THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

TOBIAS SMOLLETT

Edited by
LIONEL KELLY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE SERIES

General Editor: B.C.Southam

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General Editor's Preface

The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S.

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Preface

Criticism of the novel in the eighteenth century is rarely an exercise of profound judgment. If it is a commonplace that the form itself was relatively new, it is also true that the most acute criticism of fiction comes from its practitioners, and the different practice of one novelist from another; as in the treatment of Richardson's *Pamela* by Fielding in *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. Smollett's own contribution to this creative criticism lies in the energy of his application to a variety of possible forms—the picaresque, the Gothic, the Quixotic and the epistolary. The contemporary response to his novels often amounts to little more than generalized comments in terms of approbation for his understanding of life and manners, and his capacity for satirizing human weakness and folly in a vein of humour seen at once as abrasively vigorous and humanly just. There are numerous occasions when his critics go beyond these simple boundaries in brief illuminating moments. A public man of letters, Smollett was engaged in a variety of literary enterprizes, as a poet, dramatist, critic and historian. Much contemporary criticism of him is focused on these activities, rather than his novels. I have sought to give some examples of responses to his work in these spheres, but my main concern is to show what was reported and written about the novels, both in private and public documents. After 1756, Smollett's career, and his reputation, is intimately bound up with the development of the literary periodical as a new locus for public criticism of contemporary literature.

The effective cut-off date is 1821, with Sir Walter Scott's major critical account of Smollett; this text seems to me a proper conclusion, because it is the work not only of a fellow novelist, but also a fellow Scot. However, one later great English novelist could not be ignored: Charles Dickens. Dicken's personal enthusiasm for Smollett both affected his own work as a novelist, and encouraged a wider public audience for Smollett's novels.

Acknowledgments

Like all those who work on Smollett I am deeply indebted to Professor Lewis M.Knapp for his *Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners;* for his exemplary edition of *The Letters of Tobias Smollett;* and for his personal encouragment. My work was greatly assisted by Fred W.Boege's *Smollett's Reputation as a Novelist,* and by all those who added to the bibliography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century criticism of Smollett. In this connection I should like to record my gratitude to Professor Paul-Gabriel Boucé, who shared with me his unrivalled knowledge of Smollett criticism.

I should like to record my gratitude to the following libraries for their assistance, and permission to reprint material from their collections: the Bodleian Library, the British Library, Cambridge University Library, Dundee Public Library, the Library of Friends House, London, and Reading University Library. I am grateful to the Research Board of the University of Reading for grants to assist in the preparation of this work.

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I am grateful to many friends and colleagues who have generously helped me: to Dr Dinah Birch, Professor and Mrs W.F. Bolton, Dr Barrie Bullen, Faith Evans, Mrs Patricia Medhurst, DrJohn Pilling, Professor W.Redfern, Dr John Stokes, Dr Christopher Thacker, Professor A.Wardman, and Dr I.Williams. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my colleague Dr Nicola Bradbury for her help and her patience. I should like to give to Smollett himself the last words of these prefatory remarks, conscious

that whatever is 'elegant' in this volume is due to his genius. I quote from *The Present State of All Nations,* London, 1768, vol. 2, pp. 224–5.

> The task of collecting, collating and arranging old papers and records, is but ill suited to the impatience of the English disposition; but, this labour being in a great measure surmounted by those who had no other merit than industry, divers English authors have lately exhibited elegant, specimens of historical talents.

Introduction

Smollett's reputation has both benefited and suffered from his connection with more famous writers. In the Preface to his first novel, *Roderick Random,* he himself invoked the example of Cervantes and Le Sage. He translated Le Sage's picaresque novel *Gil Bias* in 1748 and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in 1755. For a British novelist there were advantages and disadvantages to being a contemporary of Richardson and Fielding. *Roderick Random,* published anonymously in 1748, was thought by some to be by Fielding, while Smollett's inclusion in his second novel, *Peregrine Pickle,* of *The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* attracted the censure of Richardson and his admirers. The savagery and comic bravura of his humour invoked comparison with Rabelais and Swift for many eighteenth-century critics, and distinction in tone from Sternian comic pathos. To later readers, he was associated with Sir Walter Scott by nationality, and later still was seen as a precursor to Dickens. Today the links with Fielding and Dickens seem most potent. Smollett's work as a comic novelist invites comparison with Fielding's; yet, if we think of the form of the novel his range is greater, though without Fielding's masterly control of plot. For Dickens, as for many other nineteenth-century writers, the pleasures of boyhood reading were intimately associated with Smollett, and for many of us the first encounter with Smollett's reputation comes early in the pages of *David Copperfield* where David is engaged to read aloud from *Peregrine Pickle* to Steerforth. Despite Dickens's partiality to Smollett, his critical reading of him is acute, and informs his incisively simple judgment that Smollett's way as a novelist was 'a way without tenderness'.[1]

For his contemporaries, Smollett was well known not only as a novelist but also as editor of one of the foremost journals of his day, *The Critical Review*. He had a considerable reputation too, as an historian, poet and playwright, though in this last he was least successful. As a qualified doctor, on intimate terms with the most distinguished medical men of his day, he took a lively interest in all the sciences, and often reviewed scientific books in *The Critical Review*. His *Essay on the External Uses of Water,* 1752, argues the value of non-mineral water in cold and hot baths, and warns of the unhygenic conditions of the spa waters at Bath. The sense left by the most severely moralizing critics of the nineteenth century that Smollett was an uncouth man who wrote uncouth books is remote from the truth. He was a cultivated man of wide learning,

experience and sensibility, who, like his contemporaries Johnson and Goldsmith, earned his living by his pen. He was a typical eighteenth-century man of letters, and if he was of Grub Street, he often rose above it.

I.
BEGINNINGS; *RODERICK RANDOM,* 1748

Born in 1721 in Dumbartonshire, Scotland, Smollett went to Dumbarton Grammar School and later attended Glasgow University. In 1736 he was apprenticed to William Stirling and John Gordon, surgeons of Glasgow. If his late schooling prepared him for a medical career, his ambition was to write, and in 1739, at the age of eighteen, he left for London. Like Samuel Johnson before him, Smollett arrived in London with a tragedy in his pocket. It was a verse play on the story of James I of Scotland called *The Regicide,* a work he imagined would take the town by storm. He failed to get this performed, or printed until 1748, and the resultant animus he felt towards theatre managers, actors and noble patrons is told in fictional disguise in the sixty-second and sixty-third chapters of *Roderick Random,* in the inserted story of Melopoyn. A letter Smollett wrote to his Scots friend Alexander Carlyle in 1747 presents a neatly specific account of his difficulties with *The Regicide:*[2]

> I am vain of your Approbation with regard to my Tragedy, which, as you imagine, suffered by the much lamented Death of Lord George Graham; tho', after the Assurances I had from many People of much greater Distinction and Influence than he, I little thought my Attempt to bring it on this Season could have been baffled by the Pitifull Intrigues of that little Rascal Garrick, who, at the time he gave me all the Incouragement I could desire, in assuring me he would contribute as much as in him lay, not only to bring it on, but also to act in it with all the ability he was master of, found means to prevail on Rich to reject it.[3]

Happily, his relations with Garrick improved in later years (No. 106) though Smollett was never a successful dramatist, as this comment in *The Critical Review* in 1757 shows: it occurs in a review of Smollett's comedy in two acts, *The Reprisal,* which was staged at the Drury Lane Theatre early that year:

> The author does not seem to be so well acquainted with the *Jeu de théâtre* as some of his contemporaries: there is, however, throughout the performance a close imitation of nature, which will always please the judicious, though it may not set the galleries in a roar.[4]

Furthermore, when his plays were collected and published together with his poems in 1777, the reviews of that collection, whilst enthusiastic towards some of the poems, made little significant comment on the plays.

His beginnings as a poet were more successful. In the letter to Alexander Carlyle of 1747 he writes:

> If I had an Opportunity, I would send you the New Play and Farce, Two Satires called Advice and Reproof which made some Noise here, and a Ballad set to Musick under the name of the Tears of Scotland, a Performance very well received at London.[5]

His two satires had been published in 1746 *(Advice)* and 1747 *(Reproof),* and they again invite comparison with Johnson. Indeed, it may well have been owing to the success of Johnson's imitation of Juvenal's third satire, *London,* of 1738, that Smollett tried his hand at satiric verse. *Advice* and *Reproof* present a dialogue between a poet and his friend on the injustices of the poet's present circumstances, a procedure Smollett might well have taken from the dialogue between Thales and his friend in Johnson's *London;* however, Smollett's poems are somewhat less than Johnsonian in quality, as this extract from the opening of *Advice* suggests:

> Enough, enough; all this we knew before;
> 'Tis infamous, I grant it, to be poor:
> And who so much to sense and glory lost,
> Will hug the curse that not one joy can boast!
> From the pale hag, O! could I once break loose;
> Divorc'd, all hell should not re-tie the noose!
> Not with more care shall H……avoid his wife,
> Not Cope flies Swifter lashing for his life:
> Than I to leave the meagre fiend behind.

Although these two satires, his early poem *The Tears of Scotland* and the later *Ode to Independence* appeared in miscellaneous collections of poetry during his lifetime, the first collected edition of his poems is that of 1777.

His reputation rests principally on his achievement as a novelist, an achievement assured by the publication of *Roderick Random* in 1748. Published anonymously by J.Osborn in Paternoster Row, it excited considerable comment in polite society. There was no published criticism, however, because *Roderick Random* predates the practice of reviewing contemporary literature, which was initiated by Ralph Griffiths when he established *The Monthly Review* in May 1749. With Smollett's own later periodical, *The Critical Review,* which dates from March 1756, *The Monthly Review* was the foremost periodical of its kind, and the development of Smollett's reputation can be followed in these two journals throughout the course of his career.

Although *Roderick Random* was not reviewed immediately upon publication the response to it was enthusiastic, and it went into several editions in the next few years. With its success however there developed that persistent practice of reading the novel as disguised autobiography, which was encouraged by certain aspects of some of

Smollett's later novels, such as his own appearance in *Humphry Clinker* when Jeremy Melford visits his Chelsea home. Alexander Carlyle's wry account of Smollett's meeting with the Scots historian William Robertson in 1758 recounts one example of such 'biographical' misinterpretation:

> We passed a very pleasant and joyful evening. When we broke up, Robertson expressed great surprise at the polished and agreeable manners and the great urbanity of his conversation. He had imagined that a man's manners must bear a likeness to his books, and as Smollett had described so well the characters of ruffians and profligates, that he must, of course, resemble them. This was not the first instance we had of the rawness, in respect of the world, that still blunted our sagacious friend's observations.[6]

Given this mistaken assumption of coarseness in Smollett himself, it is interesting to note that the first reference to him in a periodical cites *Roderick Random* approvingly in an exhortation to morality (No. 6). In large part the critical response to *Roderick Random* is slight, and occurs in private documents such as letters. It may have been Smollett's own attempt to give the book new publicity that resulted in the laudatory anonymous *Remarks on Roderick Random* inserted as a letter to the publisher in the 1755 Dublin edition, which claims to be the fourth edition (No. 42). The critical response to *Roderick Random* on the Continent was limited by two considerations: this, like his other novels, was badly translated, and his brand of humour was regarded by Continental critics as too English to travel well. In later years Smollett's reputation abroad was further adversely affected by the publication of his *Travels Through France and Italy*. Gotthold Lessing in a review of a German translation of *Roderick Random* in 1755 argues that it is unlikely to appeal to German 'readers of good taste' (No. 41). An extreme response to Smollett in France was voiced by Garrick's correspondent Mme Riccoboni, who, abjuring the *Travels Through France and Italy,* wrote that all Smollett's work was 'loathsome—I said loathsome' (No. 73). Yet, as we shall see from later discussion of the *Works, Roderick Random* remained a favourite with British commentators throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.

Roderick Random maintained its popularity on a number of counts. Though its structure is loosely episodic, it has a satisfying completeness of form. The plot charts several revolutions in Roderick's career: a prolonged series of adventures culminating in the restitution of family fortunes and his finding his rightful social place. Smollett gives the feel of actuality supported by particular reference to contemporary history in the shape of incident, scene and event, as in the chapters on the Voyage to Carthagena. Roderick himself is an engaging hero, tough, resourceful, passionate, gallant even, yet a man capable of refinement of feeling and expression. No less boyish than Tom Jones, he is sometimes coarser than his famous contemporary. In the sustained depiction of that camaraderie between Roderick and his companion Strap, Smollett has anglicized and familiarized the Don Quixote/Sancho Panza relationship from Cervantes. The use

of the inset narrative is familiar from European picaresque, but in Smollett the interpolated stories of Miss Williams and the dramatist Melopoyn introduce elements of documentary realism into the fiction. He satisfies the demands of verisimilitude associated with the development of eighteenth-century fiction out of and away from the conventions of Romance. Smollett's great strength is in making characters. The figures in *Roderick Random* compose a gallery of portraits often distinguished by national or professional characteristics. This is a dominant feature of his work, whether the tone is scornful, neutral, or lovingly enthusiastic, and is particularly remarkable in Smollett's portrayal of doctors and naval men. Of this latter type an enduring favourite appears in *Roderick Random* in the figure of Lieutenant Bowling, who anticipates Trunnion, Hatchway and Pipes in *Peregrine Pickle*. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentators on Smollett remark on each of these aspects of his work, but most frequently they recall individual characters.

The first published criticism of *Roderick Random* is in the remarks of 'an Oxford scholar' in an anonymous pamphlet (No. 5). It appears in a form closely associated with Smollett's reputation throughout the 1750s, when anonymous and pseudonymous pamphlets were spawned by the inclusion of Lady Vane's *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* in *Peregrine Pickle,* and by Smollett's work as a reviewer in *The Critical Review*.

II.
PEREGRINE PICKLE AND *THE MEMOIRS OF A LADY OF QUALITY*

Peregrine Pickle is, in design and structure, a repeat of the successful formula of *Roderick Random,* expanded in length and varied in incident. The history of Peregrine's boyhood is enriched by the invention of three naval characters—Commodore Trunnion, Lieutenant Hatchway and the bosun's mate Pipes—who become the favourites of later commentators on the book, and in one case the focus of an interesting attack on the authority of Smollett's naval portraits (No. 134). The novel contains what is now regarded as a sustained prose satire on the Grand Tour,[7] and features a series of portraits of Smollett's contemporaries, some satiric and some benign.[8] Like *Roderick Random,* it includes contemporary events and incidents, as in the representation of the Annesley Case.[9] But that part of the novel which attracted most contemporary attention is not Smollett's work.

Smollett's second novel did not repeat the commercial success of his first. It was not reprinted until 1757. The received view is that because Smollett retained copyright to the novel, the publishers did little to push it. Its reception was also complicated by the inclusion of Lady Frances Anne Vane's *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* as chapter 88 of the first edition. Little is known about the relationship between Smollett and Lady Vane which might account for the use of her story in the novel. As far as it can be simply told, the story is as follows.

Lady Frances Vane was born Frances Anne Hawes in 1713. In 1732 at the age of nineteen she married William Hamilton, second son of the fourth Duke of Hamilton.

Her husband, returned MP for Lanarkshire in 1734, died in that year. A year later she married the very wealthy and eccentric William Holles, Viscount Vane, cousin of the Duke of Newcastle. A great beauty in her late teens and early twenties, Lady Vane was reported to be unrecognizable by a correspondent who met her again when she was thirty-seven:

> Lady Vane was there, with her Lord, and began several balls. She seems quite easy, though no woman of any rank took the least notice of her. In my whole life I never saw anybody altered to the degree she is. I have not seen her near since her days of innocence and beauty, and really should not have known her if I had not been told her name, as there is not the least remains of what she was.[10]

After decades of marital quarrels with Viscount Vane, and a series of much publicized affairs, she lived in comparative retirement in Hill Street, Berkeley Square, where she died at the age of 65 on 31 March 1778. A view of her at the zenith of her beauty is given by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Russell writing from Ghent on 9 June 1742, to his wife in London:

> The greatest beauty we have here has followed us from England, which is Lady Vane, who arrived here last Monday night, and in reality has followed the brigade of Guards, which, as soon as she is tired with, intends to proceed to Brussels. She has no woman with her, and walks about each evening with an officer on each side of her.[11]

There is no record of comment from Lady Vane on the impact of her *Memoirs* in *Peregrine Pickle*. Nor is there evidence that Smollett was on terms of social intimacy with her. He refers to her once, neutrally, in a letter to John Moore of 1750.[12] There is no verification of the early story that Smollett was paid for including her *Memoirs* in his novel.[13] His reason for doing so remains a mystery. Lady Vane's motives for publishing her *Memoirs* are not known, but it is very likely that she was encouraged by the example of two earlier books which had achieved notoriety: Mrs Laetitia Pilkington's *Memoirs* (1748–54), and Mrs Theresa Constantia Phillips' *Apology* (1748) (No. 38). It is difficult to resist the view that Lady Vane sought to outdo her 'sister' memoirists.

The reception of *Peregrine Pickle* was further complicated by the intervention of Dr John Hill. Hill, the epitome of a Grub Street hack, was enjoying success in 1751 through his daily essay contributed to *The London Advertiser* from March 1751 to June 1753 under the title of the *Inspector*. Described as Vain, impudent, facile, unprincipled, though not without some real abilities',[14] Hill involved himself in a rivalry with Smollett over the 'authenticity' of Lady Vane's *Memoirs*. It was good copy, and Hill was quick to seize the chance. In January 1751 notices appeared advertising the forthcoming publication of *Peregrine Pickle* including the *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*. By 8 February Hill had written and published his own *History of a Woman of Quality: or the Adventures of*

Lady Frail, which he claimed to be the 'true' account of Lady Vane's amours. *Peregrine Pickle* was then published on 25 February 1751. Three tracts relating to this appeared within the next few months, the most pertinent being *A Parallel between the Characters of Lady Frail, and the Lady of Quality in Peregrine Pickle* (No. 16). It may well be that Hill wrote all three tracts, and in addition, commented on the controversy ensuing in his Inspector papers from March 1751 to June 1753.[15] Hill's tracts, though of interest to the specialist, contribute little of substance to the lasting reputation of *Peregrine Pickle.*

The immediate response to *Peregrine Pickle* was mixed. Of Lady Vane's 'bluestocking' contemporaries, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote sympathetically of the *Memoirs,* and praised the novel (No. 30), whereas Swift's friend Mary Delany thought the novel to be '*wretched stuff;* only Lady V's history is a curiosity. What a wretch!' (No. 31) Samuel Richardson wished his admirers would defend female morality against the novel, and wrote to his friend Sarah Chapone that he had sent her son 'that Part of a bad Book which contains the very bad Story of a wicked woman. I could be glad to see it animadverted upon by so admirable a Pen' (No. 10). Smollett and Richardson were on terms of reasonable professional intimacy later, since Richardson's printing house was involved in publishing the second or 'Modern Part' of a *Universal History* which appeared in forty-four volumes between 1759 and 1766, and of which Smollett was one of the compilers. In Smollett's extant letters to Richardson we see that he is scrupulous in expressing his high regard for Richardson's ability as a novelist and, dissociating himself from some denigratory remarks on Richardson in *The Critical Review,* praises Richardson's work, even whilst admitting that 'I am not much addicted to Compliment.'[16] John Cleland, whose pornographic novel *Fanny Hill: or, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure,* appeared in 1748–9, paid Smollett the compliment of a long and judicious review of *Peregrine Pickle* in *The Monthly Review* of March 1751 (No. 13). He distinguished *Peregrine Pickle* from

> that flood of novels, tales, romances, and other monsters of the imagination, which have been either wretchedly translated, or even more unhappily imitated, from the *French,* whose literary levity we have not been ashamed to adopt, and encourage the propagation of so depraved a taste.

Cleland's desire to differentiate between English and French taste leads us into the French response to *Peregrine Pickle.* Matthew Maty in the *Journal Britannique* commented that *Peregrine Pickle* offered a 'faithful picture of the customs of the century' (No. 20), yet the novel was not well received in France. Joliat reports that[17] the French were only interested in the *Memoirs* of Lady Vane, and this was probably the only section of the novel they read: comment was confined to this part of the novel. One curiosity emerged however: a French translation of the novel under the title of *Sir Williams Pickle*. In the *Avertissement* to the translation the bookseller wrote that he 'found in it some singularly original portraits, very finely sustained', yet confessed some anxiety: 'I feared at first that this would not suit the taste here but I reflected in the end that these

pictures were not without merit; that they would at least serve to instruct us in English novels.' In a long review of this translation Elie Fréron drew attention to the originality of the novel, and was particularly struck by what he called the 'bizarrerie anglaise'. He concluded his review with these remarks:

> The ingenious or pleasing qualities to be found in this work cannot compensate for the boredom induced by the reading of four long volumes. The translator acknowledges that the best English novel cannot stand comparison with ours. So what need is there for all these English productions.

According to Joliat we have to wait until the nineteenth century for a serious French critical response to Smollett's fiction, from Louis Mézières in his *Histoire critique de la littérature anglaise* of 1834.[18] Though Mézières recognizes the comic verve in Smollett, and admires the Lady Vane *Memoirs,* he nevertheless calls into question the now conventional placing of Smollett as one of the three greatest English novelists of the eighteenth century.

III.
SMOLLETT, FIELDING AND THE 'PAPER WAR'

Meanwhile in London Smollett was engaged in a literary controversy. The London *General Advertiser* for 30 April 1751 announced the following publication: *A Vindication of the Name and Random Peregrinations of the Family of the Smallwits. In a letter to a Friend.* Printed for R.Griffith at the Dunciad in St Paul's Church-Yard. No copy of this pamphlet is known to exist but the impact on Smollett of this notice in the *General Advertiser* can be guessed at. Smollett may have suspected that Fielding instigated or wrote it: which would account for Smollett's satiric Portrait of Fielding in *Peregrine Pickle,* under the name of Mr Spondy, presented as a sychophant of Lord Lyttleton[19] who is lampooned in the novel as the poet 'Gosling Scrag Esq.' Lyttleton's Monody on the death of his wife is burlesqued by Smollett in chapter 102. Early in 1752 Fielding replied to this portrayal in his *Covent-Garden Journal,* using the pseudonym Alexander Drawcansir. He gives an account of the 'present war' and comically dismisses the eponymous figures of Pickle and Random (Peeragrin Puckle and Roderick Random) (No. 24), who scatter at the 'first Report of the Approach of a younger Brother of General Thomas Jones.' Smollett replied to Fielding in the pseudonymous pamphlet *A Faithful Narrative* (No. 25) in which he makes Fielding confess, under the pseudonym Habbakkuk Hilding, that he had plagiarized Smollett's work in the making of *Tom Jones:*

> *Trunnion* is the Man.—Spare me, spare me, good Commodore! I own I have wronged you, as well as your Nephew *Peregrine,* and his Cousin *Random*.—I have robb'd them both, and then raised a false Report against them.

There is no proof that Smollett wrote *A Faithful Narrative of Habbakkuk Hilding,* although it is always included in his bibliography. Whatever the truth of the matter, the pamphlet clearly supports his position in this less than serious rivalry with Fielding. This war of words continued through the publication of Fielding's *Amelia* in 1752, the least successful of his novels. *Amelia* was itself the subject of satiric comment by Bonnell Thornton in *The Drury Lane Journal* (No. 26), and both Smollett and Fielding's work was guyed in other minor pamphlets of the day, such as William Kenrick's *Fun* (No. 28). In *Amelia,* Fielding, in pointed contrast to the self-advertisement of Lady Vane in her *Memoirs* in *Peregrine Pickle,* draws a decorous veil over human frailty in a famous bedroom scene. (No. 29)

The issue of decorum and morality in fiction was of continuing concern to commentators through the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The most serious contemporary contribution of this kind is that of Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* essay (No. 8), occasioned by the popularity of both *Tom Jones* and *Roderick Random*. Johnson's anxiety about the dangerous appeal to the young of 'immoral' heroes is echoed by subsequent readers of Smollett's novel (see, for example, No. 121).

IV.
FERDINAND COUNT FATHOM

Smollett's third novel, published in 1753, was not a commercial success. It was not reprinted in his lifetime, and the seven-year gap between this and his next novel suggests perhaps a lapse in confidence due to the failure of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Modern critics have argued that it represents an endeavour to go beyond the conventions of the native picaresque form of *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle,* an endeavour not brought fully to success. Its most remarkable features are a criminal anti-hero, and the introduction of Gothic elements in Chapters 20 and 21. Defending his choice of protagonist Smollett wrote a 'Dedication' to the novel (No. 32), in which he argues that

> the same principle by which we rejoice at the remuneration of merit, will teach us to relish the disgrace and discomfiture of vice, which is always an example of extensive use and influence, because it leaves a deep impression of terror upon the minds of those who were not confirmed in the pursuit of morality and virtue....

He calls upon the example of the drama in which he argues 'the chief personage is often the object of our detestation and abhorrence' and cites the examples of Shakespeare's *Richard III,* and Maskwell from Congreve's *The Double Dealer.* This 'Dedication', largely ignored in the eighteenth century, has been thought by late nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics an inadequate defence of the novel.[20] E.A.Baker believes that

> Smollett, in Ferdinand Count Fathom, falls between not two but a whole row of stools. First, he confounds the tale of picaresque adventure with the criminal biography, then he changes over to crude romance…the only passages that cast any spell upon the modern reader are of yet another category—those in which Smollett plays upon our sense of terror and suspense and weaves an atmosphere of gloom which gives a foretaste of the Gothic novel.[21]

Modern critics have argued for and against the view that in this novel Smollett was borrowing the example of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild,* yet this connection was not made by Ralph Griffiths in his long review of the novel in *The Monthly Review* for 1753 (No. 34). He suggests that here Smollett has worked with a fund of ideas 'gleaned from *Gil Blas, Guzman de Alfarache, Lazarillo de Tormes,* the *English rogue,* etc. His Ferdinand Fathom is a compound of all that is detestable in the heroes of these ludicrous romances.' Griffiths is cautiously hostile to the novel, whilst finding things to praise in it. There are, he writes,

> Some extravagant excursions of the author's fancy, with certain improbable stories…marvelous adventures, and little incongruities; all which seem to be indications of the performance being hastily, nay and carelessly composed.

On the bonus side he finds it shows the 'strong marks of genius in the author, and demonstrations of his great proficiency in the study of mankind.' Mary Delany, in three letters to her friend Mrs Dewes in 1753 comments from time to time on the experience of reading *Ferdinand Count Fathom,* and ends with the view that 'I think *Count Fathom* (though a bad, affected style) written with a better intention, and Melvin's character a good one, but then none of them are to be named in a day with our good friend Richardson' (No. 34). There is little other comment on *Ferdinand Count Fathom* in the 1750s. In 1762 William Rider (No. 62) in a pamphlet of biographical studies of contemporary writers suggests the superiority of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* over *Peregrine Pickle* on the grounds that *Ferdinand Count Fathom* is not a mere repetition of the design of *Roderick Random,* which *Peregrine Pickle* is. Thereafter, comments about *Ferdinand Count Fathom* usually arise in consideration of the ethical questions raised by Smollett's novels, and their impact on his readers. Richard Sheridan (No. 92) in confessing his love of Romances and hatred of novels, surely has both *Peregrine Pickle* and *Ferdinand Count Fathom* in mind when he writes that for him the great demerit of novels is in their fidelity to nature: 'Why should men have a satisfaction in viewing only the mean and distorted figures of Nature? tho', truly speaking not of Nature, but of Vicious and corrupt Society.' Similarly, in a debate between 'Nestor' and 'Caution' in *The Monthly Review* of 1773 (No. 94) 'Caution' argues that 'though he has painted vice in strong, and even glaring, colours, it does not seem to be done with a view to condemn it'. 'Caution' complains of the 'excessive profanity' of Smollett's language in his novels, and concludes them to be 'absolutely unfit for the perusal of youth, or even of mature age without the greatest caution.'

If such responses are largely matters of taste and ethical judgment, later writers in the eighteenth century did respond to the purely literary issues raised by *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. In the first substantial biographical/literary commentary on Smollett after his death, the writer of the *Westminster Magazine* article for 1775 (No. 97) argues that both *Ferdinand Count Fathom* and *Sir Launcelot Greaves* are much lesser creations than Smollett's other novels:

> No doubt invention, character, composition, and contrivance, are to be found in both; but then situations are described which are hardly possible, and characters are painted, which, if not altogether unexampled, are at least incompatible with modern manners; and which ought not to be, as the scenes are laid in modern times.

Towards the end of the century Mrs Barbauld (No. 119) in an essay on the pleasure derived from objects of terror finds in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* the best 'conceived, and the most strongly worked-up scene of mere natural horror that I recollect…where the hero, entertained in a lone house in a forest, finds a corpse just slaughtered in the room where he is sent to sleep, and the door of which is locked upon him.' Similarly, Robert Anderson in the criticalre marks prefaced to his edition of the *Miscellaneous Works* of Smollett of 1796 (No. 125) compares the Gothic chapters of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* favourably with the 'most terrible touches' in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* (1794). In her introduction to Smollett's novels selected for the British Novelists series of 1810, Mrs Barbauld argues that what is different about *Ferdinand Count Fathom* from its predecessors is that Smollett here subjects his hero to the demands of poetic justice, and suggests that the intention behind the writing of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* was precisely to meet the objections to his earlier novels that he had allowed his characters to go unpunished for their moral and social misdemeanours. However, she complains of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* that 'the narration is far from pleasing; knavery is not dignified enough to interest us by its fall.' In an anticipation of Dickens's response to Smollett, she argues that 'Strong humour he possessed, but grace and delicacy were foreign to his pencil' and adds that he 'could not draw an interesting female character' (No. 135). (Narcissa and Emilia in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* are certainly no more than the stock image of the beautiful virtuous English girl, like Sophia in *Tom Jones*.) However, Mrs Barbauld found the images of Count Fathom's mother, a camp follower 'going about stripping the dying and the dead' impossible to contemplate 'without a thrill of horror.'

Sir Walter Scott (No. 157) has three sound points to make about *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Like Mrs Barbauld he praises the Gothic chapters of the novel as 'a tale of natural terror which rises into the sublime; and, though often imitated, has never yet been surpassed, or perhaps equalled.' He remarks that in this novel Smollett makes the first attempt in fiction to do justice to 'a calumniated race' in the portrait of Joshua, the benevolent Jew. And in comparing *Ferdinand Count Fathom* with *Jonathan Wild,* Scott

comes down firmly on Smollett's side, and argues that as a consequence of his powerfully expressive style and his strong inventiveness of character 'it becomes at once obvious that the detestable Fathom is a living and existing miscreant, at whom we shrink as from the presence of an incarnate fiend, while the villain of Fielding seems rather a cold personification of the abstract principle of evil' whose adventures Scott finds 'absolutely tiresome'.

V.
TRANSLATOR, CRITIC AND HISTORIAN 1754–60

In a letter to Alexander Carlyle of 7 June 1748, Smollett wrote that he was contracted 'with two Booksellers to translate Don Quixote from the Spanish Language, which I have studied some time. This perhaps you will look upon as a very Desperate Undertaking, there being no fewer than four Translations of the same Book already extant, but I am fairly engaged and cannot recede.'[22] In his book *Smollett's Hoax: Don Quixote in English,* Carmine Linsalata seeks to demonstrate that Smollett's translation is a 'plagiarizing, paraphrasing, rewriting, and inverting' of Jervas's English translation of 1742, and that Smollett probably had little or no Spanish.[23] Smollett must have known his debt to Jervas and felt the slight on his command of Spanish in John Shebbeare's pamphlet (No. 46). He took ample revenge for this and other incivilities through his satiric portrait of Shebbeare as Ferret in *Sir Launcelot Greaves*. Smollett's version of Cervantes' novel appears to have been finished by 1751 but was not published until 1755. It aroused little public comment or formal criticism, except for Ralph Griffiths's review of it in *The Monthly Review* (No. 40). But it was a commercial success for the booksellers, went into several editions in Smollett's lifetime, and was frequently re-issued throughout the nineteenth century. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (No. 39) regretted that Smollett wasted his time in translations.

> *Don Quixote* is a difficult undertaking. I shall never desire to read any attempt to new dress him; tho' I am a meer pidler in the Spanish Language, I had rather take pains to understand him in the Original than sleep over a stupid Translation.

Ralph Griffiths reviews the translation by means of an extended comparison, line for line, with Charles Jervas's version of 1742, taking the episode in which Sancho Panza exposes the 'mistaken politeness of his master, in the affair of the table-precedency'. Griffiths feels that while Jervas's is the more exact version, Smollett's 'comes nearest the great original'. He concludes his review with a complaint about the absence of an index, a thing, he suggests, that 'men of genius, and imagination, seldom attend to; but nevertheless, *indexes* have their uses, and no book, of *considerable price* especially, ought to be without them.' Smollett expressed a nice sense of the relative value of his work on *Don Quixote* in a letter to his friend William Huggins:

> I send my Spaniard to return the Compliment I have received by your Italian. Cervantes was a warm Admirer of Ariosto, and therefore Don Quixote cannot be disagreable to a Lover of Orlando furioso. Though I do not pretend to compare my Prose with your Poetry.[24]

In 1756 Smollett and three associates founded *The Critical Review*.[25] The first issue appeared on 1 March 1756, and contained seventeen articles on books published in January and February. One of his associates and friends, Dr John Armstrong, a medical doctor and a fellow Scot, wrote to the politician John Wilkes in January 1756 that:

> Smollett imagines he and I may both make Fortunes by this project of his; I'm afraid he is too sanguine, but if it should turn out according to his hopes farewell Physick and all its Cares for me and welcome dear Transquility and Retirement.[26]

Samuel Johnson admired *The Critical Review* and thought it superior to *The Monthly Review,* but it did not make Smollett's fortune, and was often in financial difficulties throughout his association with it up to 1763, when he left England for two years for health reasons. Furthermore, *The Critical Review* involved Smollett in endless conflict with authors whose work received unfavourable reviews in its pages, and in one case embroiled him in a libel action which he lost, so that he was imprisoned in the King's Bench prison for three months. Amongst the many pamphlets and letters addressed to the editors of *The Critical Review* by enraged authors, I have selected extracts from those by John Shebbeare (No. 46), Dr James Grainger (No. 49), Joseph Reed (No. 50) and the anonymous pamphlet *The Battle of the Reviews* (No. 55), where the writers address themselves to Smollett's own creative writings. These documents speak for themselves, and are an index of the temper of eighteenth-century critical skirmishing in the environs of Grub Street. As the most prominent name associated with *The Critical Review* at its inception, it was inevitable that Smollett should be singled out for attack by disgruntled contemporaries. What he complains of in his letters of these years is being blamed for reviews he did not write. In this context it is worth recalling his letter to Samuel Richardson, cited earlier in this introduction, dissociating himself from adverse remarks on Richard-son in *The Critical Review,* there were few other writers whose work he admired sufficiently to make this gesture.

Throughout the last five years of this decade Smollett was also deeply involved in his work as an historian. The record of his output from 1755 to 1761 is awesome evidence of his capacity for literary drudgery. In 1757–8 he published the first four volumes of his *Complete History of England,* the *Continuation* of which appeared in four volumes in 1760–1, with a fifth volume in 1765, bringing the *History* right up to date. In 1756 there appeared a seven-volume compilation of *Authentic and Interesting Voyages* of which he seems to have been the editor, and volume five of which he wrote himself. He was involved in the production of a forty-four-volume *Universal History* (1759–66), some of which he compiled himself as his business letters to Samuel Richardson and

Richardson's son show. From 1761 he was editor of a thirty-eight-volume translation of the works of Voltaire. In addition to all this he was involved with the production of two other periodicals at this time, *The British Magazine* from January 1760 to December 1767, and *The Briton,* a political journal edited for Lord Bute from May 1762 to February 1763; a role which cost Smollett the friendship of John Wilkes. Small wonder that he expresses the fatigue of composition in several letters of this period. To William Huggins he writes on 20 June 1757: 'Cakes and Gingerbread to what I undergo. I have been groaning all day under the weight of Tindal, Ralph, Burnet, Feuquieres, Daniel, Voltaire, Burchet &c.,&.' and in letter to John Harvie of 10 December 1959 he writes:

> If I go on writing as I have proceeded for some years, my hand will be paralytic, and my brain dried to a snuff. I would not wish my greatest enemy a greater curse than the occupation of an author, in which capacity I have toiled myself into habitual asthma, and been baited like a bear by all the hounds of Grub-street. Some people have flourished by imputed wit; I have suffered by imputed dullness. I have been abused, reviled, and calumniated for satires I never saw; I have been censured for absurdities of which I could not possibly be guilty.

As to his qualities as an historian, contemporary reviews were mostly concerned to dispute versions of relatively recent events. Reviewing his *Complete History of England* in *The Monthly Review* (No. 45) Oliver Goldsmith found nothing to complain of in Smollett's researches, and praised his style. A year later, criticizing volume IV of the *Complete History* in *The Monthly Review* (No. 47) Owen Ruffhead dismissed the work as history on the grounds that the 'Writer's merit is rather that of an ingenious novelist than of an accurate historian. His imagination overpowers his judgement.' The partisan nature of Smollett's political and religious attachments were attacked by Thomas Comber in his *Vindication of the Great Revolutions in England…as Misrepresented by the Author of the Complete History of England.* A long refutation of Comber's arguments appeared in *The Critical Review* for September 1758, but as this unsigned article bears the marks of Smollett's authorship it is not reprinted here.

What of the views of later professional historians? In the nineteenth century Thomas Carlyle mentions Smollett's *Complete History* in a number of letters of 1871 and 1882, Writing to Robert Mitchell in 1817 he refers to 'seven of Toby Smollett's eight chaotic volumes' and writes later to another correspondent that 'I fear Smollett is going to be a confused creature.' And in 1822 in a letter to John Carlyle, he writes: 'You might commence Smollett's *Continuation* of Hume, or any continuation of him—for a worse one can scarcely be imagined than Smollett's.'[27] Our survey concludes with Charles Lamb's comic and generous response to views like those of Thomas Carlyle when, pointing out how much the Scots dislike his admiration of their fellow countrymen, he writes (No. 156), 'Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with *his* Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued *Humphry Clinker*?'

VI.
SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES, 1760–61

A number of particular circumstances attend the publication of *Sir Launcelot Greaves,* Smollett's fourth novel. First, some chapters of the novel were written whilst Smollett was in the King's Bench prison, serving his three months' sentence for the libel of Admiral Knowles. Second, *Sir Launcelot Greaves* is the first novel to make its initial appearance in serialized form in a British periodical. Third, it was illustrated, by Anthony Walker, and these are said to be the first magazine illustrations of a work of fiction.[28] The novel was published serially from January 1760 to December 1761 in *The British Magazine, or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies,* and appeared in book form in March 1762. The critical response to it was slight, and of Smollett's five novels, this and *Ferdinand Count Fathom* have always been judged inferior to the others. Its subject matter and something of its form derives from Smollett's familiarity with *Don Quixote,* and it is part of that tradition of Quixotic fictions in English which includes Fielding's comedy *Don Quixote in England* (1734), Butler's *Hudibras,* Charlotte Lennox's *Female Quixote* (1752), and a Richard Graves's *Spiritual Quixote* (1772). Its titular hero is a knight-errant of means who travels the countryside rooting out injustice and folly. In Ferret it boast a Hobbesian misanthrope to counter-balance the chivalric energies of the hero; and in Captain Crowe there is another example of Smollett's fascination with naval characters.

Oliver Goldsmith publicized the novel in an essay in *The Public Ledger* for 16 February 1760 (No. 53) in a report of what he called a 'wow-wow' or gathering of country people to gossip and read the newspapers in the local public house. Goldsmith, a contributor to *The British Magazine,* sought to boost both the novel and the magazine: he has an Oxford scholar, led to the wow-wow by curiosity, read a serialized section of *Sir Launcelot Greaves* and announce that the piece is not only done in the very spirit and manner of Cervantes, but exhibits 'great knowledge of human nature, and evident marks of the master in almost every sentence' and he attributes it to the pen of the 'ingenious Dr——'. Everyone present at the wow-wow then gives orders for *The British Magazine*. Upon book publication *Sir Launcelot Greaves* was noticed in a back-handed compliment by *The Monthly Review* (No. 59) as 'Better than the common Novels, but unworthy the pen of Dr Smollett.' Smollett's journal *The Critical Review* dealt with it most favourably, arguing that it resembled *Don Quixote* without imitating it, and praised Captain Crowe as a successfully drawn naval character (No. 60). Of Crowe's exotically original seaman's language *The Critical Review* wrote:

> It has been said that Shakespeare has drawn a natural character in Caliban, not to be found in nature. We may with equal reason affirm, that Crowe is a true seaman that never existed, who talks in tropes and figures borrowed from his profession, but never used before.

It was Captain Crowe who called forth the objections of a reviewer in *The Library* (No. 61) who, whilst admiring the novel in general terms, objected that Crowe appears too often in it, that his 'appearance is sometimes disgusting, and whose sea jargon is absolutely unintelligible to a land reader'. Some years later in his 'Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition' (No. 99) James Beattie proposed that although Greaves is a kindred figure to Don Quixote, 'Smollet's design was, not to expose him to ridicule; but rather to recommend him to our pity and admiration. He has therefore given him youth, strength, and beauty, as well as courage, and dignity of mind.... Yet, tht the history might have a comic air, he has been careful to contrast and connect Sir Launcelot with a squire and other associates of very dissimilar tempers and circumstances.' By the turn of the century, in general studies of Smollett's work, the acknowledgment of *Sir Launcelot Greaves,* like that of *Ferdinand Count Fathom,* is dutiful rather than enthusiastic.

VII.
TRAVELS THROUGH FRANCE AND ITALY AND *THE ADVENTURES OF AN ATOM*

I give some evidence of the reception of the *Travels Through France and Italy,* though it lies outside my main concerns, and its critical reputation in England, France and Germany has been thoroughly described elsewhere.[29] Similarly, I give some of the reviews of the anonymously published *Adventures of an Atom* even though Smollett's authorship of it has never been proven; it is always listed in his bibliography.

The *Travels* was published on 8 May 1766, within a year of Smollett's return from the Continent where he had been living for two years in an attempt to improve his health, and to recover his broken spirits after the death in April 1763 of his only child, his daughter Elizabeth. The *Travels* consists of a series of letters to an unnamed correspondent, in which Smollett comments on life and manners in France and Italy. Smollett adopts the attitudes of a sturdy English moralist, passing judgment on foreign customs and manners, and his tone is often ill-tempered in the extreme. The *Travels* anticipates the mode of his last novel, the epistolary *Expedition of Humphry Clinker,* 1771, and there is a family resemblance between the persona of the letters and that of Matthew Bramble in *Humphry Clinker*. The *Travels* was well received on publication, and went to a second edition in the same year. There was, inevitably, a favourable review of it in *The Critical Review,* and an equally warm account in the rival *Monthly Review* (No. 67) where Dr John Berkenhout distinguishes between the 'insipid, tedious, and uninteresting...remarks of the generality of travellers' and Smollett's *Travels*. He writes that the author 'hath not travelled without a previous acquaintance with mankind; and his abilities, as a writer, are universally known.' He concludes with an expression of thanks 'for the entertainment we have received in the perusal of his travels; which, as they are the work of a man of genius and learning, cannot fail of being useful and instructive, particularly to those who intend to make the same tour.' Similarly approving short reviews appeared in *The London Magazine* (No. 68) and *The*

Royal Magazine (No. 69). In France, inevitably, the *Travels* had a very hostile press[30] and the adverse reviews of the book there form the substance of Philip Thicknesse's comments on it in his *Observations on the Customs and Manners of the French Nation,* 1766 (No. 72). Garrick's French correspondent Madame Riccoboni wrote to him of the *Travels* that Smollett was 'a low knave who's no better acquainted with the *mores* of his own country than with those of France' (No. 73). Two years later the reputation of the *Travels* was irreparably damaged by Laurence Sterne in his *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy,* 1768. If Sterne's purpose in the *Sentimental Journey* was a general rebuke to the bad-tempered travel writer, his derisive portrait of Smollett as the 'learned SMELFUNGUS' (No. 75) effectively eclipsed the reputation of Smollett's book throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century and up to the early years of this century.

Smollett's political satire *The History and Adventures of an Atom* was published in 1769. A Dublin edition came out in the same year, but it was not otherwise reprinted in Smollett's lifetime. A satire of current affairs and public characters from 1754 onwards, it reflects Smollett's disgust at the intrigues of political life, with which he had become embroiled through his association with Lord Bute and his editing of *The Briton* from 1762–3. The device of the novel is that an atom moves from Japan to the brain of one Nathaniel Peacock, and dictates what he must write of the atom's 'Japonese' adventures: for Japan and the Japonese we are to read Britain and the British. The novel contains virulent attacks on statesmen, politicians, military and naval commanders, and the common people. Its principal theme is an exposure of the sycophancy of public life; its manner recalls Swift in the *Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Although Knapp seems anxious to question its ascription to Smollett, modern commentators confidently include it in discussions of his oeuvre.[31] Coming as it does at the end of Smollett's herculean labours as an historian, it is easy to see that he might have turned to this mode of writing to enact a form of private revenge on the public and political world he had been so closely bound up with throughout the preceding decade. It was reviewed in a number of periodicals of the day, one of which, *The London Chronicle* attributes it to 'the Author of *Roderick Random*' (No. 76). A long descriptive account of it in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (No. 77) concludes approvingly that 'The folly of the multitude, and the knavery of pretenders to patriotism, are ridiculed in this little work with great spirit and humour; but there is a mixture of indelicacy and indecency, which though it cannot gratify the loosest imagination, can scarce fail to disgust the coarsest.' *The Critical Review* (No. 78) found it to unite 'the happy extravagance of Rabelais to the splendid humour of Swift' and concluded that 'the man who does not love and relish this performance, has no wit in his own composition.'John Hawkesworth in *The Monthly Review* (No. 79) found in it 'much spirit, humour, and satire' but 'also much nastiness and obscenity: of that kind, however, which is disgusting, and consequently not pernicious.' The key identifying the fictional with the historical characters in the *Adventures of an Atom* is given in Appendix 2.

VIII.
THE EXPEDITION OF HUMPHRY CLINKER

Humphry Clinker, Smollett's last and most enduring novel appeared in June 1771. A few months later, on 17 September he died in Leghorn, where he had been living since the autumn of 1768. He received notice of the interest which greeted his new novel in a letter written from London by John Gray, a minor writer on friendly terms with him. 'Shallow judges', wrote Gray, 'are not so well satisfied with the performance as the best judges, who are lavish in its praises. Your half-animated sots say they don't see the humour. Cleland gives it the stamp of excellence, with the enthusiastic emphasis of voice and fist; and puts it before anything you ever wrote' (No. 87). Gray's sense of a mixed response to the novel was accurate. It was extensively reviewed in the periodicals, but only *The Critical Review* gave it unstinting praise. *The London Magazine* (No. 82) wrote that the novel was not 'without imperfections' among which it singled out the impropriety of the novel's title in relation to the insignificant role played by Humphry in the book, and complained also of the paucity of action and incident in it, complaints reiterated by other reviewers. Some found in it an implied nationalism which promoted the virtues of Scotland and Edinburgh over those of England, London and Bath (cf. Mrs Barbauld's remarks in 1810 (No. 135)) and thought the presentation of these English cities unrecognizable. *The Monthly Review* (No. 88) was entirely hostile. The novel was seen as inferior to his first two novels and 'perhaps equal to the *Adventures of an Atom*', an appropriate conjunction in the light of the reviewer's attempt to place Smollett in the tradition of those 'nasty geniuses' who follow their great leader Swift, 'only in his obscene and dirty walks'. However, he admits that 'The present Writer, nevertheless, has humour and wit, as well as grossness and ill-nature.' *The Critical Review* (No. 89) praises Smollett's control of plot, incident and characterization, and reports that 'the same vigour of imagination that animates his other works, is conspicuous in the present, where we are entertained with a variety of scenes and characters almost unanticipated.' He goes on to praise the epistolary form of the novel, celebrating the variety that derives from the multiple narrative perspectives 'of the letters of the several correspondents'. He praises its realism, its inventiveness, and its capacity for releasing 'the understanding from prejudice', surely a hint of shared nationalist sympathies in support of Smollett's endeavour in *Humphry Clinker* to present Scotland and the Scots in a more favourable light than was often the case in the Metropolitan culture of England in the eighteenth century. It is one of the most informed and intelligent criticisms we shall find in all the contemporary reviews of Smollett's novels. *Humphry Clinker* went into many editions in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and came to be recognized as Smollett's major work. Commenting on Smollett's power of characterization in it, William Mudford (No. 137) hesitates to compare him with Shakespeare, but nevertheless asserts than in *Humphry Clinker,* Smollett rises above description to real invention in an almost Shakespearian manner, demonstrating a 'power of intellect of much larger scope than in any of his preceding productions'. And Sir Walter Scott (No. 157) writes of Smollett's last months in Italy,

'where he prepared for the press the last, and, like music, "sweetest in the close," the most pleasing of his compositions, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*.'

IX.
PLAYS AND POEMS (1777) AND *WORKS*

Smollett's *Plays and Poems* of 1777 gathers these texts together for the first time. The edition uses biographical and critical material on his life and work taken from *The Westminster Magazine* of 1775 (No. 97). Of the critical material in the introduction to *Plays and Poems,* I have extracted the writer's comments on Smollett's most famous poem, the *Ode to Independence* (No. 101). As Boucé points out[32] no new biographical material of substance appeared thereafter until Robert Anderson's edition of the *Works* in 1796, itself a revision of his earlier edition of the *Miscellaneous Works* published in Edinburgh in 1790. Anderson's 1796 edition (revised, amended and enlarged in several editions to 1820) was followed by Dr John Moore's edition of the *Works* in 1797, the introduction to which gave an account of the 'Progress of Romance' from which I have extracted material (No. 126). This criticism of Smollett which begins in 1775 in *The Westminster Magazine* and continues through Anderson and Moore to their successors, constitutes a sequence of heavily interdependent critical essays, which are however, extended from time to time with original contributions and fresh insights. My selection of this material avoids continual repetition of critical opinions, whilst attempting to convey what is new.

X.
SCOTT, THE ROMANTICS AND DICKENS

Between the collections of Smollett's *Works* and Sir Walter Scott's *Life,* there appear two particularly interesting contributions to Smollett criticism. One of these is William Mudford's 'Critical Observations' on Smollett's novels in an edition of the British Novelists (No. 137). Mudford's work is striking because of his endeavour to write a genuinely independent and literary criticism. There is also Edward Mangin (No. 134) who in his *Essay on LightReading* of 1808 takes a dispassionate look at Smollett's naval characters.

Scott's critical assessment of Smollett in his *Lives of the Novelists,* 1821–4 (No. 157) is distinguished by its originality. It shows the mind of the novelist rather than the critic at work. Scott is vulnerable to the charge of nationalist partiality, yet in a sustained analysis of the relative merits of Fielding and Smollett, he ranks *Tom Jones* as the greatest of their novels; but he justly claims that *Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle* and *Humphry Clinker* 'far excel *Joseph Andrews* or *Amelia;* and, to descend still lower, *Jonathan Wild,* or *The Journey to the Next World,* cannot be put into momentary comparison with *Sir Launcelot Greaves,* or *Ferdinand Count Fathom*.'

Amongst the early Romantics, Keats (No. 150) is the only one on record who positively discriminates against Smollett's novels. It is interesting that he compares

Smollett and Scott; a pairing which was to dog the earlier writer throughout the nineteenth century, to his disadvantage. Lamb (No. 129), Leigh Hunt (No. 142), Hazlitt (No. 143), and Coleridge (No. 152) all respond enthusiastically to Smollett. Charles Lamb wrote to Wordsworth in praise of Smollett's 'beautiful bare narratives'; and the poet is reported to have distinguished Smollett from other 'Scotch historians' as one 'who wrote good pure English.' Leigh Hunt, despite an affection for Smollett deriving from boyhood reading, displays a rather ambivalent response to his vigour: 'His caricatures are always substantially true: it is only the complexional vehemence of his gusto that leads him to toss them up as he does, and tumble them on our plates.' Hazlitt picks out Smollett's eye for eccentricities. But Coleridge is, perhaps, critically more exact. In contrast to Mudford's generalized Romantic appeal to the genius of Shakespearian characterization, Coleridge goes back to Ben Jonson and the comedy of humours technique to account for what he calls: 'the congeniality of humour with pathos, so exquisite in Sterne and Smollett'.

Thomas Carlyle, despite his objections to Smollett as an historian, also enjoys his pathos, perhaps immoderately so: his judgment of *Humphry Clinker* is astonishing (No. 149).

> Humphry Clinker is precious to me now as he was in those years. Nothing by Dante or any one else surpasses in pathos the scene where Humphry goes into the smithy made for him in the old house, and whilst he is heating the iron, the poor woman who has lost her husband, and is deranged, comes and talks to him as to her husband.

Grandiose comparisons are a feature of nineteeth-century criticism: Scott had concluded his *Life* of Smollett with a suggestion that 'Upon the whole, the genius of Smollett may be said to resemble that of Rubens.'

This is not the place to raise the issue of Dickens's literary debt to Smollett.[33] The complexity and power of their relationship may, however, be suggested by the masterly way in which Dickens filters into *David Copperfield,* between the boys, that particular novel by Smollett, *Peregrine Pickle,* which in its atmosphere of sexual impropriety anticipates the later development of David and Steerforth's relationship, and the seduction of Little Emily.

The criticism of Smollett from 1746 until Dickens displays intermittent warmth and animosity, but overall an increasing technical sophistication. Early commentators respond to Smollett as if he were a kind of prose Pope; a satirist of life and manners, sometimes excessively vulgar, whose interest is primarily moral rather than fictional. There is little sign of critical recognition of Smollett's formal experimenting with different kinds in the same fictional genre: from the English picaresque to proto-Gothic, and from extremes of emotion to varieties of technique culminating in the use of multiple perspectives in the epistolary *Humphry Clinker*. But the purity and energy of Smollett's prose style is often singled out for approbation. His stylistic virtues are

evident to us also in the historical writing, his reviews, and, most brilliantly, in his letters.

NOTES

1 *The Letters of Charles Dickens* (1880), vol.1, p. 356.
2 For Alexander Carlyle, see No. 1.
3 *The Letters of Tobias Smollett,* ed. Lewis M.Knapp (Oxford, 1970), p. 4.
4 See No. 43.
5 Smollett, *Letters,* p. 5.
6 See No. 1. See also Paul-Gabriel Boucé, 'Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Biographies of Smollett', *Tobias Smollett, Bicentennial Essays,* ed. G.S.Rousseau and P.G.Boucé (New York, 1971), pp. 201–30. Boucé refers to the complementary practice of 'inverted autobiography' in which Smollett's fiction is used to reconstruct the story of his life.
7 George M.Kahrl, *Tobias Smollett, Traveler-Novelist* (University of Chicago Press, 1945; repr. Octagon Books, 1968).
8 Akenside, Hogarth, Lyttleton, Fielding, and Garrick. In the 1757 edition of *Peregrine Pickle,* the attack on Garrick is turned to adulation, since by that time the relationship between Smollett and Garrick was on a friendly footing.
9 See Andrew Lang, *The Annesley Case* (English Notable Trials) (1912), pp. 1–79.
10 Lewis M.Knapp, *Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners* (Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 124–5: a letter from Lady Jane Coke, just returned to London from Tunbridge Wells, to Mrs Eyre at Derby, 21 August 1750.
11 Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle,* ed. James, L. Clifford (1964), p. 799, footnote to page 490.
12 Smollett, *Letters,* p. 14: a letter to John Moore, 28 September 1750: 'I have been favoured with two Letters from Mr Hunter of Burnsyde, the first of which was shewn to the Duke of Dorset by Lady Vane, who spoke of the Author as a Gentleman worthy of the Government's Clemency and Protection, and represented his Case and Character in such an advantageous Light that the Duke expressed an Inclination to befriend him, and advised Lord Vane to speak to his Cousin the Duke of Newcastle in his behalf.'
13 See, however, James R.Forster, 'Smollett's Pamphleteering Foe Shebbeare', *PMLA* LVII (1942), 1058.
14 See William Scott, 'Smollett, Dr John Hill, and the Failure *of Peregrine Pickle* ', *Notes and Queries* CC (1955), 389–92.
15 The other two are: *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Lady V—ss V—, Occasioned by the Publication of her Memoirs in the Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (London, for W.Owen, 16 March 1751, pp. (1)+47). Then, on 9 July 1751, *An Apology for the Conduct of a Lady of Quality, lately traduc'd under the Name of Lady Frail* (London, for M.Cooper, pp. vii+48).
16 Smollett, *Letters,* p. 48.
17 Eugène Joliat, *Smollett et la France* (Paris, 1935), p. 181.
18 Ibid., pp. 232–5.
19 'Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher sphere of life, embellished by the nervous style, superior sense, and extensive erudition of a Corke, by the delicate taste, the polished muse, and tender feelings of a Lyttleton': Tobias Smollett, *Continuation of the Complete History of England,* by Hume (new edn, 5 vols, 1822), vol. V, ch. XIV, section