extending excessive benevolence and trust to other individuals, without first scrutinising their motives and natures. Furthermore, there was an added irony in that Goldsmith dressed the woman in white, the colour traditionally associated with goodness, purity and virtue. Too often, argued the author, were virtuous individuals duped by professions of "good nature", expressed by characters whose only object was self-interest and self-gratification. Altangi is wrong in formulating an indifferent view towards all English women, for this would serve only to place him in the same group of misanthropes as Fielding's Man of the Hill. Instead, Goldsmith's real lesson for readers is best summarised by the protagonist himself, when he exclaims that "the present moment becomes a comment on the past, and I improve rather in humility than wisdom".<sup>35</sup> Like Altangi, readers should also examine their beliefs on the basis of the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter VIII, pp. 43-44.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter IX, p. 44.

experiences presented to them within the world of the text. Only by assimilating them into the text, a technique used by Fielding, did Goldsmith believe that the foibles and follies of his readers could be corrected. It was his aim to teach readers humility and moderation in all pursuits, rather than simply provide them with an entertaining story.

While he is standing in "Westminster-abbey", Altangi makes his acquaintance with the "Man in Black", the character who is, ironically, to act as his guide in his travels throughout London. Through the use of a character, well versed in English behaviour, Goldsmith was able to augment his satirical attack upon the affectations and corrupt manners of the English. One such example occurs when Altangi accompanies the Man in Black to the theatre. In addition to his criticism of contemporary drama and the "inversion" of social precedence within the theatre, Goldsmith, through the persona of the Chinaman, attacked the reasons behind the attendance of the audience. Observing the "riotous" manners and "insolence of beggary" of the poor, and the pretentiousness of the rich, the "Chinese" continues:

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in a dumb shew, not a curtesy, or nod, that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest.<sup>36</sup>

Goldsmith argued that individuals of both sexes, and of all classes, exhibited the same propensity to affectation and corrupt manners. Even the naïve Altangi notices that the rich attend the theatre, not for any aesthetic value but simply to ogle members of the opposite sex. Drybone's comment, "that blindness was of late become fashionable", only serves to satirise, even further, the follies and absurd behaviour of the aristocracy.

After analysing the nature of the audience, the author turned his satire on the theatrical performance itself. Goldsmith attacked the corrupt nature of contemporary drama which, focusing upon excessive passion, held up sentimentalism for emulation.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXI, p. 90.



Altangi, after noting that the affectation of audience leads to their applauding characters before they deserve it, observes that the queen and her confidant, a "most hopeful youth", appear to be "in extreme distress" over a child that the queen had lost some fifteen years earlier. Altangi continues:

Her lamentations grew loud. Comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound. She bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropp'd for the first act.<sup>37</sup>

Altangi, noticing that the couple seem to be "very much disturbed at no very great misfortune", adds that "were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense". Ironically, before he completes his remarks, another figure, the king, is revealed, much to the pleasure of the crowd, "in a violent passion", exclaiming that he is "resolved not to survive [the] fierce disdain" of his wife, who has "refused his proffered tenderness, [and] spurned his royal embrace". Altangi's companion explains:

Now . . . you perceive the king to be a man of spirit, he feels at every pore; one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskin'd hero; this moment they embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period.<sup>38</sup>

The affected and excessive sentiments of the characters are satirised by the fact that the author has instructed readers, that "pity is but a short lived passion".<sup>39</sup> Goldsmith was concerned about the negative effects of excessive passions upon the manners and morals of society. He believed, as he commented in *The Bee*, that where vices were emphasised, then "their novelty then may have irresistible charms" for individuals.<sup>40</sup>

In his "Remarks on our Theatre", Goldsmith argued that, although the English theatre was "far superior to any others in Europe", it lacked any form of instruction and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXI, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXI, pp. 91-92.

<sup>39</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter XXI, p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> Goldsmith, *The Bee*, "On Education", No. VI (November 10, 1759), Volume I, p. 398.

decorum.<sup>41</sup> In an apt analogy, he likened the "want of taste" and "stupidity" of the theatre to the actress who, "while unwieldy with fat endeavoured to convince the audience that she [was] dying with hunger".<sup>42</sup> Criticising Murphy's *The Orphan of China* for much the same reasons as he satirised the theatre in *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith noted, in relation to distress and pity, that:

When the poet thus attempts to move us before his time, the most he can do is to raise an equally moderate degree of pity through the whole, which all his art cannot raise into that fine agony of distress, so common among the great masters of his art. All enthusiasms are of short continuance: nor is it in the power of genius to keep our sorrows alive through five acts, unless it diversifies the object, or, in every act excites some new and unforeseen distress.<sup>43</sup>

Defining excessive or prolonged distress as an "enthusiasm", Goldsmith maintained that it was, in reality, impossible for individuals to sustain passions at the same level of intensity for any lengthy periods of time without diversifying the focus of their attention to other matters of distress. Thus, after a time, excessive distress, he argued, deteriorated into foolishness. On the basis of this, the interruptions to the play, in *The Citizen of the World*, by the ludicrous figures of the man balancing a straw upon his nose and the female dancers who "flourish" their toes in the air, have the didactic purpose of emphasising not only the corrupt nature of contemporary theatre, but the vicious manners and morals of theatre-goers who, applauding affectation, accept matters on appearance rather than merit. In fact, there is so much affected sentiment that readers are informed that the conclusion of the play goes unnoticed.

Goldsmith blamed contemporary drama for leading individuals into vice. Such plays, with their emphasis upon excessive passion and selfishness, were not based on a disinterested self-love or genuine care for one's neighbours; rather, they were based upon a self-interested feeling for others. Like Hutcheson, Goldsmith was aware that individuals could affect benevolence and a concern for the welfare of their neighbours

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<sup>41</sup> Goldsmith, *The Bee*, No. I (October 6, 1759), Volume I, p. 336.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, p. 337.

<sup>43</sup> *The Critical Review*, "*The Orphan of China*, a Tragedy, as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane", May 1759, Volume I, p. 172. Friedman notes that Prior ascribes this piece of criticism to Goldsmith.

while, at the same time, harbouring emotions of a vicious nature. Thus, in much the same way as he satirised the inability of the English to appreciate the value of genuine drama, Goldsmith also attacked their inability to distinguish true benevolence and goodness of heart from its affected, excessive and passionate opposite. Goldsmith believed that individuals should reserve their displays of emotion for only the most deserving cases, and bestow their benevolence in a moderate manner. The matter of distinguishing genuine from affected benevolence is best taken up in Altangi's assessment of his companion's character. He comments:

His manners . . . are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed an humourist in a nation of humourists. Tho' he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as an hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.<sup>44</sup>

Ironically, Drybone appoints himself as the Chinaman's "instructor and guide",<sup>45</sup> a man who, like Spatter, is "a hypocrite in reverse".<sup>46</sup> However, despite his apparent naïveté, Altangi remains undeceived by the selfish professions of his companion who, much to the amusement of the Chinaman, affects ill nature. Altangi's perception of the true nature of his companion, a character used by Goldsmith as a satirical weapon against ingratitude, carries with it an important lesson for readers, because it reinforces the traditional moral theory that it is possible to discern the true motives of individuals by thoroughly scrutinising their characters. In this case, Altangi perceives that, although his companion uses "language of the most unbounded ill nature", he is still motivated by a "natural benevolence". By having Altangi observe that, "on every unguarded moment", Drybone

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVI, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XIII, p. 57.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner: Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 63.

dropped his mask, Goldsmith reassured readers that individuals could not continuously hide their vicious natures from introspective observers.

The author tested this hypothesis by having the two characters encounter several creatures, all of whom appear to deserve benevolence and compassion. After Drybone warns Altangi about the dangers of being imposed upon by "imposters" with "their false pretences", the genuineness of the man's words are put to the test when he comes upon an old beggar. In response to the old man's story, that he has been "forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children", the Man in Black is overwhelmed with pity. The protagonist continues:

I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not teize [sic.] passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.<sup>47</sup>

The result is the same when the two encounter a sailor, who also desires pity and relief. In contrast to Altangi, who is prepared to walk on "without taking any notice", Drybone stops, under the pretext of wanting to teach the Chinaman how to "detect an imposter", and purchases "some bundles of chips", even after having insinuated that the bundles were most likely stolen. The final test arises when the two encounter a woman, whom the narrator describes as an "object more distressful than either of the former". He notes that:

A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who, in the deepest distress still aimed at good humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding, his vivacity, and his discourse were instantly interrupted, upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even, in my presence, he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her, but guess his confusion, when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage, was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, 'till, at length, recollecting himself, with a face of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVI, p. 110.

ineffable good nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.<sup>48</sup>

Goldsmith used the final encounter to emphasise his didactic instruction. As a result of bestowing his benevolence indiscriminately upon less deserving characters, the Man in Black is unable to provide any relief, other than the gift of matches, for the most deserving of the characters. By testing Drybone's response to each individual, Goldsmith not only exposed the hypocrisy of the Chinaman's "instructor" but, more importantly, outlined the consequences for individuals who failed to moderate their appetites and passions with prudence, even when these passions were "amiable" ones.

Drybone's inability to distinguish between those objects which are, and are not, deserving of benevolence, combined with the Chinaman's observation that there is "something reluctantly good in [his companion's] character", makes Altangi desirous "of knowing the history of a man",<sup>49</sup> who "took such pains" to conceal his virtue. "After repeated solicitations", Drybone, who was "for twenty years upon the very verge of starving", communicates a history, one which shares similarities with that of the author. He begins:

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them, they returned him an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted; . . . thus his pleasure increased, in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him".<sup>50</sup>

On the surface, the generosity of Drybone's father seems commendable; however, in reality, such indiscriminate generosity is defective, for it is based not on a genuine love of one's neighbours but upon the ridiculous principles of sensibility, and the passions of pride and selfishness. His benevolence is based upon the expectation that all the world loves the generous man. Ironically, the father, a man of deficient moral education, is entrusted with the duty of instructing his children "to form [their] morals, [and] to improve [their] understanding". Drybone continues:

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVI, pp. 111-112.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 113.

"We [the children] were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard the *human face divine* with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of *giving away* thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of *getting* a farthing".<sup>51</sup>

This defective education is responsible for the "humorist's" inability to moderate his excessive benevolence. Thus, he concludes the history of his youth by aptly comparing his "first entrance into the busy and insidious world" with the image of "one of those gladiators who were exposed without armour in the amphitheatre at Rome".<sup>52</sup>

Goldsmith supported the arguments of Locke and Defoe, in relation to the education of children. He believed that individuals with an education deficient in virtue could not instil the principles of virtue into their children. Goldsmith's more educated readers should be able to see quite readily that such a concept as "universal benevolence" was impracticable, given a society in which individuals incorrectly equated happiness with the accumulation of pleasures and self-gratification. Following the philosophy of Butler, Goldsmith implied that there were two major defects in the father's teaching the concept of universal benevolence to his children. The first focused on the man's inability to instruct his children that reason should be applied to instances of benevolence. The second defect concerned the notion of benevolence itself which, according to Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, should be, at least to some degree, disinterested. Correctly, Drybone scrutinises the motivating forces behind his father's benevolence: his hope that all the world would love him, and his expectation of receiving praise. Such benevolence, based upon the appetites, impulses or the passions, was not genuine virtue; it was, therefore, liable to abuse and ridicule. Following Shaftesbury, Goldsmith stressed that these affected virtues, or "enthusiasms", were not to be emulated by readers.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 114.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 114.

Goldsmith argued that, by moderating benevolence, individuals would learn to distinguish between real and "fictitious distresses". In his tract "On Education", he outlined the form of education that children should receive, when he commented:

As boys should be educated with temperance, so the first greatest lesson that should be taught them is, to admire frugality. It is by the exercise of this virtue alone, they can ever expect to be useful members of society. It is true, lectures continually upon this subject, may make some boys when they grow up, run into an extreme, and become misers; but it were well, had we more misers than we have among us. . . .

Instead, therefore, of romances, which praise young men of spirit, who go through a variety of adventures, and at last conclude a life of dissipation, folly, and extravagance in riches and matrimony, there should be some men of wit employed to compose books that might equally interest the passion of our youth, where such a one might be praised for having resisted allurements . . . Were our school-masters, if any of them have sense enough to draw up such a work, thus employed it would be much more serviceable to their pupils than all the grammars and dictionaries they may publish these ten years.<sup>53</sup>

Goldsmith criticised any form of education which focused upon excessiveness. Readers should not be surprised to find that, after the death of his father and given his deficient education, Drybone is "shoved from shore to shore without ill nature to protect, or cunning to guide". Without any form of protection, Drybone became a victim of what Smollett called "the sordid and vicious disposition of the world". Thus, when left to their own devices in a corrupt society, excessively benevolent individuals struggled to survive. On one occasion, Drybone is "admitted as a flatterer to a great man". He comments:

"At first I was surprised, that the situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we don't know is an easy task; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falshood went to my conscience, his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged; my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good natured, and had not the least harm in me".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Goldsmith, "On Education", in *The Bee*, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Volume I, pp. 460-461.

<sup>54</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 116.

By offering readers a direct insight into the mind of flatterers, Goldsmith not only warned readers about the motives behind this vice, but also stressed that virtuous individuals could not sustain traits that were contrary to their own natures. This warning supported a similar attack upon the flattery, in *The Bee*, where, in relation to the education of youth, the author, in a statement derived from Locke, commented:

Every species of flattery should be carefully avoided: a boy who happens to say a sprightly thing, is generally applauded so much, that he sometimes continues a coxcomb all his life after. He is reputed a wit at fourteen, and becomes a blockhead at twenty. Nurses, footmen, and such, should therefore be driven away as much as possible. I was even going to add, that the mother herself should stifle her pleasure or her vanity, when her little master happens to say a good or a smart thing.<sup>55</sup>

His lordship, in the passage above, is representative of those boys, awarded too much flattery in their youth. His defective education makes him a "dunce", a man willing to entertain the disreputable and needy, on the condition that they pamper his vanity. Failure to flatter, as is the case with Drybone, results in dismissal from service.

Like Fielding's Heartfree, Drybone realises that, when the benevolence, compassion and friendship of his neighbours is required, none is forthcoming. He receives, for example, no assistance from "a city scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend [him] money when he knew [he] did not want it". Flying from him "with indignation", Drybone is also denied aid by one of his "best friends". However, it is this person who, alerting Drybone to his shortcoming, informs him that his "conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of [his] acquaintance [had] always thought [him] a very silly fellow".<sup>56</sup> The refusal of aid by Drybone's "best friend" should not necessarily be mis-construed as anti-benevolent by readers. Goldsmith was reinforcing Fielding's instruction that to offer assistance to others in an indiscriminate manner not only failed to educate individuals, but also supported the continuance of that appetite or passion. Drybone, like readers, has to be taught the consequences of immoderate behaviour. By informing readers that Drybone is imprisoned after agreeing

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<sup>55</sup> Goldsmith, "On Education", in *The Bee*, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Volume I, p. 460.

<sup>56</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter XXVII, p. 118.



to act as surety to a person who flees the country, Goldsmith stressed that the process of moral re-education was not a simple one. It is only after being released from prison, and re-acquainting himself with "a prudent blockhead", that Drybone, realising that he has "pursued the wrong track", attempts "to make an entire reformation [of his] conduct and behaviour".

Drybone's reformation, which begins with the "heroic action of refusing half a crown to an old acquaintance", follows "a course of uninterrupted frugality" which, ironically, results in his company being eagerly sought after. He notes that:

"If ever I am ask'd a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived by never relieving. In short . . . the truest way of finding esteem even from the indigent, *is to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give*".<sup>57</sup>

Much to the disgust of Goldsmith, Drybone, by affecting the correct responses to given situations, becomes a far more esteemed character in the eyes of society. Goldsmith had noted the perversity of this situation, in *The Bee*, when he informed readers that "the rich receive large presents and are thanked for accepting them". He continued:

Thus, when a man's circumstances are such that he has no occasion to borrow, he finds numbers willing to lend him; but should his wants be such that he sues for a trifle, it is two to one whether he may be trusted with the smallest sum.<sup>58</sup>

For educated readers, however, the affected and unnatural character of the reformed Drybone is just as ridiculous as it was in his exhibitions of excessive generosity. For readers, Goldsmith's instruction took the middle path. He aimed at teaching readers to apply reason and prudence to all their actions. This would result not only in their bestowing benevolence and pity on the truly deserving, but also in their avoiding abuse and ridicule. Thus, the Man in Black becomes a "living irony"; for, while exposing the absurdity and irrationality of excessive benevolence, he also emphasises the corrupt and degenerate nature of a society which prefers selfish individuals to virtuous ones.

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Letter XXVII, pp. 119-120.

<sup>58</sup> Goldsmith, *The Bee*, "On the Use of Language" (October 20, 1759), No. III, p. 395.

To accentuate his instruction in *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith often intruded into the text. Fearing that individuals, by following "a life of amusement and dissipation", would never achieve virtue and ultimate happiness, Goldsmith warned readers that excessiveness caused individuals misery. Supporting the idea that "passions are but short lived", he informed readers that:

The enthusiasm of pleasure charms only by intervals. The highest rapture lasts only for a moment, and all the senses seem so combined, as to be soon tired into languor by the gratification of any one of them. It is only among the poets we hear of men changing to one delight, when satiated with another. In nature it is very different: the glutton, when sated with the full meal, is unqualified to feel the real pleasure of drinking; the drunkard in turn finds few of those transports which lovers boast in enjoyment; and the lover, when cloyed, finds a diminution of every other appetite. Thus, after a full indulgence of any one sense, the man of pleasure finds a languor in all, is placed in a chasm between past and expected enjoyment, perceives an interval which must be filled up. The present can give no satisfaction, because he has already robbed it of every charm: a mind thus left without immediate employment, naturally recurs to the past or the future: the reflection finds that he was happy, and knows that he cannot be so now: he sees that he may yet be happy, and wishes the hour was come: thus every period of his continuance is miserable, except that very short one of immediate gratification. Instead of a life of dissipation, none has more frequent conversations with disagreeable *self* than he: his enthusiasms are but few and transient; his appetites, like angry creditors, continually making fruitless demands for what he is unable to pay; and the greater his former pleasure, the more strong his regret, the more impatient his expectations: a life of pleasure is therefore the most displeasing life in the world.<sup>59</sup>

Following the arguments of philosophers of the moral sense doctrine, Goldsmith sought to expose the characters of those individuals who mistook mere self-gratification for happiness, on the basis that it brought immediate pleasure. Such individuals, as evidenced in Richardson's *Lovelace* and Fielding's *Blifil*, would always seek further pleasures to gratify their selfish passions; their minds would always recur to the past or to the future in quest of a happiness that would forever elude them.

Goldsmith strengthened his argument by making an analogy between false happiness, based solely upon the appetites and the passions, and the glutton who, when over-induged, fails to appreciate the real pleasure of drinking. Such examples of dissipation, suggested Goldsmith, became harmful to individuals in their pursuit of genuine happiness and virtue. Correctly, he concluded that "a life of pleasure [was]

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<sup>59</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter XLIV, pp. 188-189.

therefore the most unpleasing life in the world", particularly as it resulted in a sham happiness which contributed to the misery of individuals. The author summarised his function as moral philosopher, and educator of readers, when he commented that:

In a word, positive happiness is constitutional, and incapable of encrease; misery is artificial, and generally proceeds from our folly. Philosophy can add to our happiness in no other manner, but by diminishing our misery: it should not pretend to encrease our present stock, but make us œconomists of what we are possessed of.<sup>60</sup>

Part of the didactic function of writers, argued Goldsmith, was to teach individuals to content themselves with their present circumstances and to avoid seeking artificial pleasures, even when these pleasures could produce some immediate gratification. The instruction recommended by Goldsmith was to pursue moderation in all things.

Goldsmith extended his instruction on the need for moderation when he examined the effect of luxury on society. Unwilling to suggest, as did Samuel Johnson, that luxury, although necessary to the well-being of a state, totally undermined civilisation, Goldsmith followed the argument of David Hume who, in his *Political Discourses*, suggested that "luxury may be innocent or blamable, according to age, country, [and] condition".<sup>61</sup> In a letter addressed directly to readers, Goldsmith observed:

Certainly those philosophers, who declaim against luxury, have but little understood its benefits; they seem insensible, that to luxury we owe not only the greatest part of our knowledge but even of our virtues . . . . Examine the history of any country remarkable for opulence and wisdom, you will find they would never have been wise had they not been first luxurious.<sup>62</sup>

Goldsmith argued that problems only arose for individuals when they allowed luxury to usurp their good nature and virtue. This point is raised by Altangi, in a letter to Fum Hoam, when he comments:

The natural consequences of security and affluence in any country is a love of pleasure; when the wants of nature are supplied, we see after the conveniences; when possessed of these, we desire the luxuries of life; and when every luxury is provided, it is then ambition takes up the man, and leaves him still something to wish for: the inhabitants of the country from

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XLIV, p. 189.

<sup>61</sup> David Hume, *Political Discourses*, quoted in Quintana, *Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 307.

<sup>62</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter XI, p. 51.

primitive simplicity soon began to aim at elegance, and from elegance proceeded to refinement.<sup>63</sup>

Friedman<sup>64</sup> notes that several critics, including Prior, Forster and Gibbs, have found an inconsistency between Goldsmith's defence of luxury in *The Citizen of the World* and his attacks upon it in "The Deserted Village". However, such observations are false, for the author's argument about the effect of luxury was consistent throughout his works. He stressed that, where it was qualified by moderation, prudence and reason, luxury could be most beneficial to society as a whole. Alternatively, when it was associated only with the appetites and the passions, it would most likely have a negative effect upon the behaviour and manners of individuals within a society. Like Hume, Goldsmith believed "that where-ever luxury cease[d] to be innocent, it also cease[d] to be beneficial: and when carried a degree too far, [was] a quality pernicious".<sup>65</sup>

In order to emphasise the negative effects of unmoderated luxury, Altangi relates the instructive story concerning the inhabitants of Lao. These individuals allow ambitious motives to replace their quest for true happiness and virtue, with the result that "every neighbour . . . began to regard with jealous eyes this ambitious common-wealth, and forbade their subjects any future intercourse with them". Altangi continues:

By this means the mother country being abridged in its commerce, grew poorer but not less luxurious. Their former wealth had introduced luxury; and wherever luxury once fixes, no art can either lessen or remove it. Their commerce with their neighbours was totally destroyed; and that with their colonies was every day naturally and necessarily declining; they still, however, preserved the insolence of wealth, without a power to support it, and persevered in being luxurious while contemptible from poverty. In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness. Their former opulence only rendered them more impotent, as those individuals who are reduced from riches to poverty, are of all men the most unfortunate and helpless.<sup>66</sup>

Goldsmith criticised the way in which excessive opulence corrupted the moral fibre of society and its individuals. Alluding to the same criticism in "The Traveller", he noted

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXV, p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> Friedman, *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, Volume II, Letter XI, Note 2, p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, "Of Luxury" (London: 1758), pp. 157-164; also quoted in Friedman, Volume II, Letter XI, Note 2, p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter XXV, p. 107.

that Italy's decline was based upon a sense of lost ethical values and a meaningless quest for the glory of Ancient Rome. Goldsmith wrote:

All evils here contaminate the mind  
That opulence departed leaves behind.<sup>67</sup>

The consequences of this opulence were expressed in the poet's comment about both the French and Swiss, whose morals had been corrupted by unbounded pleasure. He observed that:

All are taught an avarice of praise;  
They please, are pleas'd, they give to get esteem,  
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.  
  
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,  
It gives their follies also room to rise;  
For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,  
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought.<sup>68</sup>

Goldsmith argued that neither luxury nor opulence themselves were destructive of ethical values and virtues; rather, it was the excessive nature of the passions, often associated with them, that corrupted the minds of individuals. Pleasure and selfishness became so important to individuals that the concept of a disinterested love of one's neighbours was destroyed. The writer, concluding the poem with a severe warning against the effects of excessive pleasure, continued:

Nor is this the worst. As nature's ties decay,  
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,  
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,  
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.<sup>69</sup>

When allowed to usurp prudence and reason, luxury and opulence promoted false ideals in the minds of individuals, ideals based solely on pleasure, self-gratification and selfishness. These, in turn, destroyed the virtues upon which the genuine happiness of all individuals was based - benevolence and love of one's neighbours.

The negative effect of uncontrolled passion was expressed in "The Deserted Village", which, based on Virgil's first Eclogue, concerned itself with the dispossession of rustics from their homes. It was luxury, built upon false notions of happiness and

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<sup>67</sup> Goldsmith, "The Traveller", Volume IV, ll. 131-132, p. 254.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, ll. 264-270, p. 260.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, ll. 349-352, p. 264.

pleasure, that transformed "Sweet Auburn" from a benevolent, happy, and humble society into a vacant pleasure-ground for the idle rich. Wealth, when combined with excessive passions, argued the poet, destroyed the concern that individuals had for their fellow creatures. The destruction of Auburn was resultant upon the excessive indulgence of the wealthy, who became so pre-occupied with self-gratification that they ignored the plights of their neighbours. Thus, Auburn's orderly virtues, based on benevolence and a love of one's neighbours, were destroyed by the vice associated with the anti-benevolent and selfish values of commerce, luxury, and wealth. These vicious appetites which, when controlled by moderation could advance humankind, attacked the morals of all individuals, and encouraged avarice, malevolence and selfishness. It was against the negative effect of luxury that Goldsmith exclaimed:

O luxury! Thou curst by heaven's decree,  
 ... ..  
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,  
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own.  
 At every draught more large and large they grow,  
 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;  
 Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,  
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.<sup>70</sup>

The critic, Sells, errs when he suggests that "The Deserted Village" is simply a sentimental "nostalgic regret for childhood [and] genuine love of country life";<sup>71</sup> rather, it should be regarded as a strongly critical and didactic piece of writing, aimed at persuading readers to censure the excesses associated with luxury. In this way, the poem instructed readers by attacking the way in which uncontrolled self-interest had led to the destruction of benevolence, human warmth and virtue.

The argument advocated by Goldsmith in his poetry was, therefore, the same as that advocated in *The Citizen of the World*. When individuals allowed the appetites or passions to assert authority, without any form of control, then virtue would be either destroyed or neglected. The narrator notes that "a person, already possessed of a

<sup>70</sup> Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village", Volume IV, ll. 385-394, p. 302.

<sup>71</sup> A. C. Sells, *Oliver Goldsmith: His Life and Works* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974), p. 304.

competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition . . . procures no real happiness that he was not possessed of before".<sup>72</sup> He stresses that the current display of wealth and finery is based upon the vanity of individuals, who try to persuade their neighbours that they have attained happiness. The author's view about luxury, however, was best expressed in Altangi's reiteration of "the sentiment of Confucius"; he notes, "*that we should enjoy as many of the luxuries of life as are consistent with our own safety, and the prosperity of others, and that he who finds out a new pleasure is one of the most useful members of society*".<sup>73</sup> Goldsmith argued that there was much more to be gained from luxury than mere self-gratification. He claimed that there was a far greater happiness for individuals in making themselves benevolent and virtuous members of society. Commenting in *The Bee*, he added that:

Writers of every age have endeavoured to shew that pleasure is in us, and not in the objects offered for our amusement. If the soul be happily disposed, every thing becomes capable of affording entertainment, and distress will almost want a name. . . . none but a fool would measure his satisfaction by what the world thinks of it.<sup>74</sup>

The author believed that the happiest individuals were those who had been educated wisely to pursue virtue. In contrast, those who had "puffed up themselves with ideas of false grandeur" never found genuine happiness, for the appetites, once they had been allowed to rule the mind without moderation, never ceased to quest after further pleasures. Such individuals, asserted the author, "communicate[d] those fatal prejudices to their pupils".<sup>75</sup>

In the letter, entitled "A City-night piece", Goldsmith examined the effect of unrestrained luxury on benevolence. Too often, the author believed, lowly individuals were forced to prostitute themselves in order to support the pleasures of the rich. In an indictment of the effects of unmoderated luxury, Altangi relates to readers scenes reminiscent of eighteenth-century London:

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<sup>72</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter LXIV, p. 266.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Letter XI, p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> Goldsmith, "Happiness, In a great Measure, Dependent on Constitution", in *The Bee*, No. II (October 13, 1759), Volume II, p. 385.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, No. II, "Some Particulars relative to Charles XII", Volume I, p. 382.

There are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness excites rather horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease; the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps now lying at the doors of their betrayers they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.<sup>76</sup>

Goldsmith's description of the plight of the poor stressed the negative consequences of opulence in relation to Butler's ideal concept that all individuals should love their neighbours. The passage also presented, in more horrific terms than what either Richardson or Fielding had achieved in the novel, the reality for women who, having surrendered their virginity, had been forced, by necessity, to turn to prostitution for relief. Altangi's response reflects the horror and misery of the poor. He exclaims:

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the suffering of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny, and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance.<sup>77</sup>

What could appear, at first glance, the response of an individual overwhelmed by excessive sensibility was, in fact, a response based upon a genuine concern for, and love of, one's fellow creatures. In spite of his "fellow-feeling", Altangi donates nothing to the poor, partly because such would have little practical benefit; furthermore, any excessive generosity on his part could bring ruin upon himself. Although his concern, pity and sympathy are genuine, he is, unlike the Man in Black, guided by moderate principles. Rather than affect a guise of malevolence towards the poor, as does Drybone, Altangi guides the reactions of readers to the plight of the poor with honesty and sincerity.

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<sup>76</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Letter CXVII, pp. 453-454.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, Letter CXVII, p. 454.



Ironically, Altangi concludes his description, prior to wishing to "leave a people suspicious to excess, whose morals are corrupted, and equally debased by superstition and vice",<sup>78</sup> with the following words:

The misfortunes of the great, my friend, are held up to engage our attention, are enlarged upon in tones of declamation, and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers; they have at once the comfort of admiration and pity.

The miseries of the poor are however entirely disregarded; tho' some undergo more real hardships in one day, than the great in their whole lives. . . .

With what indignation do I hear the heroes of tragedy complain of misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity is founded in arrogance and pride. Their distresses are pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day sustain, without murmuring.<sup>79</sup>

The passage reaffirmed Goldsmith's indignation at the complaints of the wealthy, whose loss of a minor pleasure constituted a misery of as great a magnitude as those endured by the poor every day. The author satirised the admiration and pity received by the "great" over their misfortunes, by contrasting them with the sailor who, even though he had lost "four fingers" and a leg, never complained about his own misfortune. This man remarks:

"As for misfortunes, Sir, I can't pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don't know any reason, thank heaven, that I have to complain; there are some who have lost both legs, and an eye; but, thank heaven, it is not quite so bad with me".<sup>80</sup>

Ironically, life for the sailor could hardly be worse, for he is abused by the very same individuals for whom he had gone to war. Following his instruction concerning the necessity for all individuals to scrutinise the real motives of other beings, Goldsmith forced readers to acknowledge that individuals with honest grievances complained least, while those with little reason to grieve, complained most. It was against the rich that the author communicated his indignation to readers, through the persona of Altangi.

The corrupt state of contemporary behaviour and manners of society was nowhere better expressed than in the satirical figure of Mr. Tibbs, a man of affected and pretentious character. Readers are provided with an early indication of Tibbs' character, when

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter CXVIII, p. 457.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter CXIX, pp. 458-459.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter CXIX, p. 460.

Altangi informs them that Drybone, after strolling leisurely among the crowd, "caught [him] by the elbow, and led [him] out of the public walk", so as to escape his "pursuer", Mr. Tibbs. Altangi guides the response of readers in relation to Tibbs, by describing "the peculiarity of his [Tibbs'] dress", and by recording Drybone's ironical compliments about Tibbs' clothes and countenance. Altangi then recounts Tibbs' affected conversation:

*Psha, psha, Will, . . . no more of that if you love me, you know I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet to be sure an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet faith I despise the great as much as you do; but there are a great many damn'd honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeez'd a lemon; I should myself, be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Dutchess of Picadilly's, My Lord was there. Ned, says he to me, Ned, says he, . . . His lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a tete-a-tete dinner in the country; where we talked of nothing else.*<sup>81</sup>

Following Fielding's example, Goldsmith used Tibbs to satirise the foibles and follies of contemporary society. Portrayed in all his affected finery, Tibbs personified the degree of corruption and selfishness to which society had succumbed.

After Tibbs leaves the two, Drybone summarises the true nature of the man's character, when he informs Altangi, and readers, that Tibbs has had "scarce a coffee-house acquaintance, with those persons of distinction, of whom he talks so familiarly".<sup>82</sup> Tibbs appears even more ridiculous when he encounters Altangi, who is walking in the park on his own, the following day. Ironically, Altangi notes the "oddities" which mark the man's character, such as his bowing "to several well dressed persons, who . . . appeared perfect strangers" and his taking "memorandums . . . with much importance and assiduity". Readers are alerted fully to the ridiculous nature of the man, when he claims that it is Altangi who is being "laughed at . . . by every spectator", rather than himself.<sup>83</sup> Tibbs, like many other individuals engrossed in affectation and folly, refuses to accept that his own affectation makes him seem ridiculous. The satiric attack upon the man is continued, when he insists that Altangi dine with him and his wife. Tibbs begins:

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LIV, pp. 226-227.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LIV, p. 227.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LV, p. 229.

*I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a Lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of Shore ditch. A charming body of voice, but no more of that, she will give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature; I design her for my Lord Drumstick's son, but that's in friendship, let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guittar [sic.] immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place I'll make her a scholar; I'll teach her Greek myself, and I intend to learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret.*<sup>84</sup>

Goldsmith's exposure of the affected behaviour and manners of Tibbs should warn readers against assuming similar traits. As was the case in the novel of sentiment, everything about Tibbs and his wife is based upon affectation, excessive appetites, hypocrisy, and uncontrolled passions.

Not content with simply confining his satire to the affected aspirations and words of the pretentious man, Goldsmith cemented his instruction as to the ridiculous nature of affected individuals, by having the Chinaman accompany Tibbs home. In this way, readers received a more complete education about the effects of affectation on individuals. As soon as he is welcomed into the house, Altangi realises that the "high life" and expectations of Tibbs and his family are nothing more than pretence. The language of the old woman, for example, satirises that of servants of the upper class; however, even in this, Tibbs attempts to deceive the Chinaman. He comments:

*Were that Scotch hag . . . to be for ever in the family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprizing too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine, from the highlands, one of the politest men in the world, but that's a secret.*<sup>85</sup>

With Tibbs, every thing is mentioned in, or as a, secret because it is false. He wishes not to be exposed; however, in his folly, he exposes himself as a man of affected behaviour and manners. When, from the "paltry" interior of the house, Tibbs' wife appears, she is far from being a lady of "elegant qualifications"; instead, she is as affected as her husband. Altangi continues:

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquet; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LV, pp. 229-230.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LV, p. 231.

apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had staid out all night at the Vauxhall Gardens with the countess, who was excessively fond of the *horns*. And indeed, my dear, added she, turning to her husband, his lordship drank your health in a bumper. *Poor Jack*, cries he, *a dear good natured creature, I know he loves me, but I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us, something elegant, and little will do, a turbot, an ortolan, or a \_\_\_ or what do you think, my dear*, interrupts the wife, *of a nice pretty bit of ox cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce* - *The very thing*, replies he, *it will eat best with some smart bottled beer, but be sure to let's have the sauce his grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life*.<sup>86</sup>

Like Altangi, Goldsmith believed that readers should also condemn all individuals who base their lives on affectation, deceit, and pretence. Despite Tibbs' exclamations about his own, and his family's, worth, Altangi perceives that the wife is a "slattern", a word associated with lowness of birth and poverty. The dispute between Tibbs and wife over what they should eat, especially when readers know that they have very little, also verges on the ridiculous. Like Altangi, readers should be pleased to take their leave from a scene which not only makes them smile, but fills them a sense of "melancholy".

Goldsmith's attack on the folly of the Tibbs' household symbolised his criticism of members of the lower and middling classes, who affected importance and power. In *The Bee*, he argued that:

Of all the follies and absurdities which this great metropolis labours under, there is not one, I believe, at present, appears in a more glaring and ridiculous light than the pride and luxury of the middling class of people; their eager desire of being seen in a sphere far above their capacities and circumstances, is daily, nay, hourly, instanced by the prodigious numbers of mechanics, who flock to the races, and gaming-tables, brothels, and all public diversions this fashionable town affords.<sup>87</sup>

The attack upon affectation and corrupt manners resembled a similar attack upon the vanity of individuals in his article, "On Dress", in which he described several women who "dressed out beyond the fashion". Of one, he wrote:

That is miss [sic.] Biddy Evergreen. Miss Biddy it seems, has money, and as she considers that money was never so scarce as it is now, she seems resolved to keep what she has to herself. She is ugly enough, you see; yet, I assure you, she has refused several offers, to my own knowledge, within this twelvemonth. Let me see, three gentlemen from Ireland who study the

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Letter LV, p. 232.

<sup>87</sup> Goldsmith, "Of the Pride and Luxury of the Middling Class of People", in *The Bee*, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Volume I, pp. 486-487.

law, two waiting captains, a doctor, and a Scotch preacher, who had liked to have carried her off. All her time is passed between sickness and finery.<sup>88</sup>

Miss Bidy Evergreen symbolises the upper class, pretentious and wealthy woman, whose affectation, corrupt behaviour and manners, and deceit are borne out by the author's description of her coming "dressed out to the Park every Sunday, to shew her airs, to get new lovers, to catch a new cold, and to make new work for her doctor". However, in the affectation and pride of Miss Mazzard, readers are presented with a character whose behaviour is worse than that of Miss Evergreen. The author adds that:

Every new gown she put on impaired her credit; she still, however, went on, improving her appearance, and lessening her little fortune, and is now, you see, become a belle and a bankrupt.<sup>89</sup>

In Miss Mazzard, Goldsmith provided readers with a female version of Tibbs, a woman who was willing to do away with everything so that she could pamper her excessive pride and vanity. Full of the same affectation and deceit as Miss Evergreen, Miss Mazzard appears the more ridiculous figure because she does not have the money necessary to support her corrupt nature. By warning them of the consequences of failing to apply reason to their appetites and passions, and of the need to remain content with their station in life, Goldsmith believed that he could best instruct his readers in their pursuit of virtue.

Emphasising that corrupt behaviour and manners should be reformed, Goldsmith, as Richardson had done, attacked the methodology of preachers and the writers of sermons. He concluded that morals could only be improved in a small way "by men who get into the pulpit rather to shew their parts, than convince us of the truth of what they deliver, [and] who are painfully correct in their stile, musical in their tones, [and whose] every sentiment, every expression, seems the result of meditation and deep study".<sup>90</sup>

Goldsmith argued that:

the good preacher should adopt no model, write no sermons, study no periods; let him but understand his subject, the language he speaks, and be convinced of the truths he delivers. . . . To discard the lazy manner of reading sermons, or speaking sermons by rote; to set up singly against the

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<sup>88</sup> Goldsmith, "On Dress", in *The Bee*, No. II (October 13, 1759), Volume I, p. 377.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Volume I, p. 378.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., "Of Eloquence", in *The Bee*, No. VII (November 17, 1759), Volume I, p. 413.

opposition of men who are attached to their own errors, and to endeavour to be great, instead of being prudent, are qualities we seldom see united.<sup>91</sup>

It was this technique of the "good preacher" that the author adopted for the purpose of instructing his readers in issues of morality, and in the pursuit of virtue. What was most important was that the author not only understood his subject thoroughly, but that he was convinced of the truths that he was attempting to inculcate in the minds of his readers. Although he differed from Fielding, in that he sometimes disregarded the autonomy of his readers, Goldsmith did so only in the hope of impressing upon them, the validity of his moral views.

In *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith aimed at achieving two things: firstly, he sought to instruct readers to pursue virtue in its truest sense; and secondly, he endeavoured successfully to expose the foibles and follies of contemporary society. His didactic technique followed the style he had advocated in his "Essay on Education", where he had insisted that the best form of instruction was neither to "harangue" nor "indulge" readers, but to instruct them with "didactic simplicity".<sup>92</sup> His aim was to instruct readers in temperance and frugality, and to warn them to avoid dissipation, extravagance and folly. After achieving this, he assumed that individuals would become "more useful members of society",<sup>93</sup> and more virtuous beings. Moreover, it was his ambitious idea that he could "compose books that . . . would be serviceable" to all individuals. In this, he followed the lead of Francis Fox, who many years earlier, had stressed that books, aimed at educating individuals in morality, should move away from the traditional biblical story to examples of virtue in everyday life.

Goldsmith's recommendation that the novelist be concerned with educating readers in morality was supported by his comments in *The Bee*, in which he suggested that individuals "be instructed in the arts from which they may afterwards draw greatest advantage".<sup>94</sup> The author recognised correctly that, if readers were continually

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Volume I, pp. 482-483.

<sup>92</sup> Goldsmith, "On Education", in *The Bee*, No. VI (November 10, 1759), Volume I, p. 455.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., No. VI, Volume I, pp. 460-461.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Volume I, p. 462.

confronted with examples of happiness, based on selfishness and corrupt morals, then these would become, for them, the norm. Individuals, he argued, needed to be taught that true happiness could only be found in instances of true virtue, such as in genuine benevolence and in a love of one's neighbours. Goldsmith emphasised that once readers had been taught that a life of virtue is synonymous with happiness, then they would, thereafter, pursue virtue. At the same time, however, the author was aware that individuals, especially those with "amiable instincts", had to learn to distinguish true from affected virtue, a task which could be achieved only by the application of moderation and reason to their good natures. It was this didactic task that the author proposed he could achieve in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

**Chapter XII      Discerning True Virtue and Moderating Benevolence:  
Didactic Instruction in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*  
and Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling***

Oliver Goldsmith's journalistic and poetical writing had much in common with the didactic intentions of Henry Fielding, who aimed at exposing the foibles and follies in society, and recommending that all individuals pursue virtue. In this sense, much of Goldsmith's literary work echoed Fielding's doctrine, expressed in *A Journey from this World to the Next*, that "the greatest and truest happiness which this world affords, is to be found only in the possession of goodness and virtue; a doctrine which . . . can never be too often or too strongly inculcated on the minds of men".<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith emphasised that individuals should be taught to moderate benevolence with prudence and reason. Like Fielding and advocates of the moral sense theory, he argued that benevolence, good nature, and virtue were intrinsically linked together in order to promote the happiness, and reduce the miseries, of fellow human beings.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Goldsmith accepted the definition of the good-natured individual outlined, some twenty years earlier, in *The Champion*:

A delight in the happiness of mankind, and a concern at their misery, with a desire as much as possible, to procure the former, and avert the latter; and this, with a constant regard to desert.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fielding, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, ed. Claude Rawson (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1973), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Fielding had commented in "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men" that, "Good-Nature is that benevolent and amiable Temper of Mind which disposes us to feel the Misfortunes, and enjoy the Happiness of others; and consequently pushes us on to promote the latter, and prevent the former". Fielding *Miscellanies*, Volume I, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Fielding, *The Champion* (27 March 1740), Volume II, p. 40.



In *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Goldsmith reinforced his argument that benevolence, if it were to be identified with virtue, should be applied moderately, and bestowed only upon worthy and deserving objects. Like Butler, he argued that disinterested thoughts, rather than impulse and sensibility, should motivate good acts. Individuals, especially readers, had to be taught to distinguish between genuine and false objects of benevolence, lest they, like Altangi, Asem and Honeywood, be abused and exploited by vicious and selfish beings. In reinforcing this instruction in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Goldsmith was drawing upon a view expressed in *The Bee*, when he had argued that:

In fact, pity, though it may often relieve, is but, at best a short-lived passion, and seldom affords distress more than transitory assistance: With some it scarce lasts from the first impulse till the hand can be put into the pocket; with others it may continue for twice that space, and on some of extraordinary sensibility, I have seen it operate for half an hour altogether: but still, last as it may, it generally produces but beggarly effects; and where, from this motive, we give five farthings, from others we give five pounds: whatever be our feelings from the first impulse of distress, when the same distress solicits a second time, we then feel with diminished sensibility, and, like the repetition of an eccho [*sic*], every stroke becomes weaker, till, at last, our sensations lose all mixture of sorrow, and degenerate into downright contempt.<sup>4</sup>

Although pity may be short-lived, Goldsmith stressed that genuine objects of distress would always remain so. It was only in cases in which pity was motivated by impulse and sensibility, without the moderating influences of prudence or reason, that individuals would feel sensations of contempt. Goldsmith's moral instruction was best summarised in the words of Joseph Addison, who had claimed:

The next way of a Man's bringing his Good-nature to the test is, to consider whether it operates according to the Rules of Reason and Duty: For, if, notwithstanding its general Benevolence to Mankind, it makes no distinction between its Objects, if it exerts it self promiscuously towards the Deserving and Undeserving, if it relieves alike the Idle and the Indigent, if it gives it self up to the first Petitioner, and lights upon any one rather by Accident than Choice, it may pass for an amiable Instinct, but must not assume the name of a Moral Virtue.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Goldsmith, "On the Use of Language", in *The Bee*, No. III (October 20, 1759), *Collected Works*, Volume I, pp. 396-397.

<sup>5</sup> Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 177 (September 22, 1711), pp. 197-198.

In *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Goldsmith aimed at instructing readers to apply the "Rules of Reason and Duty" to "Good-nature" and benevolence, so that they would no longer apply benevolence "promiscuously towards the Deserving and Undeserving", alike.

In *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith had outlined the consequences of actions based on imprudence, when he had Fum Hoam inform Altangi of the calamities that his disobedience had brought upon his own family. He writes:

It is with a heart full of sorrow, my dear Altangi, that I must inform you that what the world calls happiness must now be yours no longer. Our great emperor's displeasure at your leaving China, contrary to the rules of our government, and the immemorial custom of the empire, has produced the most terrible effects. Your wife, daughter, and the rest of your family have been seized by his order, and appropriated to his use; all except your son are now the peculiar property of him who possesses all . . .

You see, my dearest friend, what imprudence has brought thee to; from opulence, a tender family, surrounding friends, and your master's esteem, it has reduced thee to want, persecution; and still worse, to our mighty monarch's displeasure. Want of prudence is too frequently the want of virtue. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Although Goldsmith did not support the arguments of the French philosophers, who stressed that all actions and decisions should be based upon reason,<sup>7</sup> neither did he fully accept the validity of Hume's doctrine that "reason was slave to the passions". Instead, Goldsmith observed that both reason and the passions exerted authority upon the minds of individuals, to varying degrees. Thus, in order to live balanced lives, it became necessary that individuals be taught to moderate their passions with reason.

In the case of Altangi, the quest for knowledge, and happiness, over-rides any consideration of the possible catastrophic consequences for his family. His actions become examples of imprudence and selfishness, like many of the actions of Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. One critic, Thomas Preston, observes, in relation to the latter novel, that:

In thematic terms the novel moves from an emphasis on Parson Primrose's benevolence to an emphasis on his need for prudence. The parson, however, is a complex and ambivalent character. As the relater of his experiences, Parson Primrose is a naif, like the Chinaman, unable to

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<sup>6</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Letter VI, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Fum Hoam reminds Lien Chi Altangi that he who "seeks happiness from mind alone, is in fact as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest who places all happiness in sensual pleasures". Goldsmith, *Ibid.*, Volume II, Letter VI, p. 37.

distinguish appearances from reality, constantly confusing one for the other. But as a character in the story, he is also the object of satire as the vanity underlying his naïveté is revealed. His vanity constitutes a lack of prudence that evokes more than sympathetic laughter, for it causes physical and moral harm to others.<sup>8</sup>

The consequences for the parson's family, like that of the Chinaman's, are catastrophic. The protagonist, therefore, becomes a figure of ridicule and, because of his excessive benevolence, a naïf. However, the novel provided much more than just an amusing and entertaining story for, through the presentation of the protagonist, the author could instruct readers both in the pursuit of virtue and happiness, and provide them with some means of combatting the foibles and follies of contemporary society. Lady Sarah Pennington, a severe critic upon the effect of novels on public morality, described *The Vicar of Wakefield* as "equally entertaining and instructive", and one of a very few novels "from which much injury [would] not be received".<sup>9</sup> Some years later, the actor and dramatist, Samuel Foote, also noted that "Dr. Goldsmith was the first to attack this illegitimate species of writing [sentimentalism]",<sup>10</sup> a form of writing in which the emotional response was disproportionate to the object.<sup>11</sup>

Samuel Foote also noted that, in the protagonist, a man given to excessive passion, readers were presented with a character upon whom, despite all his amiable and virtuous instincts, they should not model their own lives. As was the case with Heartfree, the "good nature" of the Vicar, because of his naïveté and his deficient powers of discernment, is abused by more selfish individuals within society. Accepting Shaftesbury's doctrine that true virtue could never be made to appear foolish, Goldsmith applied the test of ridicule to his protagonist's virtue. By laughing at the excessive generosity and naïveté of Primrose, readers were alerted to the immoderate and

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner. Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), pp. 63-64.

<sup>9</sup> Lady Sarah Pennington, *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Absent Daughters*, (1767), quoted in *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. S. Rousseau (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1974), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Foote, *Memoirs of Samuel Foote, Esq., In Three Volumes* (London: Richard Phillips, 1805), quoted in *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, p. 180.

<sup>11</sup> This point is commented upon by Emslie in his work, *Goldsmith: The Vicar of Wakefield* (London: Edward Arnold, 1963), p. 54.

imprudent, yet amiable, instincts of the protagonist, instincts which a deficient moral education could misconstrue as virtuous. In contrast to the Vicar, Sir William Thornhill, a character who has learned to moderate excessive benevolence, provides a more suitable character upon whom readers can model their behaviour. Readers are told that, at one stage, he too, blinded by fortune "from knowing that there were rascals" in the world and loving all humankind, was touched by even "the slightest distress, whether real or fictitious . . . of the miseries of others".<sup>12</sup> Applying Butler's moral theory, it was impossible, and indeed foolish to attempt, to "love all mankind" equally. Reason, argued Goldsmith, should always direct one's amiable instincts, lest they disintegrate into "a sickly sensibility". Although virtuous individuals should feel some compassion for the miseries of others, Goldsmith recommended, with Butler, that individuals act moderately and prudently; for, in reality, they could never assume the same emotions as the distressed. In this way, Goldsmith attacked the sentimental doctrine, which had encouraged the idea of shared feelings and the condoning of faults of other individuals as indicative of "universal benevolence". In his "Essay on the Theatre", he censured the practice in which "the Spectator [was] taught not only to pardon but to applaud [the faults and foibles of others] in consideration of the goodness of their hearts".<sup>13</sup> Such instruction, Goldsmith claimed, required immediate correction, if individuals were to attain virtue.

Goldsmith set the tone upon which he developed his satire, when, in the heading to the first chapter of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, he warned readers, that "a kindred likeness prevail[ed], as well as of Minds as of Persons" among all members of the Primrose family.<sup>14</sup> He then guided the reaction of readers by incorporating into the text a description of an incident which testified to the naïveté of the father and, by their "kindred likeness", all members of the Primrose family. The Vicar begins:

As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us to taste our gooseberry wine, for which we had a great reputation; and I

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<sup>12</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Goldsmith, "An Essay on the Theatre", Volume III, p. 212.

<sup>14</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. I, p. 18.

profess with the veracity of an historian, that I never knew one of them find fault with it. Our cousins too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the Herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number. However, my wife always insisted that as they were the same *flesh and blood*, they should sit with us at the same table. So that if we had not very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us; for this remark will hold good thro' life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated: and as some men gaze with admiration at the colours of a tulip, or the wing of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house, I ever took care to lend him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes an horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them. By this the house was cleared of such as we did not like; but never was the family of Wakefield known to turn the traveller or the poor dependant out of doors.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Vicar suggests that his offspring had been "educated without softness" and with "temperance", this cannot be the case, given the fact that his comments are juxtaposed against the abuse he suffers at the hands of travellers. Applying the theory of John Locke, in his *Treatise on Education*, to the above passage, readers should note that, where deficiently-educated parents have opted to instruct their children, then their offspring will, in turn, exhibit the same character traits. In the case of the Primrose family, the narrator observes that all "had but one character - that of being equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive".<sup>16</sup> Moses provides readers with one example of the credulity shared by all members of the family, when he attempts to sell the colt at the market.

However, for Goldsmith's readers, there was a second lesson to be learned from this same incident. Ironically, despite pleas of family temperance, the colt is sold in order to meet the rising expectations of the family. It was part of the didactic technique of the author that readers be forced not only to scrutinise the actions and words of various characters, but to make connections between parts of the narrative. Consequently, the narrator's emphasis on the "likeness of character" within the family serves to undermine the proud assertion of Mrs. Primrose that Moses is a "discreet boy", who is able to haggle

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. I, pp. 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. I, p. 21.

until "he gets a bargain".<sup>17</sup> When the boy returns, after having been "imposed upon by a prowling sharper", the severity of Mrs. Primrose's criticism of her son<sup>18</sup> provides a more satirical commentary upon her own character than it does on that of her son, for she is partly responsible for the boy's deficient education in worldly affairs.

Ironically, in both his decision to sell the family's remaining horse, so that the appearance of his daughters "should equal the greatness of their expectations",<sup>19</sup> and his suggestion that he attend the fair in order "to prevent imposition", Goldsmith emphasised the vanity of his protagonist. Primrose continues:

Though this was one of the first mercantile transactions of my life, yet I had no doubt about acquitting myself with reputation. The opinion a man forms of his own prudence is measured by that of the company he keeps, and as mine was most in the family way, I had conceived no unfavourable sentiments of my worldly wisdom.<sup>20</sup>

In assuming that he is prudent and possesses "worldly wisdom", the Vicar presents himself as a more ridiculous figure than his son. The same point is emphasised by the narrator when Primrose, failing to discern the real natures of vicious individuals, is deceived by the affected benevolence of Ephraim Jenkinson's proclamation that "to do good is a duty we owe to all our fellow-creatures". Using the Shaftesburian technique of ridicule, the author satirised the excessive benevolence of the Vicar, who forms an "instantaneous friendship" with the dissembling Jenkinson. The satire continues when Primrose informs readers that:

The old gentleman . . . when my friend was gone, most respectfully demanded if I was any way related to the great Primrose, that courageous monogamist, who had been the bulwark of the church. Never did my heart feel sincerer rapture than at that moment. "Sir," cried I, "the applause of so good a man, as I am sure you are, adds to that happiness in my breast which your benevolence has already excited. You behold before you, Sir, that Doctor Primrose, the monogamist, whom you have been pleased to call great. You here see that unfortunate Divine, who has so long, and it would ill become me to say, successfully, fought against the deuterogamy of the age."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XII, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XII, p. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XIV, p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XIV, pp. 71-72.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XIV, p. 73.

Despite his reassurances to the contrary, the Vicar's character is continually marked by lapses into pride and vanity. Susceptible to flattery and wishing to be acknowledged as that "glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy", Primrose blinds himself to the real natures of those with whom he comes into contact. Readers should not, therefore, be surprised to find that he has been swindled by "the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven".<sup>22</sup> Later still, this same inability to discern the true motives of the vicious is evident in the Vicar's willingness to accept the word of Squire Thornhill in relation to his professed innocence over the disappearance of Olivia.<sup>23</sup> By including such didactic incidents, Goldsmith aimed at educating his readers to scrutinise the actions, motives and words of other individuals.

There were, however, several other didactic lessons incorporated into the Vicar's relation of the above passage. The first concerned the Christian duty of all individuals to act benevolently towards their fellow beings. Moral doctrines of the eighteenth century had emphasised, in accordance with those of Butler and Hutcheson, that individuals were required "to love their neighbours". In the case of the Vicar, the contention about whether he was simply fulfilling the obligations of Christian morality centred on two issues: firstly, the extent of benevolence that one should show one's neighbours; and secondly, some definition concerning who constituted a neighbour. In terms of the liberal definition, which held that "neighbours" constituted all beings with whom one came into contact, Primrose does appear to be performing his Christian duty. However, such a definition was far too encompassing for the more discerning philosophers and writers of the mid eighteenth century, who argued that "neighbour" referred to a much narrower set of associations. As early as 1725, for example, James Arbuckle had advocated that individuals were not "able to exert [their] Good-will to that degree, that the whole *Universe* [should] feel the immediate Effects of it; and [that] but very few [had] it in their power to promote the Interest either of a large *Society*, or of any considerable number of their *Fellow-creatures*, in so extensive a manner as a generous Mind would desire".

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XIV, p. 76.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVII, p. 92.

Arbuckle had argued that benevolence be restricted to one's "*circle of Acquaintance*".<sup>24</sup> In one's own area, therefore, neighbour would refer to those geographically situated within a defined boundary; alternatively, when one was overseas, neighbour would refer to individuals of the same nationality. The definition used by Primrose resembles that suggested by Thomas Sheridan and writers of the sentimental novel, who advocated that "neighbour" referred to any individuals with whom one associated at any given time. Such a definition, readers should realise, was far too broad for, as Butler had observed, only God was capable of displaying such universal love. Consequently, Primrose was portrayed as a foolish figure and unworthy of the emulation of readers not simply because of his failure to discern the reasons behind such large attendances at his home, but also because of the way in which he lived by the ideal, yet unattainable, principle of universal love.

Throughout the novel, the benevolence of the protagonist is undermined by his excessive passions, pride and vanity. His actions too often stem from self-interested, rather than disinterested, feelings of virtue, which according to Shaftesbury and Butler, could be inconsistent with virtue, if they were allowed to reign in an "ungovernable" state. Even in his choice of a wife, for such "qualities as would wear well",<sup>25</sup> rather than for love, readers are alerted to the vanity of the man, whose character is based upon the need of praise and recognition. The naming of his children also testifies to the materialistic nature and vanity of the protagonist: George and Sophia, for example, are named after rich relatives, even in spite of the Vicar's reservations about the effect of wealth on the morals of individuals; Olivia's name is based on the romances, despite the fact that such works corrupt morality; while Moses, named by the Vicar himself, is given the pretentious name of that great, Biblical lawgiver, who led the Jews from captivity to the Promised Land. Furthermore, Primrose, after censuring his wife's praise of their

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<sup>24</sup> James Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays on several subjects, lately published in the Dublin Journal in Two Volumes* (Bartholomew-Close: J. Darby and T. Browne, 1729), Volume I, No. 13 (June 26, 1725), p. 114.

<sup>25</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. I, p. 18.



children, admits that they "were certainly very handsome"<sup>26</sup> in the most affected terms: Olivia, for example, has the "luxuriancy of beauty" of the goddess, Hebe; Sophia, though more modest, is still alluring; George is "intended . . . for one of the learned professions"; and Moses is "designed for business". Ironically, although he attacks materialism and passions, Primrose is testimony to their powerful influence on human beings. In addition, Goldsmith emphasised the vanity in the Vicar's attempt to exceed the fame of Whiston. In relation to his tracts upon monogamy, Primrose adds that:

as he [Whiston] had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, œconomy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. 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.<sup>27</sup>

In this case, readers are forced to discern whether the epitaph provides a reminder to both he and his wife of their duty and fidelity to each other, or whether it is simply another display of the man's excessive vanity in attempting to excel his "neighbour". Ironically, such a man invests himself with responsibility for the moral education and spiritual welfare of his family.

Although he acknowledged that there was often only a fine line between passion and virtue, Goldsmith never his readers entirely to their own devices in decoding the didactic meaning of the text. After each incident, he provided subtle clues as to the way in which the actions and words of his protagonist should be interpreted. One such example occurs when the Vicar asserts that he hates "all manner of gaming, except back-gammon", and yet admits to "the ominous circumstance" when he "threw deuce ace five times running".<sup>28</sup> His very involvement in "gaming", after having stressed its corrupt influence on morals, provided one way in which the author made readers aware that some of his protagonist's comments were not as genuine as they might appear to be. Throughout the course of the text, Goldsmith forced readers to discriminate sagaciously between the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. I, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. II, p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. II, p. 23.

Vicar's unwillingness "to disavow his principles" and instances of his selfishness and vanity, such when he refuses to "relinquish the cause of truth"<sup>29</sup> in relation to Parson Wilmot's "courting a fourth wife", even though it results in the postponement of his son's marriage to Arabella Wilmot. The fact that his trust is abused by his inability to scrutinise the character and motives of the merchant tends to suggest that, too often, the Vicar's responses are based more on selfish impulses than they are on principle. At times, he seems more willing to jeopardize the happiness of his family than to abandon either his pride or vanity. This same vanity affords the Vicar some mental consolation when his family is unable to accept the humility of their new station in life. He notes:

My chief attention therefore was now to bring down the pride of my family to their circumstances; . . . "You can't be ignorant, my children", cried I, "that no prudence of ours could have prevented our late misfortune; but prudence may do much in disappointing its effects. We are now poor, my fondlings, and wisdom bids us conform to our humble situation. Let us then, without repining, give up those splendours with which numbers are wretched, and seek in humbler circumstances that peace with which all may be happy. . . . No, my children, let us from this moment give up all pretensions to gentility; we have still enough left for happiness if we are wise, and let us draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune".<sup>30</sup>

Had fortune been responsible for the destruction of the former splendour of his family, then the Doctor's words would offer sound advice to both his family and readers on how to achieve happiness; for, ideally, happiness is to be found in inner contentment. However, there are ironical undertones in the words, which emphasise the hypocrisy of the protagonist; for, had Primrose sought prudence himself, then the family's misfortunes may have been averted. Primrose's consolation stems from his proud belief that he is the victor in the argument. His actions, therefore, should not be seen as virtuous, because they are based on selfish principles. Although he is not a "vicious" individual, Primrose still needs to be educated, as do readers, to scrutinise the motivating principles of his own character.

The Vicar's excessive passion and pride are also responsible for his being sentenced to prison when, after the abuse committed upon his daughter, he refuses an

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. II, p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 26.

invitation to the Squire's marriage to Miss Wilmot. Rather than exercising some prudent control over his excessive anger, Primrose denounces Thornhill, calling him a "wretch", a "lyar" and a "reptile". He concludes by taunting Thornhill that "though [the Squire] hast [his] forgiveness, [he] shalt ever have [his] contempt."<sup>31</sup> Although Primrose has reason to rebuke Thornhill, his verbal attack on the man is far too passionate. Furthermore, his forgiveness lacks sincerity, being undermined by the implication that, if George were at home, the Squire should expect to be punished. Ignoring the pleas of his family that he not enrage Thornhill, Primrose, on the basis of his excessive pride, refuses to comply with the Squire's terms. He continues:

"Why, my treasures, . . . why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right! My duty has taught me to forgive him; but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and to avoid a prison continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement! No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown, we can still retire to a charming apartment, when we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!"<sup>32</sup>

On face value, the Vicar's refusal to compromise his principles is admirable. However, Goldsmith, never losing sight of the didactic nature of the text, forced readers to scrutinise the Vicar's motives in censuring Thornhill. The fact that Primrose freely admits to having his "passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal" should indicate to readers that his firm stance against the Squire is based more on personal pride, than on a genuine adherence to principle. Certainly, given the catastrophic consequences for his family, his action seems almost as ridiculous as his myopic, if Christian, vision of allowing his son to go forth into the world accompanied only by a staff, a book, and the words that, "*never saw I the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread*".<sup>33</sup> In the novel, the moral education of readers was closely associated with the education of the protagonist, who had to be taught how to distinguish true from false ideals, and to moderate his passions.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXIV, p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXIV, p. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 26.

The extent to which Primrose must learn to moderate his "amiable instincts" can be seen when he meets Burchell at the inn. In response to Primrose's act of charity, Burchell, accepting the "purse" replies that he is "glad that a late oversight in giving what money [he] had about [him] has shown [him] there are still some men like [Primrose]."<sup>34</sup> In the context of the novel, indiscriminate acts of charity, such as those bestowed upon others by the Vicar, where discernment and prudence are neglected, render individuals liable to abuse. If readers accept the validity of Fielding's doctrine, as they should, then the Vicar has done nothing to address Burchell's real problem, a problem that he shares with the protagonist, of helping him apply prudence to his benevolence. Arguing that individuals should not offer generosity indiscriminately to those whose distresses had been caused by defects within their own characters, Fielding had advocated that such characters needed to be educated to discern the worthy from unworthy objects of relief. Failure to do so rendered "benevolent" individuals ridiculous. Sir William Thornhill summarises the moral instruction for readers when, in retaliation to the Vicar's praise of the "man of consummate benevolence", he stresses that he "carried benevolence to an excess when young; for his passions were then strong, and they all were upon the side of virtue, they led it up to a romantic extreme."<sup>35</sup> Burchell provides both the protagonist and readers with their first cognitive and didactic test of the need for moderation and scrutiny in life. In his refusal to accept the existence of selfish and vicious passions, however, the Vicar, unlike Goldsmith's readers, misses the moral issue.

In his relation of the history of the young Sir William Thornhill, Burchell, by emphasising the consequences that attend excessive generosity, assumes the role of textual guide and moral instructor for readers. He comments:

[Sir William] was surrounded with crowds, who shewed him only one side of their character; so that he began to lose regard for private interest in universal sympathy. He loved all mankind; for fortune prevented him from knowing that there were rascals. Physicians tell us of a disorder in which the whole body is so exquisitely sensible, that the slightest touch gives pain: what some have thus suffered in their persons, this gentleman felt in his mind. The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 29.

quick, and his soul laboured under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others. Thus disposed to relieve, it will be easily conjectured, he found the numbers disposed to solicit: his profusions began to impair his fortune, but not his good nature; that indeed, was seen to encrease as the other seemed to decay: he grew improvident as he grew poor; and though he talked like a man of sense, his actions were those of a fool.<sup>36</sup>

Where individuals deliberately blind themselves to the motives of others, they allow themselves to become victims of abuse and, by consequence, the butt of ridicule. It is this didactic aim which Brissenden overlooks when he describes Goldsmith as being forced into sentimentality.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, Burchell's relation of Sir William's actions stresses the consequences of failing to moderate the passions with reason. Touched by all afflictions, whether real or fictitious, Sir William is pursued, on the basis of his unmoderated good nature, by all the "rascals" of the world. Like the Vicar, Sir William often spoke "like a man of sense", yet acted like a fool. His education only becomes complete when he learns the art of discernment and moderation, which results in his discovering the real motives of those who had affected friendship in order to exploit his fortune.

Blinded by his own shortcomings, the Vicar's early attempts at reforming the natures of those with whom he associates fail to come to fruition. In spite of all his "sumptuary edicts" against the effects of "false finery", Primrose acknowledges that:

How well so ever I fancied my lectures against pride had conquered the vanity of my daughters; yet I still found them secretly attached to all their former finery: [They] drest out in all their former splendour: . . . I could not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion.<sup>38</sup>

The emphasis upon the continued vanity of the women reasserted what writers, from Arbuckle to Fielding, had already noted - that sermons provided an inadequate means of modifying human behaviour. Rather than being passive receptors of instruction about the amoral nature of pride and vanity, the women should have been allowed to decode the moral instruction for themselves, in much the same way as Goldsmith allowed his readers

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. III, p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 250.

<sup>38</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. IV, pp. 33-34.

the autonomy necessary in decoding the meaning of the text. Only in such a way could individuals be educated to pursue virtue.

In addition to the irony which underlies Primrose's admonishment of the pride of the women within his family, the Vicar informs readers that his family has been deceived by the "careless, superior air" of the Squire. Goldsmith, however, eager that readers not be deceived by the biased narration of the Vicar, guided the way in which they should interpret his comments, by emphasising Primrose's unconscious shifts between the use of the pronouns "I" and "we". For example, while he allowed Primrose to stress his disapproval of "disproportioned acquaintances", Goldsmith divulged his protagonist's subconscious hope of an alliance between the Squire and Olivia, when he had Primrose admit that "we soon became more familiar". He continues:

"I think he [Thornhill] has a great deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say. . . . to confess a truth, he has not prepossessed me in his favour. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust; and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us. Let us keep to companions of our own rank. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune-hunter, and I can see no reason why fortune-hunting women should not be contemptible too".<sup>39</sup>

In spite of warning his daughters that they should "keep to companions of their own rank", Primrose undermines his own authority when he stresses that "*we* most readily agreed" to Thornhill's request that he be allowed to "renew his visit". Even when the gypsy forecasts future happiness for the two girls, the Vicar displays the same vanity and pride about which he admonishes other members of his family when he admits that "we now began to think ourselves designed by the stars for something exalted, and already anticipated our future grandeur".<sup>40</sup> These persistent fluctuations between the use of pronouns in the first person singular and the first person plural were part of Goldsmith's didactic technique, aimed at forcing readers to scrutinise fully the words of his protagonist.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. V, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. X, p. 57.

Ironically, "satisfied with just having pointed out danger" of disproportioned acquaintances, the family's moral instructor remains, thereafter, silent. He notes, in relation to the Flamboroughs, that:

My daughters seemed to regard their superior accomplishments with envy; . . . My wife . . . [added] that there was nothing she more ardently wished than to give her girls a single winter's polishing. To this I could not help replying, that their breeding was already superior to their fortune; and that greater refinement would only serve to make their poverty ridiculous, and give them a taste for pleasures they had no right to possess.<sup>41</sup>

Although the Vicar's words offer sound moral advice to all individuals, who affect "superior fortunes", his "long and painful lectures upon temperance, simplicity, and contentment"<sup>42</sup> are totally disregarded by the girls. The Doctor's advice is ignored because, like writers of sermons, his educative technique is deficient and indoctrinating; for, it detracts from the autonomy of his family in decoding his moral instruction. As a result, members of his family listen, and then dismiss, what he has to say almost simultaneously. His silence, as he watches the girls choose the opposite course of action from what he had dictated, only emphasises his inability to communicate his moral instruction in a way that proves morally advantageous to listeners. Ironically, his remark, that "virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarce worth the sentinel," highlights, for readers, his inability to educate his family; for, in reality, virtue should always be on its guard against the designs and snares of vicious individuals.

Goldsmith satirised the character of the Vicar who, consumed by pride and vanity himself, attempts to correct the foibles and follies of others. While promoting Christian duty and the doctrine that individuals make acquaintances only with those of a similar dispositions, Primrose fails to apply the doctrine to himself. Although he praises young Dick for his hospitality to Burchell, he comforts himself with the belief that Sophia is too ambitious to be attracted by "a man of broken fortune". He reflects:

"What a strong instance . . . is that poor man of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance. He by no means wants sense, which only serves to aggravate his former folly. Poor forlorn creature, where are now the revellers, the flatterers, that he could once inspire and command!"<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. IX, pp. 54-55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. X, p. 56.

The same words could readily be applied to Primrose's own nature, for he too appears to be a man sensible in philosophy, yet falls a victim to an extravagant sensibility. More ironical, however, is the rebuke of Sophia and Moses to their father's censure of Burchell's character. Sophia reminds her father that "whatsoever his former conduct may [have been] . . . his circumstances should exempt him from censure now". She continues:

His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly; and I have heard my pappa himself say, that we should never strike our unnecessary blow at a victim over whom providence holds the scourge of its resentment."<sup>43</sup>

Sophia's correction of her father's conduct provides readers with a guide as to the way they should interpret many of the views of the protagonist. Too often, the Vicar's dictates are based solely upon his prevailing passions: such as when he admits to disliking Thornhill, not on the basis of his being able to discern the Squire's true motives, but rather from the fact that he hates all "free thinkers"; or, the way in which he ostracizes Burchell, whom he accuses of the "vilest instances of unprovoked ingratitude" for trying to hinder the advancement and happiness of his family.<sup>44</sup> Although individuals may argue, from a sentimental perspective, that the Vicar's outburst towards Burchell is justified, the condemnation of his visitor only emphasises the excessive and passionate nature of a man, who uses Christian doctrine to his own advantage. Instead of forgiving Burchell, the Vicar treats him with an unchristian contempt.

It was part of the didactic technique of the author that the disappearance of Burchell, the Vicar's moral instructor, coincides with further calamities befalling the Primrose family, calamities based not on coincidence, as the Vicar would have readers believe, but rather on instances of his lack of prudence, pride, and vanity. The vanity of the family is nowhere more elaborately documented than in the family portrait, in which the Primroses attempt "to shew the superiority of [their] tastes" over their neighbours, the Flamboroughs. The Vicar continues:

As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. VI, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XV, p. 81.



composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style, and, after many debates, at length came to a unanimous resolution of being drawn together, in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel; for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was desired not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side, while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, drest in a green joeseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be drest out with an hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the 'Squire, that he insisted on being put in as one of the family in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication of his desire to be introduced into the family, nor could we refuse his request.<sup>45</sup>

Goldsmith used the portrait, with its heavy emphasis upon pretension, to undermine the sincerity of the Vicar's view that his family should be able to find contentment and happiness in their present station in life. By satirising the vanity of his protagonist, Goldsmith forced readers to examine carefully all the moral issues upon which the Vicar offered commentary. Goldsmith believed that all readers should scrutinise the actions and words of those with whom they associated. In exposing the vanity of the Primroses, Goldsmith anticipated the philosophy of Adam Ferguson, who argued that:

Vanity appears in affectation and ostentation.  
 The vain affect what they think will captivate the attention and merit the  
 praise of others. . . .  
 They are gratified by the admiration of others. . . .  
 The attention they pay to other men not proceeding from the heart, but from  
 the desire of consequence and applause, they always fail where the fruits or  
 effects of real affection are expected.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the Vicar's arguments to the contrary, the portrait represents little more than an exercise in pretension and vanity, aimed not only at persuading Squire Thornhill into an alliance with the family, but also at captivating the admiration, applause, attention and praise of all individuals who attend the Primrose's home. Later in the novel, readers are forced to determine the real motives behind the Vicar's chastisement of his "deluded flock" who, in seizing the two accompanying officers of justice, swear that "they would

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVI, pp. 82-83.

<sup>46</sup> Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: 1773), Part II, Ch. III, Section iv, pp. 98-99.

never see their minister go to gaol while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence". The Vicar, noting that "the consequence might have been fatal, had [he] not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude",<sup>47</sup> appropriately advises his parishioners to be obedient to both the law and to "the duty [they] owe God". His use of hyperbole, in his saving the officers from the "enraged multitude", would suggest to sagacious readers that they should investigate his motives to see whether or not he has a genuine concern for the moral welfare of his parishioners, or whether this concern stems from his own vanity. Even virtuous individuals, argued the author, occasionally displayed instances of pride and vanity, which required correction.

Like Fielding, Goldsmith also guided readers in their pursuit of virtue. After emphasising the huge size of the portrait, a testimony to the excessive vanity of the family, readers are informed of the reaction of the Vicar's neighbours, one of whom compared "it to Robinson Crusoe's long-boat, too large to be removed", another to "a reel in a bottle", while others "were amazed how it ever got in" the house.<sup>48</sup> The reactions, ridiculous as they are, give readers a clear indication of the way in which they too should judge the pretentious nature of the family. Ironically, Primrose informs readers that the malice of his neighbours is based upon their envy at seeing the Squire's portrait "united" with that of his own family. Thus, he continues:

Scandalous whispers began to circulate at our expence, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies. These reports we always resented with becoming spirit; but scandal ever improves by opposition.<sup>49</sup>

The scandalous rumours about which the Vicar complains only highlight his lack of prudence. Although some of the whispers may stem from malice, the Vicar, as was the case with Burchell, is unable to discriminate concerned criticism, which has as its basis the welfare of his family, from that of malicious intent. Only after Thornhill has abused

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<sup>47</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. XXV, p. 140.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. XVI, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. XVI, p. 84.

his hospitality does Primrose note, retrospectively, that "the hopes of having him for a son-in-law in some measure blinded us to all his imperfections".<sup>50</sup>

This failure to discern the true nature of individuals is responsible for the calamity associated with Olivia's absconding. Naïvely, Mrs. Primrose misinterprets the words of the Squire in relation to his marrying her daughter. In response to her suggestion that Olivia marry farmer Williams, Thornhill replies ambiguously:

"No madam, . . . it is impossible to know any person that deserves to be her husband: she's too great a treasure for one man's possession; she's a goddess! Upon my soul, I speak what I think she's an angel: . . . How, madam, . . . my approbation of such a choice! Never. What! Sacrifice so much beauty, and sense, and goodness, to a creature insensible of the blessing! Excuse me, I can never approve of such a piece of injustice! And I have my reasons!"<sup>51</sup>

In spite of Mrs. Primrose's innocent belief that Thornhill's disapproval of the match signifies his intention of marrying Olivia, readers should be aware of the double meaning in Thornhill's reply, that "she's too great a treasure for one man's possession". The only injustice envisaged by the man of selfish principles is his own loss of sensual gratification, if the girl were to marry Williams prior to his seducing her. Thornhill, therefore, personifies the doctrine of selfishness advocated by La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes and Mandeville. The problem for all characters of excessive benevolence, in discerning the motives of the vicious, is summarised adequately in the Vicar's acknowledgement that Thornhill's reasons "lie too deep for discovery".

Throughout the text, the author tested the sagacity of readers by contrasting the Vicar's belief in his own prudence and wisdom with incidents which testified to the contrary. For example, despite his eagerness to admit Thornhill into the family, Primrose still acknowledges that he could see the motives behind the Squire's flattery. In much the same way, although he argues that the integrity of individuals should never be influenced by the fact that they are parents, he still fails to restrain Olivia from playing "the coquet to perfection".<sup>52</sup> However, an even greater discrepancy between the Vicar's belief in his

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVI, p. 81.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVI, p. 85.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVII, p. 86.

own wisdom and reality is emphasised, when Primrose is informed of Olivia's departure. In spite of all his former exhortations on the need to moderate the passions, Primrose subordinates all prudence and reason to their control. Proclaiming that all future happiness has been lost, the Parson attacks his son for the latter's rebuke of his father's neglect of prudence and fortitude, commenting:

"Fortitude, child! Yes, he shall see I have fortitude! Bring me my pistols. I'll pursue the traitor. While he is on earth I'll pursue him. Old as I am, he shall find I can sting him yet. The villain! The perfidious villain!"<sup>53</sup>

Ironically, the teacher, having lost sight of all moral instruction, becomes dependent upon his pupil for moral guidance. Even his wife advises him that "the Bible is the only weapon" fit for his hands, while his son, that same person who was laughed at for having been imposed upon at the fair, comments:

"Indeed, Sir, . . . your rage is too violent and unbecoming. You should be my mother's comforter, and you encrease her pain. It ill suited you and your reverend character thus to curse your greatest enemy: you should not have curst him, villain as he is".<sup>54</sup>

In spite of undermining the Vicar's wisdom, Goldsmith did not allow readers to become passive receptors of the narrative. Instead, he forced them to apply their sagacity in decoding the moral meaning of the text by succeeding Mrs. Primrose's advice on the need for moderation with her violent outburst against her daughter, the "vile strumpet", Olivia. In attempting to moderate her passion, Primrose continues:

"Wife . . . do not talk thus hardly: my detestation of her guilt is as great as yours; but ever shall this house and this heart be open to a poor returning repentant sinner. The sooner she returns from her transgressions, the more welcome shall she be to me. For the first time the very best may err; art may persuade, and novelty spread out its charm. The first fault is the child of simplicity, but every other, the offspring of guilt. Yes, the wretched creature shall be welcome to this heart and this house, tho' stained with ten thousand vices".<sup>55</sup>

The Vicar's words, with their emphasis on the Christian duty of forgiveness, offer sound advice to both his wife and readers alike. However, Goldsmith left readers with the task of judging the sincerity of the Vicar's concept of forgiveness, especially given his

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVII, p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVII, p. 92.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVII, p. 93.

passionate outbursts following the abduction of Olivia, and his attack on Burchell. Too often, in subordinating prudence and reason to the power of the passions, Primrose strays from the path of true virtue, albeit innocently and unconsciously. It was Goldsmith's didactic aim to teach readers not only to distinguish between virtue and her amiable, though affected, images, but also to instruct them that virtue was resilient.

In order to consolidate the validity of his argument, that individuals must pursue virtue and learn to distinguish virtue from vice, Goldsmith adopted the didactic technique of the journey motif as the best means of inculcating his moral instruction to readers. As readers follow the ridiculous situations into which the Vicar becomes embroiled, through his inability to discern the true natures of other individuals, they are simultaneously educated. By employing irony and satire, however, Goldsmith allowed readers to distance themselves from the shortcomings of his protagonist. Correctly, the Vicar comments that:

Man little knows what calamities are beyond his patience to bear till he tries them; as in ascending the heights of ambition, which look bright from below, every step we rise shews us some new and gloomy prospect of hidden disappointment; so in our descent from the summits of pleasure, though the vale of misery below may appear at first dark and gloomy, yet the busy mind, still attentive to its own amusement, finds as we descend something to flatter and to please. Still as we approach, the darkest objects appear to brighten, and the mental eye becomes adapted to its gloomy situation.<sup>56</sup>

Although no individuals possessed any knowledge of future events and calamities, readers were taught that they could avoid many calamities by applying inspection and moderation to their lives. Similarly, by avoiding affectation and ambition, by accepting their current station within society, and by applying prudence to their actions and thoughts, readers were instructed that happiness could be found, even in the most gloomy of situations. Even at the conclusion of the novel, the Vicar must still be taught to moderate his passions. Abandoning all "fortitude" on seeing his son led into prison, "fettered with heaviest irons", Primrose casts, only to be rebuked by George for abandoning "hope and resolution", "all the curses that ever sunk a soul . . . upon the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XVIII, p. 95.

murderer of [his] children".<sup>57</sup> For Goldsmith, individuals had to be taught to recognise and control excessive passions.

George's story is far from a digression as some critics tend to label it; rather, it too carries considerable didactic significance for Goldsmith's readers. Through the persona of George, Goldsmith highlighted the consequences for individuals who, without adequate education, were thrown on the mercy of the greater world. Although some parallels could be drawn between George's story and that of the author's own life, George's history allowed the author the opportunity of attacking contemporary literature, which had neglected integrity in favour of vanity. Like his father, George's tracts had been received with "neglect" by a world, more content with the flattery and vanity promoted by the novel of sentiment. For some time, the uneducated George had abandoned his principles in order to "write for bread", flattering Squire Thornhill "for a fee". George's association with Ned Thornhill stressed the degree to which individuals would lower themselves, in order to pamper their ambition and vanity. Sir William offers readers the didactic moral when, refusing George succour, he comments:

"But I suppose, Sir, I guess your merits, you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me, for being the instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance".<sup>58</sup>

Sir William's refusal to reward George was consistent with Goldsmith's belief that individuals could rehabilitate themselves morally, if they were given the correct instruction. In this sense, Goldsmith conformed with Fielding's view that an offer of immediate assistance to the wretched did little to help them abandon their former, vicious habits. Such individuals needed to be re-educated with virtuous principles, and be taught to scrutinise the motives upon which their actions were based. Thus, only by being refused assistance could individuals be induced to seek virtue for its own sake. In this way, Sir William Thornhill became, for the author, a vehicle for educating characters and readers alike.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXVIII, pp. 158-159.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XX, p. 113.

Goldsmith used irony to help distinguish the gulf which existed between the moral re-education of his readers and that of his characters. When George and his father meet Squire Thornhill at the Arnolds', the two undiscerning characters fail to see the Squire's motives in procuring, for George, a commission in a regiment going to the West Indies. Although readers realise that Thornhill's aid is based upon selfish affections, Primrose fails to understand why the Squire's friendship increased "proportionably" according to the affection shown his son by Miss Wilmot. This inability to discern the motives that lie behind the Squire's affected generosity makes the Vicar and his son partly responsible for the abuse that they receive. Alternatively, through the use of irony, readers are educated to see through the selfish and vicious nature of the man, who, "desires no other reward but the pleasure of having served [his] friend".<sup>59</sup> With George out of the country, the Hobbesian-like character can lay siege to the virtue of Miss Wilmot, unopposed.

Juxtaposed to the blindness of the Vicar, Goldsmith offered readers insights into his Christian charity and forgiveness. When Primrose finds his daughter disputing the bill at the alehouse, Goldsmith, following Fielding's lead, took the opportunity of attacking inn-keepers, who subordinated their benevolence and humanity to selfish concerns. Such inhumanity is depicted in Goldsmith's portrayal of the innkeeper's wife who, berating "the dear forlorn wretch", accuses the "infamous strumpet" of trying "to come and take up an honest house, without cross or coin to bless [herself] with".<sup>60</sup> Although the husband tries to restrain his wife's expulsion of the lodger, his affected compassion is motivated by the selfish desire that, if Olivia be a "gentlewoman", then they can expect some monetary gain. In this sense, he presents himself as a more contemptible figure than the woman, whose words reflect her true inhumanity. Ironically, when Olivia is found to be the daughter of the Vicar, they are offered "a more genteel apartment". In contrast to the inhumanity of the innkeeper and his wife, the Vicar provides readers with a more correct, albeit excessive, example of charity and compassion. He comments:

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 123.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 126.

"Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Tho' the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; tho' thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all. . . . Yes, my child, from my heart I do forgive thee! Only repent, and we both shall be happy".<sup>61</sup>

Goldsmith based the Vicar's idea of charity on that promoted by Alexander Forbes who, earlier in the century, had defined "Charity" as more than "the giving of Alms, [and] having a favourable Opinion of others". Forbes had interpreted charity in light of its "proper" meaning which, according to St. Paul, was "Love".<sup>62</sup> It was this interpretation of charity that Goldsmith emphasised as the correct form of charity. However, even though the Vicar adopts this interpretation in theory, Goldsmith forced readers to scrutinise the motives behind his protagonist's words; for, occasionally, Primrose's expressions of forgiveness are undermined by some minor qualification, such as when he comments, only after finding out that she has been married by a priest, that his daughter is "a thousand times more welcome than before".

Despite reassurances that "the wretched delinquent" would be received with love on her return home, Mrs. Primrose does not share the same degree of Christian forgiveness as that shown by her husband. By having the Vicar intervene in order to remind his wife of the duty owed by all individuals to the "repentant sinner", Goldsmith instructed readers that future happiness was not beyond the reach of those who repented their former transgressions. Primrose comments:

"I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us, let us not therefore encrease them by dissention among each other. If we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world, and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of Heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner, than ninety nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude".<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 126.

<sup>62</sup> Alexander Forbes, *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects* (1734), "Additions to the Essay on Self-Love", No. III, pp. 355-356.

<sup>63</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. XXII, p. 132.



Primrose provided the vehicle by which the author's doctrine on Christian virtue was promoted. In contrast to the writers of sermons, who had argued that sinners were lost to Heaven, Goldsmith re-iterated a philosophy that had gained considerable momentum during the middle part of the eighteenth century - that the repentant sinner, even if censured by the world, would not be abandoned by God. In stressing the duty that the family owed the repentant Olivia, Goldsmith emphasised that Heaven alone would judge the sinner. By consequence, it became the moral duty of all virtuous individuals to welcome the return of the repentant sinner with tenderness. In addition to the Vicar's chastisement of his wife about the need for forgiveness, Goldsmith was also promoting the moral instruction advocated by James Arbuckle, who claimed that no individuals had "any just cause to be ashamed or cast down [by] Unavoidable Misfortunes", unless these were consequent upon their own "criminal or highly imprudent Conduct".<sup>64</sup> Although it may be argued that Olivia's misfortunes could have been avoided, the fact remains that they have resulted from a deficient moral education. Consequently, it is the parents, not the girl herself, who are to blame.

Goldsmith's protagonist served two purposes: firstly, he educated readers through the moral instruction he offered members of his own family; and secondly, he was used by the author to test the sagacity of readers in decoding the moral meaning of the text. In terms of the second purpose, Goldsmith used Olivia's narration, about "the gradations that led to her . . . wretched situation", to undermine both the Vicar's idea of charity and his belief that "wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one".<sup>65</sup> Olivia's narration also warned readers about the dangers of making hasty judgements, for she informed her father that Burchell was the family's "warmest, sincerest friend", and that he had taken "every opportunity of privately admonishing [her] against the artifices of Mr. Thornhill". Ironically, the Vicar replies:

"You amaze me, my dear, . . . but now I find my first suspicions of Mr. Thornhill's baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich and we are poor. But tell me, my child, sure it was

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<sup>64</sup> James Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 17 (July 24, 1725), Volume I, pp. 144-145.

<sup>65</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 126.

no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine".<sup>66</sup>

In addition to emphasising the shortcomings of his protagonist, Goldsmith used the passage to stress to readers that they should always scrutinise the motives of others with great care. Only in hindsight can Primrose overcome his blind faith in good nature. Even more foolish, however, is the protagonist's ironic belief that the education he has given his children is enough to protect their virtue against the snares of a vicious world. Readers should be aware that such a deficient education, combined with the family's social aspirations and vanity, is responsible for Olivia's degradation.

Although there was nothing innovative in the scenario of the young woman duped by the vicious nature of the man of the world, Goldsmith used Olivia's story to allow readers further insights into the thoughts of women, whose virtue had been corrupted by the prospects of affectation, social advancement, and wealth. Olivia acquaints her father with the following information:

"The very next morning, . . . I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. . . . Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young Baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, Sir, how his ingratitude stung me. My answer to this proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was going he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to".<sup>67</sup>

The difference between the account of the woman provided by Goldsmith and that of his predecessor, Samuel Richardson in *Pamela*, was that Olivia's story offered readers a more subjective insight into the plight of a woman, whose virtue had been destroyed. Too often, implied the author, women were too ill-prepared, or poorly educated, to perceive the dangers that lay behind the façades adopted by vicious individuals. Olivia,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 127.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXI, p. 128.

despite her good nature, represented such a woman, a woman whose transgressions had resulted from the deficient education provided by her parents.

Goldsmith also used the passage to attack the corrupt influence of the sentimental novel, which emphasised the importance of the passions in motivating individuals to action. Lacking prudence and wisdom, and by reciprocating the affected love of her paramour, Olivia becomes easy prey for the male predator who, after conquering the virtue of his victims, casts them aside, leaving them with no other alternative than to fall into prostitution. From a psychological perspective, Goldsmith's instruction was based in reality, for often, when the truth was discovered, victims attempted to hide it by seeking excessive pleasures which, in turn, caused them to sink further into the depths of iniquity. However, unlike the two other women whom she encounters, Olivia, through some steadfastness of character, denies the general truth of the Vicar's statement that "one vice, tho' cured, ever plants others where it has been".<sup>68</sup> Instead, she personifies the author's instruction that individuals, once they have scrutinised their situation, could repent and reform their vicious ways.

When Primrose is notified about Thornhill's intention of marrying Miss Wilmot, he decides to inform the young woman of the Squire's villainous behaviour towards his own daughter. Although the Vicar's action should be based on a genuine concern for the welfare of a fellow creature, his actual motives are ambiguous. Readers are forced to discern whether his informing Miss Wilmot is based on a genuine concern for her well-being, or whether he is motivated more by a vengeful passion, that of having seen the affliction of his daughter increase after hearing of the intended marriage. Furthermore, the words of the Vicar's son, concerning the rejoicing which fills the country at "the approaching nuptials", carry with them an important moral lesson for readers. The boy notes:

. . . that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person,

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXIII, p. 133.

and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.<sup>69</sup>

The reaction to the approaching nuptials, with its emphasis upon affectation and hypocrisy, contrasts the genuine benevolence and good nature of the country people who, after fire had destroyed the Primrose house, did what they could to lighten the family's distress. After providing his family with clothes and other utensils, the Vicar adds that his "honest neighbour, and his children, were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest".<sup>70</sup> For Goldsmith, it was in this "untutored benevolence", the simple, yet genuine, display of the kindnesses of rural individuals, uncorrupted by affectation and wealth, that true virtue was to be found. Ironically, in contrast to the Vicar, these simple folk are able to discern those who are, and are not, truly deserving of their benevolence and compassion.

Against this "untutored [and natural] benevolence", Goldsmith contrasted the affected good nature of those preparing for the marriage ceremony. Such behaviour was indicative of the corrupt manners of contemporary society. Too many individuals, like the naïve Moses, argued the author, wrongly associated happiness with excessive mirth, splendour and wealth. In pandering to the wealthy, such individuals not only allowed themselves to be corrupted by the behaviour of the likes of Squire Thornhill, but also allowed themselves to become figures of ridicule. Alexander Gerard, in his essay on "The Due Proportion of the Principles of Taste", discussed the same problem when he noted that:

If, through an excessive liveliness of imagination, our sentiments of excellence and deformity be too violent, they will so transport us, as to prevent judgement from scrutinising and comparing them: our taste may be sensible and feeling, but will be incorrect.

The want of due proportion is one of the most fertile causes of false taste . . . . A small disproportion is not to be censured, because it is natural: but, when it exceeds certain bounds, it is acknowledged to degenerate into a partial and distorted form.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXIII, p. 135.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXII, p. 131.

<sup>71</sup> Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London & Edinburgh: 1764), Part II, "Of the Due Proportion of the Principles of Taste", Section vii, pp. 138, 141.

In presence of the Squire, individuals neglect to apply prudence to their behaviour and judgement. Consequently, they are deceived into accepting degeneracy and false taste in lieu of real happiness and refinement. Gerard continued:

But an excessive or false refinement is equally to be avoided. It is like a weakly constitution, which is disordered by the minutest accident, or like a distempered stomach, which nauseates every thing. It has a capriciousness of mind, which begets an habit of constantly . . . discovering imaginary delicacies, . . . while one is blind to what lies perfectly open to his view.<sup>72</sup>

Goldsmith shared with Gerard the view that excessive refinement was both a sign of affectation and false values. Instead of being the basis of happiness, an affected refinement created an imaginary happiness in much the same way as the capricious mind discovered imaginary delicacies. Subsequently, those who flatter the Squire become blinded by false and ephemeral thoughts of happiness.

For the purpose of correcting the false views of Moses and, by association his readers, Goldsmith had the Vicar counsel his son about true happiness. He comments:

". . . observe this bed of straw, and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls, and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread; . . . yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O, my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendours of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile".<sup>73</sup>

In the passage, Goldsmith reinforced both the traditional Christian ideal about what constituted true happiness and the lesson advocated by James Arbuckle, who argued that the gratification of "the sensual Appetites [was] productive of none but short and unruly Gusts of Pleasure".<sup>74</sup> In this sense, Thornhill represents nothing more than another vicious character who, like those portrayed by Richardson and Fielding, is concerned solely with self-gratification. Appropriately, the author chose the image of the journey to describe the consequences for individuals of virtuous and vicious dispositions: the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Part II, "Of Refinement of Taste", Section v, pp. 119-120.

<sup>73</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. XXIII, p. 135.

<sup>74</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 27 (October 2, 1725), Volume I, p. 221.

former travelled the path to ultimate happiness; the latter travelled into oblivion. By implication, the journey motif also had didactic significance for readers; for, by journeying through the text, they could be instructed in what constituted true benevolence and virtue which, if applied to their own lives, would enable them to achieve ultimate happiness. In terms of didactic method, the journey motif allowed readers to experience situations similar to those which occurred in daily life. Thus, by using this technique, Goldsmith was following the doctrine of James Arbuckle, who had argued that individuals were "much more apt to be wrought upon by Example than Instruction . . . in inculcating the Principles of Vice, as in propagating the Maxims of Reason and Virtue."<sup>75</sup> The instruction referred to by Arbuckle was the indoctrinating method of sermons and tracts. Like Richardson and Fielding, Goldsmith realised that the novel had the power both to inspire individuals "with noble and generous Sentiments", and to reform "vitious" tastes and "Follies".<sup>76</sup>

In spite of Primrose's "false Estimate of the Worth of Things", Goldsmith distinguished his protagonist from the more vicious individuals in the text, by stressing his concern for the moral welfare of both his family and his "neighbours". The fact that this concern co-existed with the excessive passions and vanity of the Vicar allowed Goldsmith to test the sagacity of his readers in discerning the true motives of all individuals within the text. Although Primrose displays a genuine concern for the moral welfare of those who have been ostracised from society, his innocence within the confines of the prison make him appear, at least initially, a figure of ridicule. At first, his benevolence is abused by the deceitful Ephraim Jenkinson who, fearing that he may be convicted as a "coiner", affects a friendship with Primrose, in the hope that the Vicar will intercede on his behalf against his prosecutor, Mr. Flamborough. Unsuspecting of any abuse, the Vicar, overcome by the kindness of the man whom he believes "expect[s] no return", promises to send his son "to soften or totally suppress Mr. Flamborough's

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., No. 16 (July 17, 1725), Volume I, p. 136.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., No. 1 (April 3, 1725), Volume I, p. 7.

evidence".<sup>77</sup> Goldsmith satirised the good nature of the protagonist in order to teach readers how easily unsuspecting individuals could be duped by their own failure to scrutinise the motives of the vicious. Foolishly, the Vicar mistakes the sudden "change in [Jenkinson's] aspect" as a sign of repentance. In contrast, Jenkinson's offer of assistance to Primrose is motivated not by any love for his neighbour, but from what he can gain for himself. Jenkinson correctly evaluates the character of the Vicar when he describes Primrose as being "little acquainted with the world".

In his conversion of the prisoners from their wretched behaviour<sup>78</sup> to a state of repentance, readers are forced to reflect upon the genuine and disinterested concern that the Vicar shows for the moral welfare of his neighbours. After initially being forced back into his apartment, the Vicar returns heroically to reclaim his fellow prisoners from sin. He recollects that:

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.<sup>79</sup>

From a Christian perspective, the Vicar's intentions are admirable. However, corrupted by excessive passions, which they misconstrue as temporary happiness, the prisoners care little about amendment and reformation. Consequently, the Vicar observes that these individuals treat him in a reprehensible manner:

Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry amen in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dextrously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXV, p. 142.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXV, p. 141.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXVI, p. 145.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXVII, p. 148.

Nonetheless, in a practice akin to the method and expectations of the author in educating readers to pursue virtue, the Vicar, by persevering with the reformation of the vicious natures of the prisoners, finally wins their admiration and respect. Readers are forced to conclude that the social benefit achieved in the Vicar's reformation of the prisoners outweighs any significant display of vanity in his exclamation that "in less than a fortnight I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator". In his concern for the welfare of his fellow-prisoners and after having been chid by Jenkinson about his pride and resentment, negative traits which should be sacrificed "to the welfare of those who depend[ed] on [him] for support",<sup>81</sup> Primrose admits that he would "detest his own heart if he saw either pride or resentment lurking there". His admission supports the fact that he is not a vicious individual; rather, he lacks the ability to discern instances of pride and vanity within his own character. In this, Goldsmith believed that Primrose resembled many virtuous individuals who, being blind to the fact that such passions existed in themselves, found difficulty in moderating the passions and in discerning the motives of others.

In having Primrose rehabilitate the prisoners through example and instruction, the same technique employed by the author to correct the foibles and follies of readers, Goldsmith followed the lead of Henry Fielding, who had argued strongly against the severity of the British legal system. Goldsmith also believed that the legal system showed no concern for the rehabilitation of wrongdoers. He commented:

Then instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance if guilty, or new motives to virtue if innocent. And this, but not the increasing of punishments, is the way to mend a state: nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature.<sup>82</sup>

Goldsmith emphasised the notion of punishment to support Fielding's argument that, in a "refined community", penal laws were made by the rich and "laid upon the poor", and

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. XXVIII, p. 154.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume IV, Ch. XXVII, p. 149.



only served to "produce new vices, [which] call[ed] for fresh restraints".<sup>83</sup> Reinforcing his argument, he juxtaposed the reformation of the prisoners with the vicious nature of Squire Thornhill who, being protected against the law by his wealth, refused any opportunity of reformation.

Goldsmith concluded the trials of his protagonist by allowing readers an insight into the Vicar's philosophy on happiness. Although his words contain all the elements of a traditional sermon, readers should not dismiss the relevance of the tract for their own lives because, having been assimilated into the world of the text, they have been exposed to, and learned from, the same experiences as the Vicar himself. In words which echo the thoughts of Samuel Johnson, the Vicar, reflecting "on the distribution of good and evil here below", contends that, although individuals have been given much to enjoy, they still have more to suffer. The author shared, with his protagonist, the belief that no individuals were "so happy as to have nothing left to wish for"; consequently, they must put their faith in religion as the only means of affording them the greatest comfort while they lived. He continues:

Thus to the fortunate religion holds out a continuance of bliss, to the wretched a change from pain. . . . Thus, my friends, you see religion does what philosophy could never do: it shews 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 was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter.<sup>84</sup>

Goldsmith re-emphasised that happiness was not to be found in the pursuit of sensual or material pleasures, as some philosophers and writers had argued; rather, it was to be found in religion and, ultimately, Heaven, where both the poor and rich alike would be judged according to the same standards. This was the happiness, which Goldsmith advocated, that all individuals should seek, a happiness attainable only by those who pursued virtue. This view was consistent with the author's instruction in his other major works where, as in *The Citizen of the World*, he had argued that:

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVII, pp. 174-175.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXIX, pp. 161-162.

"It must, it must surely be, that this jarring discordant life is but the prelude to some future harmony; the attuned to virtue here, shall go from hence to fill up the universal choir where Tien presides in person, where there shall be no tyrants to frown, no shackles to bind, nor no whips to threaten".<sup>85</sup>

As moral instructor, Goldsmith assumed the responsibility of instructing his readers in how to attain true happiness. In his own methodical approach, he addressed the problem outlined by James Arbuckle, who had commented that:

The Happiness, and the Search after it be the Business and Study of all Mankind, and nothing is of greater Importance to us in Life, than to be rightly inform'd wherein it consists; yet such is the Weakness of the human Understanding, that tho there can be but one Way to be *happy*, there are as many different ones pursu'd, as there are unsettled Notions in the World about Matters of mere Speculation, that do not concern us at all.<sup>86</sup>

For Goldsmith, it was the duty of all philosophers and writers to instruct their learners in the pursuit of truth and virtue. When this had been done, only then, by accepting the validity of the moral instruction and acting in accordance with it, would individuals be able to achieve ultimate happiness.

Although some critics have labelled the novel's conclusion sentimental, such an hypothesis ignores the didactic and moral intentions of the author. With its aim of teaching readers moderation, prudence and the need for discernment, the novel concludes with the Primrose family making restitution for their error of judgement in relation to the character of Burchell. The Vicar continues:

"After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who, under the mask of friendship, has undone me".<sup>87</sup>

Although the Vicar is partly responsible for his own undoing, Burchell's genuinely benevolent reply, that the Vicar deserves more pity than resentment for his delusions, was used by Goldsmith to stress that readers should also adopt leniency in judging the protagonist's nature. Consequently, since the author was promoting both forgiveness and rehabilitation, it is not unnatural that Sir William Thornhill should intervene in order to protect the essentially good-natured individuals of the world from their malicious

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<sup>85</sup> Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, Volume II, Ch. XXXV, pp. 152-153.

<sup>86</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 5 (May 1, 1725), Volume I, p. 37.

<sup>87</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Volume IV, Ch. XXX, p. 164.

adversaries. Sir William's intervention, therefore, became symbolic of the protection that should be awarded the virtuous, even given their minor passions and vanities, once they had fallen victims to abuse, "falsehood, cowardice, and oppression".

Like Fielding, Goldsmith also emphasised the disloyalty that existed among characters of vicious natures. Finding that the Squire has been rebuked by his uncle, the characters who had formerly acted on his wicked instructions soon abandon their former allegiance to their master. Sir William accurately summarises the selfish natures of characters who, like his nephew, affect a fondness for public justice and yet commit every possible injustice, when he comments:

"You see in him, madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because he had courage to face her betrayer. And give me leave, madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster".<sup>88</sup>

Sir William's words, concerning his nephew, could readily be applied to any of the characters who, in the works of Richardson, Fielding or Goldsmith, pursue self-gratification at all costs. In having Primrose offer his daughter to Sir William, Goldsmith was careful enough to follow the movement that had gained considerable momentum during the middle part of the century - that women should always be consulted in relation to their choice of husband. Primrose continues:

"And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompence, she is yours, if you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her, obtain her consent, as I know you have her heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you, Sir, that I give you no small treasure, she has been celebrated for beauty it is true, but that is not my meaning, I give you up a treasure in her mind".<sup>89</sup>

Like Richardson, Goldsmith was adamant that a young woman's consent be obtained, prior to the celebration of marriage.

The advent of happiness, at the conclusion of the novel, should be distinguished from the affected happiness that concluded romances and the novels of sentiment. In *The Vicar of Wakefield*, happiness cannot be divorced from the didactic aims of the novel,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXXI, p. 174.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Volume IV, Ch. XXX, p. 166.

which emphasised that happiness would reward those who pursued virtue, even though they may have human frailties. In this sense, Goldsmith's instruction resembled that of James Arbuckle who, in 1725, had argued "that perfect and unmingled Happiness [could] never be our Portion in the present Life". He continued:

The Wickedness of the World wherein we live, is perpetually throwing Obstacles in the way of social Joy. And since all Men are conscious of some defects in their own Virtue, none of them can preserve a constant Tranquillity. . . . To pursue as far as we are able, the Paths of Truth, Goodness and Honour, is the only way to make us the happiest we can be, in whatever situation we are placed. Our Virtue cannot prevent the common Calamities and Accidents of Life, but it is the only thing that can best support us under them; and, if we escape them, what gives the truest and sweetest Relish to all our other Enjoyments: whereas a vitious Mind has nothing wherewith either to season the Blessings, or soften the Afflictions it may meet with.<sup>90</sup>

Despite their lack of prudence, the members of the Primrose family are rewarded for their maintenance of virtue in the face of adversity. Goldsmith, like many writers before him, argued that, during the course of life, no individuals could live in a state of perpetual happiness, for this ideal was achievable only in Heaven. Knowing that virtue could not prevent calamities, a point raised continuously throughout the text, and that happiness and virtue were constantly being tested by the "Wickedness of the World", Goldsmith instructed readers to pursue "the Paths of Truth, Goodness and Honour" as the only means of achieving some degree of happiness in this world. It was for this reason that the Vicar and his family were rewarded with happiness at the conclusion of the novel.

Goldsmith distinguished the happiness which concluded *The Vicar of Wakefield* from that promoted by the romances in his review, "*True Merit, True Happiness, exemplified in the entertaining and instructive Memoirs of Mr. S \_\_\_\_\_*".

Censuring those corrupt works, he commented:

Reader, if thou hast ever known such perfect happiness, as these romance-writers can so liberally dispense, thou hast enjoyed greater pleasure than has ever fallen to our lot. How deceitful are these imaginary pictures of felicity! and, we may add, how mischievous too! The young and the ignorant lose their taste of present enjoyment, by opposing to it those delusive daubings of consummate bliss they meet with in novels; and, by expecting more

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<sup>90</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 28 (October 9, 1725), Volume I, pp. 230-231.

happiness than life can give, feel but the more poignancy in all its disappointments.<sup>91</sup>

Like Richardson and Fielding, Goldsmith warned readers that the pictures of universal felicity, presented in sentimental and romantic novels, were purely invention. Furthermore, although the Primrose family would enjoy some temporary happiness, Goldsmith refused to state categorically that this felicity would be lasting; instead, the novel concluded ambiguously leaving readers in some doubt over whether the Vicar had, in fact, corrected his excessive passions. Although the educative process of moral reform had commenced for the Vicar, and by consequence for readers as well, reality dictated that all character deficiencies could not be overcome in so short a space of time. As human beings were not perfect, they had to be taught both to moderate their benevolence and passions, and to act prudently; these were lessons which could only be learned through experience. Thus, by assimilating readers into the text, Goldsmith gave them an experience of life which would aid them in their pursuit of virtue. The author's didactic aim was best summarised in the words of James Arbuckle, who commented that:

Whoever considers his own Infirmities, the Vices and Folly of far the greater Part of Mankind, the many cross Accidents which may, and every day do happen in all human Affairs, and the great number of Abuses in the World, which, by being long established as Customs, claim a sort of Prescription for their continuance, will soon be convinced, that the most consummate Virtue and Prudence are not sufficient to procure us perpetual Happiness. All our rational Enjoyments are subject to frequent Interruptions; and whatever meets with an Interruption in the Enjoyment of it, must be attended with some degree of Uneasiness.<sup>92</sup>

Although Goldsmith realised that "perpetual Happiness" could never be procured on earth, even though individuals might display "consummate Virtue and Prudence", he maintained that an adherence to virtue and prudence could bring individuals inner happiness and contentment. This was the real reward for the Vicar and his family, and the reason behind Sir William Thornhill's intervention at the end of the novel.

Goldsmith also attacked, in his comedy, the way in which "sentimental comedy" distorted the true nature of comedy by portraying human folly and frailty, not for ridicule

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<sup>91</sup> Goldsmith, "*True Merit, True Happiness, exemplified in the entertaining and instructive Memoirs of Mr. S* \_\_\_\_\_". In *The Monthly Review* (May, 1757), Volume I, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Arbuckle, op. cit., No. 28 (October 9, 1725), Volume I, p. 223.

and scorn, but for exciting the pity of audiences. In the context of sentimental drama, Young Honeywood, the protagonist in *The Good Natur'd Man*, should be pitied, rather than condemned, for his excessive and foolish benevolence. However, for Goldsmith, such an interpretation would have resulted in an abuse of the requirement that drama and literature promote the cause of virtue for readers. Goldsmith argued that sentimental comedy wrongly taught audiences to pardon, and even applaud, the faults and foibles of characters, "in consideration of their goodness of hearts".<sup>93</sup> He believed that such plays as Richard Cumberland's *The West Indian*, in which the protagonist, Belcour, established his excessive benevolence by "extending the warmth of his heart to all mankind", did more to corrupt the notion of true benevolence and virtue than they did to inculcate into the minds of theatre-goers a need to pursue a virtuous course in life.

In *The Good Natur'd Man*, Goldsmith satirised the excessive benevolence of his protagonist, in order to make him appear as he really should, a more ridiculous than admirable figure. Like the uneducated Drybone, Honeywood's fault is that he "loves all the world".<sup>94</sup> His belief in the principle of "universal benevolence", which according to Butler and Hutcheson was impossible, makes him appear foolish both to those with whom he associates and to readers. The dramatist's didactic aim was to instruct all individuals "to reserve [their] pity for real distress; [and their] friendship for true merit".<sup>95</sup> After being assimilated into the world of the play, readers should find that they are unable to "shed a tear for [Honeywood]", a requirement of sentimental drama; instead, they ought only to laugh at the character for failing to control his excessive benevolence, and for being unable to scrutinise the motives of other individuals. By using Sir William Honeywood and Jarvis, Goldsmith guided the judgement and response of readers in relation to the protagonist's benevolence. Sir William provides the test for his nephew's benevolence when he aims at having the young Honeywood arrested, in order to "let him

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<sup>93</sup> Goldsmith, Article on "Satirical Letters" in *The Monthly Review* (July, 1757), Volume I, p. 85.

<sup>94</sup> Goldsmith, *The Good Natur'd Man*, Volume V, Act I, p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume V, Act V, p. 81.

see which of his friends will come to his relief".<sup>96</sup> Like Primrose, Honeywood is blinded by the passion of excessive benevolence, which has resulted in his house being overrun with "pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants".<sup>97</sup> Refusing to listen to the advice of those who are able to discern the true motives of vicious individuals makes Honeywood appear ridiculous.

As was the case in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Goldsmith again used irony and satire as didactic instruments in undermining the "good nature" of Honeywood. On numerous occasions, the absurdity of Honeywood's excessive good nature is emphasised, such as when he is approached by the butler who, totally intoxicated himself, complains about the drunken state and corrupt morals of a fellow servant,<sup>98</sup> or when the protagonist comments, in relation to his failure to dismiss a servant caught in the act of stealing, that "it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen, let us not add to the loss of a fellow creature!"<sup>99</sup> Sir William provides readers with the didactic instruction when he notes that his nephew's weakness must be dealt with delicately, because "there are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that [one] can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue".<sup>100</sup> Sir William's comment highlights the fine line that exists between virtue and its affected opposites. Furthermore, his words apply to all individuals who, being good natured, fail to moderate their benevolence with either conscience or prudence. Rather than exciting pity, such characters become objects of ridicule, being totally incompetent in protecting themselves against the selfish and vicious designs of individuals who, like Mr. Twitch, proclaim their love of humanity and yet act in a contrary manner. Sir William, the moral educator of the play, stresses the problems associated with excessively benevolent dispositions, when he comments:

I saw with indignation the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition which, though inclined to the right, had not the courage to condemn wrong. I saw, with regret, those splendid

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act I, p. 20.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act I, p. 21.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act I, p. 23.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act I, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act I, p. 20.

errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty; your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship, but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to terror, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms; but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution.<sup>101</sup>

Goldsmith believed that many benevolent individuals misconstrued the constituents of virtue. Thus, assuming responsibility for the moral education of his readers, he argued that the ideal consisted in moderating excessive benevolence. Sir William comments:

Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They, who pretend most to this universal benevolence, are either deceivers or dupes. Men who desire to cover all their ill-nature, by a pretended regard for all; or, men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings are more earnest in pursuit of splendid, than of useful virtues.<sup>102</sup>

Like Butler, Goldsmith stressed that true benevolence should never be diffused too widely, lest it be abused or become affected. It became his aim to educate readers to distinguish virtue from its affected opposites, so that they could achieve ultimate happiness. Consequently, there seemed little doubt about the validity of Edwin Mangin's appraisal of Goldsmith's greatness as a moral instructor when, in his *Essay on Light Reading*, he commented that Goldsmith was "A MORAL INSTRUCTOR, WHOSE TALENTS WERE UNIFORMLY DIRECTED TO THE GREAT AND PRAISEWORTHY END OF COMMUNICATING TO HIS COUNTRYMEN A PARTIALITY FOR THE DICTATES OF VIRTUE".<sup>103</sup>

Goldsmith was not alone in emphasising the didactic part that literary works could play in promoting true benevolence and virtue, especially in an age in which corruption and excessive sentiment had gained a significant influence over morality. The Scottish writer, Henry Mackenzie, a great admirer of Goldsmith, also censured the sentimental novel for its perversion of virtue. Like Goldsmith, Mackenzie believed that conscience should never be separated from feeling. He argued that all emotions and passions had to

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act V, p. 80.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., Volume V, Act III, p. 51.

<sup>103</sup> Edward Mangin, *An Essay on Light Reading* (1808), reprinted in *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, p. 111.



be moderated by prudence and traditional morality. In relation to the effect of "sentimental morality", Mackenzie claimed that:

. . . the rules of our conduct should be founded on a basis more solid, if they are to guide us through the various situations of life; but the young enthusiast of sentiment and feeling is apt to despise those lessons of vulgar virtue and prudence, which would confine the movements of a soul formed to regulate itself by finer impulses. . . . [However] there are bounds beyond which virtuous feelings cease to be virtue . . . the decisions of sentiment are subject to the controul of prudence, and the ties of friendship subordinate to the obligations of duty.<sup>104</sup>

Mackenzie likened the effects produced by sentimental literature to Shaftesbury's idea of the dangers associated with "the enthusiasm of religion, [which substituted] certain impulses and feelings . . . in the place of real practical duties".<sup>105</sup> Such enthusiasm resulted in the affectation, deceit and hypocrisy of characters who, like Winbrooke in *The Man of Feeling*, feigned sensibility in order to take advantage of his victims.

For Mackenzie, virtue consisted not in passively indulging the emotions, but in actively and prudently engaging in virtuous deeds or "good works". Eric Erämetsä is correct in his hypothesis that Mackenzie's ideals were founded in the traditional principles of moral conduct which, the author felt, were being threatened, in the later part of the eighteenth century, by a perversion of sensibility.<sup>106</sup> Mackenzie shared Goldsmith's view that sensibility, when separated from the moderating powers of conscience, prudence or reason, became either affected or "sickly", and created "imaginary evils and distresses, and imaginary blessings and enjoyments, which embitter the common disappointments, and depreciate the common attainments of life".<sup>107</sup> An anonymous

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<sup>104</sup> Henry Mackenzie, *The Mirror, A Periodical Paper; Published at Edinburgh in the Years 1779-1780*, in 3 vols., (Edinburgh: Printed for W. Creech, Edinburgh; and A. Strahan, & T. Cadell, London, 1781), No. 101 (April 25, 1780), Volume III, pp. 247-248.

<sup>105</sup> Mackenzie, *The Lounger, A Periodical Paper; Published at Edinburgh in the Years 1785 and 1786*, in 3 vols., 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Strahan, & T. Cadell, London; and W. Creech, Edinburgh, 1787), No. 20 (June 18, 1785), Volume I, pp. 185-186.

<sup>106</sup> Eric Erämetsä, *A Study of the Word "Sentimental" and of other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England* (Helsinki: 1951), pp. 57-58.

<sup>107</sup> Mackenzie, *Lounger*, No. 20 (June 18, 1785), Volume I, p. 186.

writer, in the *Critical Review*, expressed the views of both Goldsmith and Mackenzie, when he wrote, some years later, that:

When indulged beyond the bounds of reason it [sensibility] degenerates into weakness; when affected, it is absurd; and when directed to improper objects, extremely dangerous. This word, like 'sentiment', has of late years been often strangely perverted, and applied to gild the violation of the most sacred duties. Excess of sensibility, or a sentimental affection, is often an apology for a young lady's elopement from a harsh father, or that of a wife from a stupid husband. 'Delicate feelings' become the substitute for those of virtue; and we are too often taught by the prevalence of fashion and delusions of sophistry, to interest ourselves in the calamities of guilt, as in the affliction of innocence.<sup>108</sup>

In spite of comments which assert that *The Man of Feeling* was written to promote the novel of sentiment, Mackenzie's work was, in fact, didactic in its aims. His technique was to present readers with some excerpts from the life of his protagonist, long since dead, without any subjective commentary, other than a brief warning that Harley's "education . . . had been but indifferently attended to".<sup>109</sup> Readers were left with the task of decoding the meaning and instruction inherent in the novel.

Harley's self-regulated education fails to prepare him adequately for the world. Being unable to moderate his passions and apply the prudence necessary in discerning the deceitful and hypocritical natures of other individuals, Harley becomes little more than "a child in the drama of the world", a symbol of one extreme side of human nature. The protagonist personifies the doctrines of Shaftesbury and Whichcote, who argued that all individuals, when left to their own native impulses, were essentially good. However, unlike the two philosophers, Harley fails to acknowledge that many individuals have allowed selfish and vicious passions to usurp their good nature. Mr. Sedley emphasises the didactic nature of the text, when he comments that:

\* \* \* \* 'But as to the higher part of education, Mr. Harley, the culture of the Mind; - let the feelings be awakened, let the heart be brought forth to its object, placed in the light in which nature would have it stand, and its decisions will ever be just. The world  
Will smile, and smile, and be a villain;

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<sup>108</sup> Anonymous, Review of *An Essay on Sensibility*, in the *Critical Review*, No. LXVIII (London: 1789).

<sup>109</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Edited with an Introduction by Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Ch. XII, p. 12.

and the youth, who does not suspect its deceit, will be content to smile with it. - Men will put on the most forbidding aspect in nature, and tell of the beauty of virtue.<sup>110</sup>

It is this inability to detect the vicious natures of other individuals, or even to suspect that there is deceit in the world, that makes Harley appear a naïf "in this world of semblance"<sup>111</sup> and, by consequence, a fool in the eyes of readers.

With David Hume and Adam Smith, Mackenzie believed that individuals could commiserate with the sufferings of their fellow creatures only on the basis of empathy. In opposition to the sentimentalists, Mackenzie argued that individuals could not actively appreciate the distresses of others, unless they had simultaneously experienced those distresses. Thus, *The Man of Feeling* carried, in its didactic method, the implied irony that any direct sympathy shared with the sufferings of others was affected; for, no individuals could share exactly the same sensations as their fellow creatures. The concept was best expressed in the words of Adam Smith, who argued that:

Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did and never can carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. It is the impressions of our senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy.<sup>112</sup>

Smith's words, in addition to emphasising the corrupt way in which the novel of sentiment promoted affected feelings between individuals, undermined the doctrine upon which it was based. The same point had also been emphasised by Alexander Gerard who, in his *Essay on Taste*, had commented that a "sensibility of heart . . . fits a man for being easily moved, and for readily catching, as by infection, any passion that a work is fitted to excite".<sup>113</sup> When Harley visits Bedlam, his instructor teaches him the same lesson. He comments:

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<sup>110</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Ch. XL, p. 118.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch XXXVI, p. 100.

<sup>112</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 4th edition (London: 1774), Part I, Section I, Ch. I, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Alexander Gerard, *Essay on Taste* (London: 1764), p. 48.

'But delusive ideas, Sir, are the motives of the greatest part of mankind, and a heated imagination the power by which their actions are incited: the world, in the eye of a philosopher, may be said to be a large madhouse.'<sup>114</sup>

Although Harley acknowledges the truth in his conductor's assertion, and replies that "the passions of men are temporary madnesses; and sometimes very fatal in their effects", he still fails to apply the instruction to his own life.

Gerard Barker claims that "Harley's innocence evokes our respect rather than our contempt because we associate it with his idealism and benevolence".<sup>115</sup> He supports his claim by drawing upon Adam Smith's conception that:

There is a helplessness in the character of extreme humanity which more than any thing interests our pity. There is nothing in itself which renders it either ungraceful or disagreeable. We only regret that it is unfit for the world, because the world is unworthy of it, and because it must expose the person who is endowed with it as a prey to the perfidy and ingratitude of insinuating falsehood, and to a thousand pains and uneasinesses, which, of all men, he the least deserves to feel, and which generally too he is, of all men, the least capable of supporting.<sup>116</sup>

Although readers may share some of Smith's pity for the man of extreme humanity, the didactic aim of the novel was to highlight the consequences for those who either refused, or were unable, to apply moderation or prudence to their own behaviour. As is the case with Miss Walton, Mackenzie realised that all individuals had to be taught to base their benevolence on principle, rather than on feeling alone.<sup>119</sup>

Harley's journey to London exposes the deficient education of the protagonist. In his first encounter with the beggar and his dog, the protagonist, refusing to scrutinise the character of the man, immediately offers him monetary assistance. The narrator subtly undermines the benevolence of Harley in two ways: firstly, by informing readers that he "had destined sixpence for him", well before he had been approached by the beggar; and secondly, by allowing the beggar to emphasise that his present situation is based upon idleness, and his existence upon the excessive generosity of the benevolent. In relating the beggar's history, Mackenzie not only provided readers with a realistic presentation of

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<sup>114</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Ch. XX, p. 32.

<sup>115</sup> Gerard A. Barker, *Henry Mackenzie* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), p. 38.

<sup>116</sup> Smith, op. cit., Part I, Section II, Ch. IV, pp. 63-64.

<sup>119</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Ch. XIII, p. 16.

the psychological process of beggars, but he also offered them some insight into the ways in which vicious characters exploited the affected natures of other individuals. Ironically, he continues:

I told all my misfortunes truly, but they were seldom believed; and the few who gave me a halfpenny as they passed, did it with the shake of the head, and an injunction, not to trouble them with a long story. In short, I found that people don't care to give alms without some security for their money; a wooden leg or a withered arm . . . so I changed my plan, and, instead of telling my own misfortunes, began to prophesy happiness to others. This I found by much the better way: folks will always listen when the tale is their own; . . . for every one is anxious to hear what they wish to believe; and they who repeat it to laugh at it when they have done, are generally more serious than their hearers are apt to imagine. . . . My trade, indeed, is none of the honestest; yet people are not much cheated neither, who give a few halfpence for a prospect of happiness.<sup>117</sup>

Mackenzie's tone would suggest that he was far less critical of the dissembling nature of the beggar than he was of the corrupt moral standards of the vain and hypocritical individuals, who rewarded the beggar's deceit and flattery. From a moral perspective, therefore, the beggar seems a more virtuous character in his willingness to acknowledge his dishonesty, than the others who seek flattery. Although Harley does not possess the same vanities as those who seek the services of the beggar, he is still satirised for both his excessive benevolence and his inability to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving. Even when Harley seems likely to apply prudence to his benevolence, he is once more overcome by passion. The narrator continues:

Harley had drawn a shilling from his pocket; but virtue bade him consider on whom he was going to bestow it. - Virtue held back his arm: - but a milder form, a young sister of virtue's, not so severe as virtue, nor so serious as pity, smiled upon him: His fingers lost their compression; - nor did virtue offer to catch the money as it fell. It had no sooner reached the ground than the watchful cur (a trick he had been taught) snapped it up; and . . . delivered it immediately into the hands of his master.<sup>118</sup>

Ironically, even the beggar's dog is better educated and more able to discern the natures of human beings than the protagonist, for it never misses the opportunity of retrieving, for its master, money offered indiscriminately by individuals of unmoderated benevolence. There are numerous other examples of Harley's excessive benevolence exhibited

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIV, pp. 22-23.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIV, pp. 22-23.

throughout the text, such as his placing, after being gripped by tears at hearing the history of a girl committed to Bedlam, "a couple of guineas into [her keeper's] hand", without enquiring into the trustworthiness of his character,<sup>119</sup> and his donating "a few shillings" to a "footman", who pretends "acquaintance with men of quality".<sup>120</sup>

Mackenzie adopted a didactic technique similar to that used by Henry Fielding, in which he used the headings of chapters both to instruct readers in their pursuit of virtue, and to undermine the "sickly sensibility" of his protagonist. For example, the author begins chapter twenty-five with the ironical heading, "*His skill in physiognomy*". Until this point in the novel, however, readers had only been exposed to Harley's inability to distinguish physiognomy. After learning that he has been rebuked by his aunt for his inability to discern character from physiognomy, readers are informed that Harley assists a man who, lamenting his "want of silver", is unable to provide for a beggar. Ironically, despite arguing that "he never saw a face promise more honesty", Harley is fleeced of his money.<sup>121</sup> In much the same way, he is deceived later by a prostitute who, affecting gratitude and pity, admits that "to bestow [generosity] on [her] is to take it from the virtuous".<sup>122</sup> Ironically, the man of feeling, overlooking the truth in the woman's admission, that she has caused her own misery, searches for some means of "shared feeling" which, can activate his benevolent passions. For such a person, the label, "CULLY", provides an apt description. Indeed, as readers should be aware, Harley must be taught "to be a little more cautious for the future".<sup>123</sup>

For Harley, with his claim that "to calculate the chances of deception is too tedious a business for the life of man",<sup>124</sup> happiness can only be based on acts of generosity. However, according to Mackenzie and Goldsmith, this was not enough; for, when individuals failed to apply moderation or prudence to benevolence, happiness could

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Ch. XX, p. 35.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Ch. XIX, p. 28.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVII, p. 52.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVI, p. 50.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVII, p. 53.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p. 53.

become elusive. In order to emphasise the necessity of applying moderation or prudence to benevolence, Mackenzie drew upon the technique, used successfully by Fielding, Johnson and Goldsmith, of contrasting his protagonist's attitudes and behaviour with those of a misanthropist. This character, formerly a man of excessive and impetuous passions himself, vehemently denies the existence of any form of truth, "*honour and politeness*" in society. Arguing that the behaviour and manners of individuals are regulated by a deficient moral education and a universal selfishness, like that of which La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes and Mandeville wrote, he continues:

"Your very nurseries are seminaries of falsehood; and what is called Fashion in manhood completes the system of avowed insincerity. Mankind, in the gross, is a gaping monster, that loves to be deceived, and has seldom been disappointed: nor is their vanity less fallacious to your philosophers, who adopt modes of truth to follow them through the paths of error, and defend paradoxes merely to be singular in defending them. . . .

"Indeed, the education of your youth is every way preposterous: you waste at school years in improving talents, without ever having spent an hour in discovering them; one promiscuous line of education is followed, without regard to genius, capacity, or probable situation in the commonwealth. From this bear-garden of the pedagogue, a raw unprincipled boy is turned loose upon the world to travel; without any ideas but those of improving his dress at Paris, or starting into taste by gazing on some paintings at Rome. . . .

"Nor are your females trained to any more useful purpose: they are taught, by the very rewards which their nurses propose for good behaviour, by the first thing like a jest which they hear from every male visitor of the family, that a young woman is a creature to be married; and when they are grown somewhat older, are instructed, that it is the purpose of marriage to have the enjoyment of pin-money, and the expectation of a jointure".<sup>125</sup>

In his attack upon the education of youth, the misanthropist continued the arguments, begun with Locke in his *Treatise on Education*, and advanced by Defoe, Chesterfield, Sheridan and Richardson himself, of those who had blamed the corrupt standard of morality in contemporary society upon a deficient form of moral education. Far from being baffled by the meaning of the words of the misanthropist, Harley too comments upon the negative effects that "hackneyed vice", sensual pleasure, and wealth have had on "private morals, and public virtue". Like Goldsmith and other eighteenth-century writers, Mackenzie blamed a deficient moral education and the effects of luxury and wealth for corrupting the values of society.

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. XXI, pp. 39-40.

The excessive pessimism of the misanthropist provides readers with the other extreme to Harley's optimistic belief in the universal goodness of human nature. The author's moral instruction, however, took the middle course; for, he argued that the best means of achieving happiness was for individuals to moderate all their endeavours and pursuits. In much the same way as Harley's character is deficient in his inability to recognise any vicious designs in the natures of other individuals, so too is the character of the misanthropist deficient in being unable to recognise, as Shaftesbury and Butler had argued, that individuals do act benevolently for the sake of virtue itself. Although there is some truth in the misanthropist's assertion that the actions and words of individuals are motivated by affectation, pretence and vanity, he is wrong in his generalisation that "man is an animal equally selfish and vain".<sup>126</sup> The misanthropist complements the didactic nature of the text by completing the continuum upon which readers are to judge the natures of all other individuals both within and without the text. This process was aimed at forcing readers to examine carefully the characters of all individuals, so that they could best discern their true motives.

Mackenzie followed the misanthropist's claim about the corrupt standard of moral education in youths with the didactic story of Miss Atkins who, under the strict moral guidance of her mother, "had been bred from her infancy in the strictest principles of religion" and morality.<sup>127</sup> After the death of her mother, however, her moral instruction is ignored. She notes that:

"My mother's books were left behind at the different quarters we removed to, and my reading was principally confined to plays, novels, and those poetical descriptions of the beauty of virtue and honour, which the circulating libraries easily afforded.

"As I was generally reckoned handsome, and the quickness of my parts extolled by all our visitors, my father had a pride in showing me to the world. I was young, giddy, open to adulation, and vain of those talents which acquired it".<sup>128</sup>

Following Richardson and Fielding, Mackenzie blamed the moral demise of Miss Atkins upon the affected presentation of virtue depicted in current literature and romances. Such

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXI, p. 42.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p. 55.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p. 55.



pieces of work, when combined with the influence of a vain parent, could easily corrupt the innocence of children and lead them to seek lives of affectation and vanity. Alexander Bicknell, in *The Benevolent Man; or the History of Mr. Belville*, put the problem in the following way:

It is too much the prevailing opinion of the age, and inculcated by the catastrophe of every play and novel lately published, that riches, honours, and pleasures are the only good things this life affords; the only rewards that are worth seeking after. . . .<sup>129</sup>

Having lost sight of the path of virtue, Miss Atkins' vanity makes her easy prey for the men of the world who, like Winbrooke, proclaims her "superiority over the young ladies of [her] village", in order to rob the young girl of her virtue. She recalls that:

"He asked my opinion of every author, of every sentiment, with that submissive diffidence, which shewed an unlimited confidence in my understanding. I saw myself revered, as a superior being, by one whose judgement my vanity told me was not likely to err; preferred by him to all the other visitors of my sex, whose fortunes and rank should have entitled them to a much higher degree of notice: I saw their little jealousies at the distinguished attention he paid me; it was gratitude, it was pride, it was love! Love which had made too fatal a progress in my heart, before any declaration on his part should have warranted a return: but I interpreted every look of attention, every expression of compliment, to the passion I imagined him inspired with, and imputed to his sensibility that silence which was the effect of art and design. At length, however, he took an opportunity of declaring his love: he now expressed himself in such ardent terms, that prudence might have suspected their sincerity; but prudence is rarely found in the situation I had been unguardedly led into; . . . In short, . . . I fell a prey to his artifices".<sup>130</sup>

Mackenzie re-emphasised the dire consequences for young women who, abandoning prudence and reason, allowed their passions to govern their behaviour and manners. The deficient moral education of Miss Atkins is responsible for her inability to discern the motives beneath the flattery of her conqueror, in much the same way as Harley's deficient education makes him blind to the attacks upon his benevolence. Although the characters may be poles apart in relation to the notion of "good nature", Mackenzie's lesson was still the same, that those who abandoned prudence or reason in moderating the passions

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<sup>129</sup> Alexander Bicknell, *The Benevolent Man; or, the History of Mr. Belville*, (1775; rpt. London: Printed for J. Lewis etc., 1796), Volume I, Ch. I, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Ch. XXVIII, pp. 57-58.

would ultimately fall victims to the abuses of vicious individuals. This instruction formed an integral part of the didactic purpose of *The Man of Feeling*.

Miss Atkins suffers the same consequences as all women who, abandoning prudence, allow their passions to reign unchecked; she falls into the state of wretchedness offered by prostitution. Even after having been duped by Winbrooke, Emily Atkins is still unable to discern the real motives upon which vicious characters base their affected benevolence. She, for example, mistakes the contrived good nature of the "artful procuress" as a sign of genuine compassion. For Mackenzie's readers, however, the description of the state of wretchedness into which the young woman had fallen, coming as it does from her own lips, creates a far more disturbing and realistic picture of the horrors associated with the woman's degradation than that presented by earlier writers of the didactic novel. She informs readers that:

"Amidst all the horrors of such a state, surrounded with wretches totally callous, lost alike to humanity and to shame, think, Mr. Harley, think what I endured: nor wonder that I at last yielded to the solicitations of that miscreant I had seen at her house, and sunk to the prostitution which he tempted. But that was happiness compared to what I have suffered since . . . Oh! did the daughters of virtue know our sufferings! did they see our hearts torn with anguish amidst the affectation of gaiety which our faces are obliged to assume; our bodies tor-tured by disease, our minds with that consciousness which they cannot lose!"<sup>131</sup>

Although Harley is overcome by sympathy for the young woman and is unable to control his own feelings, it was not Mackenzie's purpose that readers should abandon their powers of discernment in the same way. Although it is true that individuals must bear their misfortunes with patience, alert readers should recall that the girl, being unable to moderate her passions, had contributed to her own state of wretchedness. Lest they too abandon their discernment and imitate the protagonist, Mackenzie instructed readers, through Mr. Atkins' rebuke of Harley,<sup>132</sup> that they could never share sensations identical to those suffered by the object of their distress.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p. 65.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Ch. XXIX, p. 69. The father says to Harley, "You have a feeling heart, Mr. Harley; I bless it that it has saved my child; but you were never a father; a father, torn by that most dreadful of calamities, the dishonour of a child he doated on!"

Despite erroneous claims that *The Man of Feeling* contained no philosophical or didactic purpose, and that it was nothing more than "an entertaining book that would bring sighs to the palpitating heart",<sup>133</sup> Mackenzie concluded the novel with the Fragment, "A Pupil", designed to consolidate the novel's didactic instruction. Mackenzie had the old man, Sedley, instruct both the protagonist and readers that they should be wary of the affected and deceitful manners of the world. As with the other authors examined in this dissertation, Mackenzie aimed at teaching readers to scrutinise carefully the motives that existed beneath the actions and words of individuals with whom they came into contact, lest they be duped by affected virtue. At the same time, Mackenzie's message was an optimistic one; for, as was the case with Shaftesbury and Butler, he recognised that most individuals were, essentially, good natured. Where good nature had been subordinated to more vicious instincts, Mackenzie blamed this upon a deficient moral upbringing.

Sedley's story validated the author's claims that all individuals should have a moral guide, and that they should learn to distinguish true virtue from its affected opposites. Sedley is fortunate in that, during his travels abroad, he has been accompanied by a man of sound moral principles. Mackenzie used the friendship between the young man and Respino to emphasise to readers how easy it was to form bonds of friendship, which were based solely on affectation. Like the excessively benevolent Harley, the uneducated young man, lacking the power of discernment, fails to detect the hypocrisy and viciousness of Respino. It is only after he accompanies his tutor, Mountford, to a prison, where lay "a wretch, sunk in poverty, starving, [and] stretched on a sick bed",<sup>134</sup> that Sedley learns about the true nature of characters who, like Respino, attribute to themselves the title "Man of Honour". Disgusted at learning the truth behind his friend's affected good nature, Sedley, on leaving Milan, writes:

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<sup>133</sup> R. Peter Burnham, *Social Ethos in The Man of Feeling*, in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Volume XVIII, ed. G. Ross Roy (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1983), pp. 134-135.

<sup>134</sup> Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, Ch. XL, p. 122.

"Accept of my thanks for the civilities I have received from you and your family. As to the friendship with which you were pleased to honour me, the prison, which I have just left, has exhibited a scene to cancel it for ever".<sup>135</sup>

Although Sedley has reacted admirably in taking leave, the author's didactic instruction can be fully comprehended only after examining the complete story. The young Sedley, unsuspecting of deceit and unable to discern the true motives behind the various façades of vicious individuals, is content to smile with the villains. However, unlike other characters who allow their own good natures to be usurped by the deceit and hypocrisy of those with whom they come into contact, Sedley's own moral demise is avoided because of the efforts of his tutor, a man conversant with the corrupt behaviour and manners of the vicious.

In the same way as Mountford instructs Sedley, Mackenzie assumed the didactic task of moral educator for readers of the text. While permitting them to retain their autonomy in judging the characters and situations within the text, the author was never so far removed as not to be able to provide readers with some moral guidance or instruction. Although Harley is doomed, partly because of his inability to restrain his excessive sensibility, readers should conclude their reading of the text in a much more enlightened manner, knowing full well that "To virtue has the Supreme Director of all things assigned rewards enough even here to fix its attachment".<sup>136</sup> Like Alexander Bicknell, Mackenzie believed that:

. . . we often see many worthy, upright, and virtuous men, who appear deserving a better fate, finish a life of uninterrupted misfortune, overwhelmed with poverty and wretchedness, whilst the wicked and undeserving pass their days in ease and affluence, as if the peculiar favourites of heaven.<sup>137</sup>

Mackenzie realised that individuals of essentially good nature, who failed to scrutinise the motives of other individuals and moderate their benevolence, would not always be rewarded with materialistic and earthly happiness. In real life, such rewards, administered in many novels as poetic justice, were not possible; consequently, they

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., Ch. XL, p. 124.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., Ch. XL, p. 130.

<sup>137</sup> Alexander Bicknell, *The Benevolent Man*, Volume II, Ch. XXIII, p. 2.

should have no place in the novel of didactic instruction. Like Bicknell, Mackenzie stressed that, when overcome by misery and misfortune:

nothing but a steady faith in a future state of existence, and an unshaken confidence in the goodness of the Almighty, can support us under the troubles, the perplexities, and the miseries, that far the greater part of mankind experience.<sup>138</sup>

With Goldsmith, Mackenzie believed that individuals, despite all their sufferings at the hands of the vicious, should never lose their confidence in the "goodness of the Almighty". Thus, Mackenzie's moral instruction, which aimed at teaching readers to moderate excessive benevolence and scrutinise the real motives of all individuals, was founded on the same moral values as those propounded by the other writers of the mid eighteenth-century didactic novel examined in this dissertation. This instruction was expressed best in the words of Alexander Bicknell, who asserted:

"Oh never let the virtuous mind despair: for, though the rewards of virtue may, and generally are, deferred till the curtain of life is dropped, yet they are not the less certain".<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Ch. XXXV, p. 211.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Volume II, Ch. XXXVI, p. 225.

### Conclusion.

The mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction was innovative in the way that it deviated from the existing didactic method of sermons and tracts in order to inculcate virtue on the minds of readers. Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and, later, Mackenzie all became exponents of this literary form, which was aimed specifically at morally educating readers, by assimilating them into the text. If one were to apply to these writers Allan Bloom's claim, that every educational system should aim at producing "a certain kind of human being" and have "a moral goal that it tries to attain",<sup>1</sup> then it must be said that they belonged to a movement which, seeing the corrupt state of contemporary morality, aimed not only at instructing readers in how to pursue virtue and avoid vice, but also at teaching them how to moderate virtue with prudence, if they were to avoid being abused by the more vicious individuals in society. These writers were not the only moral educators of the age; there were others, such as Johnson, Smollett and Sterne, who also attacked the depravity in contemporary behaviour and manners. The selected writers, however, were chosen because their works best displayed the developmental process in the moral education of readers over the period, 1740-1780.

Like Fielding and Goldsmith, Tobias Smollett, a "serious and moral satirist" himself, also aimed at promoting virtue, attacking vice, and warning readers of the necessity in applying prudence to all affairs. Commenting on eighteenth-century London,

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<sup>1</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 26.

in *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, Smollett reinforced the views of the writers examined in this dissertation, when he noted that:

London . . . was a receptacle of iniquity, where an honest unsuspecting man was every day in danger of falling a sacrifice to craft; where innocence was exposed to continual temptations, and virtue eternally persecuted by malice and slander; where every thing was ruled by caprice and corruption, and merit utterly discouraged and despised.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of those who labelled his works as debauched, licentious,<sup>3</sup> and obscene,<sup>4</sup> Smollett argued that it was the duty of all writers to instruct readers against "the sordid and vicious disposition of the world". Deviating from Shaftesbury's firm belief in the theory of the innate goodness of human nature, Smollett recognised that, in addition to the virtuous, society comprised individuals who, like Lovelace and Blifil, were totally malevolent. More importantly, however, he realised that many individuals were inherently good, but had allowed their selfish passions to dominate reason. These individuals, among whom were included readers, he sought to correct by using a form of satire which was both "entertaining and universally improving", and designed to bring "every incident home to life".<sup>5</sup>

Realising that individuals could not be morally educated by their simply reading a set of maxims, Smollett proposed that the moral education of readers be based upon an association with the protagonist, for this should lead to the heart being improved by the example.<sup>6</sup> In his preface to *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, he claimed:

A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of a uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (Dublin: 1783), Volume II, p. 316.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Mangin, *Essay on Light Reading* (London: 1808), pp. 31, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1975), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1905), Preface, p. 9.

In this sense, Smollett's method of instruction conformed with the traditional approach to moral education in that he not only promoted the "publick good" and tried to produce a certain kind of human being, but also provided a story which was crucial to the moral instruction that he was advocating. Declaring that it was his purpose both to "raise up a virtuous character" and to help readers "learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they were continually surrounded in the paths of life", Smollett continued:

If I have not succeeded in my endeavours to unfold the mysteries of fraud, to instruct the ignorant, and entertain the vacant; if I have failed in my attempts to subject folly to ridicule, and vice to indignation; . . . I have, at least, adorned virtue with honour and applause, [and] branded iniquity with reproach and shame.<sup>8</sup>

As was the case with Fielding, in particular, it was Smollett's aim to "arm as well as [he could], the honest, undesigning, open-hearted man", against hypocrisy.

Like Fielding, Smollett argued that all individuals, to avoid being abused or duped by hypocrisy, should scrutinise the motives of other individuals on the basis of their actions rather than either their reputations or words. In order to warn readers against vicious individuals, Smollett presented them with numerous examples of characters with vicious dispositions, among whom he included Fathom, an individual not only "calculated by Nature to dupe even the most cautious, [to] gratify his appetites",<sup>9</sup> but one who "seldom or never erred in his observations on the human heart".<sup>10</sup> Through the figure of Fathom, Smollett enlightened readers about how easy it was for the vicious to deceive the unwary. The protagonist, for example, has no difficulty in deceiving Renaldo, who allows his benevolence to overcome reason, nor does he have any difficulty in deceiving the women with whom he associates, such as when he throws himself at the feet of the "adorable Wilhelmina" in order to enflame her passion. In reply to her ironic comment that "men were created for the ruin of [her] sex", Fathom exclaims:

"Ruin! . . . talk not of ruin and Wilhelmina! let these terms be for ever parted, far as the east and west asunder! Grant me, kind Heaven, a more propitious boon; direct her genial regards to one whose love is without example, and whose constancy is unparalleled. Bear witness to my

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Preface, pp. 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Ch. V, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Ch. VII, p. 42.



constancy and faith, ye verdant hills, ye fertile plains, ye shady groves, ye purling streams; and if I prove untrue, ah! let me never find a solitary willow, or a bubbling brook, by help of which I may be enabled to put a period to my wretched life".<sup>11</sup>

The narrator informs readers that Wilhelmina, "before her passion could obtain a legal gratification, surrendered to his wish". By failing to scrutinise the motives of other individuals, Smollett believed that society aided the hypocrite. Even when Fathom wins fame as a doctor, ironically on the basis of malpractice, the narrator observes that "there is generally some person present, who, either from an affectation of singularity, or envy to the accusers, undertakes the defence [of those who have no real merit to depend upon], and endeavours to invalidate the articles of his impeachment, until he is heated by altercation, and hurried into more effectual measures for his advantage".<sup>12</sup> Such individuals, claimed Smollett, allured many imprudent and unsuspecting admirers, who supported the continuance of their lives of deceit and hypocrisy. Although Smollett agreed with Shaftesbury's doctrine, that virtue should be pursued for its own sake, he sought to alert readers to the pitfalls associated with excessive benevolence. Like Fielding, who had Allworthy advocate that Blifil be punished even against Jones' professions of compassion, Smollett also argued that justice had to be exacted upon evildoers, if society were to correct, and eventually, eradicate acts of viciousness. Anticipating the doctrine of Oliver Goldsmith, he asserted that moderation and prudence were necessary in all things, especially acts of benevolence. For this reason, he had the benevolent prisoner, Felton, inform Sir Launcelot Greaves:

God forbid . . . that I should attempt to thwart your charitable intention; but this, my good sir, is no object - she has many resources. Neither should we number the clamorous beggar among those who really feel distress; he is generally gorged with bounty misapplied. The liberal hand of charity should be extended to modest want that pines in silence, encountering cold, nakedness, and hunger and every species of distress.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Ch. XII, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Ch. LIII, pp. 329-330.

<sup>13</sup> Tobias Smollett, *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, in *The Collected Works of Tobias George Smollett*, in 11 volumes (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1925-26), Volume XI, p. 236.

Like Fielding and Goldsmith, Smollett attempted to expose, for the moral education of readers, the "malice, treachery, and dissimulation" inherent in contemporary society.

Samuel Johnson was also critical of the corrupt standard of human behaviour and manners of contemporary society. He advocated that readers, through the medium of the narrative, be taught the means by which they could pursue virtue and avoid the snares of vice. In *The Rambler*, for example, he claimed that:

The depravity of mankind is so easily discovered, that nothing but the desert or the cell can exclude it from notice. . . . They whom their abstraction from common occurrences hinders from seeing iniquity, will quickly have their attention awakened by feeling it. Even he who ventures not into the world, may learn its corruption in his closet. . . . He that endeavours to live for the good of others, must always be exposed to the arts of them who live only for themselves, unless he is taught by timely precepts the caution required in common transactions, and shewn at a distance the pitfalls of treachery.<sup>14</sup>

In order to help readers see through the base arts of the vicious and avoid abuse, Johnson employed the journey motif. This didactic technique prepared readers for some of the situations with which they might come into contact in the real world. Through his authorial intrusions into the text, Johnson acted as the moral guide for readers in much the same way as Imlac provided moral guidance for Rasselas, Spatter for David Simple, and Drybone for Altangi. For Johnson, the function of the moral guide was to personify the faculty of reason, which was required if individuals were to pursue virtue and attain eternal happiness.

Samuel Johnson summarised the moral duty of novelists in *The Rambler*. Like the writers discussed in this dissertation, Johnson attacked the way in which the romances had portrayed corrupt manners and excessive passions as normal. In contrast, he argued that novelists should write books which "served as lectures of conduct and introductions into life" for the young, the ignorant, and the idle. He continued:

The purpose of these writings is surely not only to show mankind, but to provide that they may be seen hereafter with less hazard; to teach the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence, without infusing any wish for that superiority with which the betrayer flatters his vanity; to give the power of counteracting fraud, without the temptation to practice it; to initiate youth

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<sup>14</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, No. 175 (November 19, 1751), ed. W. J. Bate and A. Strauss, Volume V, pp. 160, 162.

by mock encounters in the art of necessary defense [*sic*]; and to increase prudence without impairing virtue.<sup>15</sup>

Disapproving of Fielding's method of instruction, Johnson, advocating a method similar to that used by Richardson, insisted that novels should exhibit "the most perfect idea of virtue, of virtue not angelical, nor above probability, for what we cannot credit we shall never imitate, but the highest and purest that humanity can reach".<sup>16</sup> However, this form of moral instruction which used exemplary characters, such as Pamela whose virtuous traits were beyond human attainment, could prove, if used incorrectly, to be as deficient a method of education as that employed by the writers of sermons and tracts. By the middle of the eighteenth century, many readers had become disillusioned with the presentation of exemplary characters, whose level of virtue was unattainable; instead, they sought a form of moral instruction which preserved their autonomy in decoding the moral meaning of the text, and which also provided them with instances of virtue that were attainable. It was this didactic technique, of assimilating readers into the world of the text and forcing them to use their sagacity in decoding the moral instruction, that distinguished the works of writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction from the works of writers of sermons, tracts and instruction manuals.

In terms of content, writers of didactic novels promoted the cause of virtue. Rejecting the doctrine of selfishness advocated by Hobbes and Mandeville, these writers argued that much of the corruption inherent in contemporary society had resulted from a deficient moral education. John Gilbert Cooper, writing in 1757, summarised the problem in this way:

Among the many ingenious Essays, that have been written upon Education, it has often surprised me, not to find greater Stress laid upon the Danger of contracting ill Habits, which, once acquired, survive the Passions which originally created them, and even govern Reason herself, after those rebellious Subjects have been brought to Obedience.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, No. 4 (March 31, 1750), Volume III, pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume III, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> John Gilbert Cooper, *Essays concerning Taste, and Essays on Similar and other Subjects* (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1757), Essay II, "On the Power of Habit", p. 145.

Cooper argued that writers had the same duty towards readers as parents had towards their children; they had to "restrain the Inclination [to] deviate from virtue". Accepting Forbes' analogy that the passions, when they broke loose were "like Hurricanes and Eruptions of Fire",<sup>18</sup> Cooper claimed that "nothing would so much contribute to the Fame and Fortune" of writers than an "Attachment to Virtue" in their works.<sup>19</sup> In reply to Brown's question concerning the "Foundations [upon which] Mankind [was] *obliged* to the Practice of [Virtue]", writers of the novel of moral instruction argued that "to pursue as far as we are able, the Paths of Truth, Goodness and Honour"<sup>20</sup> was the duty of all individuals. William Paley, writing later in the century, defined the form of virtue which these writers were advocating in the following way:

Virtue is, *"the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*" According to this definition, "the good of mankind" is the subject, the "will of God," the rule, and everlasting happiness," the motive of human virtue. Virtue has been divided by some, into *benevolence, prudence, fortitude, and temperance*. *Benevolence* proposes good ends; *prudence* suggests the best means of attaining them; *fortitude* enables us to encounter the difficulties, dangers, and discouragements, that stand in our way in the pursuit of these ends; *temperance* repels and overcomes the passions that obstruct it.<sup>21</sup>

Virtuous individuals, therefore, observed "the Principles of Virtue . . . as a great Instrument for preserving some Peace and good Order in the World",<sup>22</sup> and for providing them with a means of attaining everlasting happiness. Joseph Highmore best described the didactic aim of writers in promoting virtue, when he claimed that:

Virtue is, in general, the road to happiness; and that a virtuous man must necessarily be more happy, than a vicious man in the same circumstances; yet it is also certain, that there are many particular cases, in which a man does, and must, suffer for adhering to virtue, and might sometimes avoid such present evil, by acting differently; but it does by no means follow from hence, that in these instances, he may lawfully quit the path of virtue; and forfeit the character he has hitherto maintained, and lose the credit and

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<sup>18</sup> Alexander Forbes, *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects* (London: 1734), "A View of the Human Faculties", Dialogue I, Part IV, p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, op. cit., Letter VIII, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> James Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays*, No. 28 (October 9, 1725), Volume I, p 231.

<sup>21</sup> William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (London: Printed for R. Faulder, 1785), Book I, Ch. VII, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> Forbes, op. cit., "Two Discourses on Decency", in *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects*, Discourse II, p. 234.

influence of a man of probity, by such weak and unsteady conduct. And indeed, according to the common acceptation of the words, virtue that exposes not a man to suffering deserves little praise or reward. Virtue ought never to shrink, or give way in the least, nor does, without forfeiting so much of its value: but then these very instances, in which a man suffers for his virtue, are as necessary to his *ultimate* happiness, as such which produce *present* happiness are to that; else it would be right to quit virtue in these instances; for happiness is the end proposed in virtue itself.<sup>23</sup>

Following Highmore, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie all instructed readers that, after they had distinguished virtue from its affected opposites, they should never shrink from its maintenance. These writers believed that "the more virtuous [individuals became] in all respects, the more happiness [they would] enjoy". Virtue brought with it a "tranquillity and peace of mind" which only the virtuous could have, and "of which no power on earth [could] rob" them.<sup>24</sup> The reaction that readers should have to virtuous characters was summarised by Alexander Gerard who commented that, in contrast to the indignation that they should feel towards vicious individuals, readers should rejoice "when prosperity and success attend[ed] the virtuous man", but feel compassion "when he [was] sunk into disappointment and adversity".<sup>25</sup>

In addition to instructing readers in the pursuit of virtue, writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction were progressive in the way that they focused directly upon the moral education of women. With the exception of some indoctrinating comments about the vicious nature of women and a few instruction manuals, the moral education of women had been largely ignored by both writers and philosophers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Against the traditional view of the subordinate role of women, the writers examined in this dissertation advocated a qualified degree of equality for women, particularly in relation to their choice of husbands, and in their dealings with men. Richardson, for example, in a letter to Sarah Chapone, rebuked the conservative notion that a "Woman's Subordination [had

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Highmore, *Essays, Moral, Religious, and Miscellaneous*, Volume I, pp. 139-140.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume I, p. 153.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (1764), Part I, "Of the Sense or Taste of Virtue", Section vii, p. 72.

been] laid upon her as a Punishment" for Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden.<sup>26</sup> He advocated Forbes' idea that love between a man and a wife should be based on "a Concurrence of Ardor, Respect, and Tenderness".<sup>27</sup> Supporting Richardson, Cooper also argued that a failure to allow women the opportunity of choosing their husbands on the basis of love was to deny them any chance of a marriage which exhibited "a full Completion of the Blessings of Humanity". He stressed that only when "two minds [were] engaged by the Ties of reciprocal Sincerity" could a truly "virtuous Love and Friendship"<sup>28</sup> be formed. Even William Paley, writing thirty years after the appearance of *Clarissa*, advocated Richardson's doctrine, when he stated that "parents [had], on no account, a right to urge their children upon marriages, to which they [were] averse; nor ought, in any shape, to resent the children's disobedience in such commands".<sup>29</sup>

In addition to promoting the rights of women in relation to choosing husbands, both Fielding and Goldsmith joined Richardson in emphasising the need to educate women against the snares of vicious men. Censuring the romances, which they claimed were responsible for the continued mis-education of women, these writers took upon themselves the task of instructing women on how to discern the base motives of men, whose "impetuous and unrestrained passions" were focused entirely on conquering their virtue. Furthermore, as Bellario noted in *Remarks on Clarissa*, women had to be taught to esteem a man with "Sobriety and Goodness of Heart" over one with a "Gaiety of Disposition which [stemmed] from a vast Flow of animal Spirits, without Restraint or Curb from either Principles of Religion or Good-nature . . . and wild Fancies".<sup>30</sup> Simply put, women needed to be taught prudence and wisdom, lest they fall the victims to the snares of vicious men. Although writers of the novel of moral instruction emphasised that women, who repented their loss of virtue, could be forgiven, their view of the

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<sup>26</sup> Richardson, "Letter to Sarah Chapone" (March 2, 1752), in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll, p. 202.

<sup>27</sup> Forbes, op. cit., "Essay on Self-Love", Section vii, p. 267.

<sup>28</sup> Cooper, op. cit., Essay VII, "On Conjugal Love", pp. 198-199.

<sup>29</sup> Paley, op. cit., Book III, Part III, Ch. XI, p. 308.

<sup>30</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 28-29.

consequences for such women was best summarised by William Paley who, later in the century, wrote:

The *seducer* practices the same stratagem to draw a woman's person into his power, that a *swindler* does, to get possession of your goods, or money . . . . Seduction is seldom accomplished without fraud; and the fraud is by so much more criminal than other frauds, as the injury effected by it is greater, continues longer, and less admits of reparation.

This injury is three-fold, to the woman, to her family, and to the public.

1. The injury to the woman is made up, of the *misery* she suffers from shame, of the *loss* she sustains in her reputation and prospects of marriage, and of the *depravation of her moral principle*. . . . The *loss* which a woman sustains by the ruin of her reputation, almost exceeds computation. Every person's happiness depends in part upon the respect and reception they meet with in the world; and it is no inconsiderable mortification even to the firmest tempers to be rejected from the society of their equals, or received there with neglect and disdain. But this is not all, nor the worst. By a rule of life, which it is not easy to blame, and impossible to alter, a woman loses with her chastity the chance of marrying at all, or in any manner equal to the hopes she had been accustomed to entertain. . . . Add to this, that where a woman's maintenance depends upon her character, as it does, in a great measure, with those who are to support themselves by service, little sometimes is left to the forsaken sufferer, but to starve for the want of employment, or to have recourse to prostitution for food and raiment. As a woman collects her virtue into this point, the loss of her chastity is generally the *destruction of her moral principle* . . . .

2. The injury to the family may be understood, by the application of that infallible rule "of doing to others what we would that others should do unto us". . . . And when they reflect upon this, let them distinguish if they can, between the robbery of their fortune by fraud or forgery, and the ruin of their happiness by the treachery of a Seducer.

3. The public at large lose the benefit of the woman's service in her proper place and destination, as a wife and a parent.<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the gradual change in attitude towards "fallen women", which had gained considerable momentum with Soame Jenyns' claim, in his *Essay on Virtue*, that the Almighty could not be so "cruel or severe" as to condemn women whose chastity had been seduced, Johnson's essay in *The Rambler* on the need to treat "fallen women" with humanity, and Henry Brooke's allegorical poem, "The Female Seducers", in which a lovely maid was restored to virtue after losing her chastity, many individuals still treated "the lost maid" as a person to "be loathed by every age". As a consequence, women still needed to be instructed on how to protect their virtue, and maintain virtuous dispositions.

In terms of didactic method, writers of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction did not only deviate from the traditional means of documenting instruction, but

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<sup>31</sup> Paley, op. cit., Book III, Part III, Ch. III, pp. 250-253.

developed an innovative form of moral instruction. By assimilating readers into the world of the text, writers found that readers could take an active part in their own moral development, a point expressed later by Paley who claimed that, unless they were put into "complete possession" of the issue, readers would seldom retain information that was not directly requested.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, Fielding developed the model of instruction initiated by Richardson, even though the latter was far less likely to leave readers to their own devices in decoding the meaning of the text. Although it is impossible to ignore the fact that Fielding wrote to entertain his readers, his paramount function, like that of Richardson, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, was to instruct readers to abandon vice and pursue virtue. It was for this purpose that he stated explicitly that readers, in reading the text, would not only have to "travel [slowly] through these pages" in order to decode accurately the moral meaning of the text, but use their sagacity as well. In the requirement that readers use their sagacity in decoding the moral instruction, Fielding, along with Goldsmith and Mackenzie, differed from Richardson's didactic method. It was, however, an important deviation in terms of educational method, for it made readers fully responsible for their own moral education. This innovative method left readers with a choice about whether they should, or should not, apply the moral instruction of authors to their own lives. Ideally, if the lesson had been taught well, as it had been in the above cases, then readers should accept the validity of the writers' arguments, without hesitation. Although they were never left "without a guide" in decoding the moral instruction, readers could more readily accept the instruction of these writers because they, by maintaining their autonomy, had taken an active part in their own moral development. According to Sheridan, "the only way to bring about a reformation of manners [was] to restore wisdom and knowledge [which could] be effected only by a right system of education".<sup>33</sup> Following the traditional approach to moral education, that

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<sup>32</sup> Paley, *op. cit.*, Preface, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>33</sup> Sheridan, *British Education: or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain*, Book I, Ch. I, p. 4.



"right system of education" had to involve readers directly in their own moral development.

In short, the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction aimed not only at instructing readers in the pursuit of virtue and the censuring of vice, but it also aimed at activating the minds of readers to become conscious of their "own conduct and of the customs and prejudices that conditioned it".<sup>34</sup> In this sense, the novel became "a Glass" in which readers could scrutinise the functioning of society and, more importantly, their own characters. The didactic function of the novel, therefore, provided readers with the opportunity of distinguishing truth from falsity, of inspecting the motivating forces of their own natures and those of others, of discovering models of exemplary behaviour, and of learning the traits necessary for the maintenance of a virtuous life. The moral re-education of individuals could only be achieved with the aid of their own sagacity, for only then could they accept fully the validity of the writers' instruction and apply it to their own lives. Because they had assumed passive roles in decoding the moral instruction of sermons and tracts, readers would, even though they might agree with the morality presented, either soon forget or fail to apply the instruction to their own lives. Although Iser summarises correctly the "aesthetic intention" of the novel as allowing readers to discover things for themselves, the didactic end of the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction went far beyond the mere training of "the reader's sense of discernment"; its primary aim was to instruct readers in the pursuit of virtue. As early as 1725, James Arbuckle had defined the task of writers as: "to make Virtue appear in its native Beauty and Lustre; to shew the Weakness and Folly of vicious Courses; to prevent the ill Effects of . . . popular Delusions . . . and to banish Nonsense, Indecency and Impertinence from the publick Diversions".<sup>35</sup> Consequently, it is not enough to describe the mid eighteenth-century novel of moral instruction as mimetic only; for, the function of the novel was primarily an educative one. Correctly, Locke claimed that, "of all the Men

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<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader*, p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> Arbuckle, *A Collection of Letters and Essays*, No. 39 (December 24, 1725), Volume I, pp. 324-325.

we meet with, Nine Parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education".<sup>36</sup> It was the objective of novelists, such as Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith and Mackenzie, to make certain that, given the corrupt nature of contemporary society, the novel should aim at making "Nine Parts of Ten" virtuous individuals. Certainly, given this, education and ethics were, indeed, "natural bedfellows".

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<sup>36</sup> Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Section 1, p. 83.

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